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**RDI REPORTS**

A

*Gender Issues in  
Privatization and  
Liberalization of the  
Agricultural Economy in  
Egypt:  
Implications for Policy Reform*

*by*

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## ACRONYMS

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| AERDI    | Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Institute |
| AERI     | Agriculture Economics Research Institute               |
| AgLink   | Agricultural Linkage Project                           |
| AgReform | Agricultural Reform Project                            |
| AfDB     | African Development Bank                               |
| ALEB     | Agriculture-Led Export Businesses                      |
| APCP     | Agricultural Production and Credit Project             |
| APRP     | Agricultural Policy Reform Project                     |
| ARC      | Agricultural Research Center                           |
| ATUT     | Agricultural Technology Utilization and Transfer       |
| BRDP     | Beheira Rural Development Project                      |
| CAPMAS   | Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics  |
| CDP      | Community Development Program                          |
| CIDA     | Canadian International Development Agency              |
| CSPP     | Cotton Sector Promotion Program                        |
| DHS      | Demographic Health Survey                              |
| DIDA     | Diary Industry Development Association                 |
| EDHS     | Egypt Demographic Health Survey                        |
| Expolink | ExpoLink Technical and Marketing Services Support Unit |
| HEIA     | Horticulture Export Improvement Association            |
| EEPC     | Egyptian Export Promotion Center                       |
| EEA      | Egyptian Export Association                            |
| EIHI     | Egypt Integrated Household Survey                      |
| ERSAP    | Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program      |
| FAO      | Food and Agriculture Organization                      |
| FY       | Fiscal Year  |
| GDP      | Gross Domestic Product                                 |
| GOE      | Government of Egypt                                    |
| GTZ      | German Development Agency                              |
| HC       | Holding Company  |
| IFAD     | International Fund for Agricultural Development        |
| IFPRI    | International Food Policy Research Institute           |
| IITA     | International Institute of Tropical Agriculture        |
| ILO      | International Labor Organization                       |
| IMF      | International Monetary Fund                            |
| IPMP     | Integrated Pest Management Program                     |
| IRRI     | International Rice Research Institute                  |
| JICA     | Japan International Cooperation Agency                 |
| LFSS     | Labor Force Sample Survey                              |
| MALR     | Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation           |
| MOSA     | Ministry of Social Affairs                             |
| NARP     | National Agriculture Research Project                  |
| NCW      | National Committee on Women                            |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| NCNW   | National Council of Negro Women   |
| NGO    | Nongovernmental Organization  |
| ORDEV  | Organization for Reconstruction and Development of the Egyptian Village |
| PBDAC  | Principal Bank for Development and Agricultural Credit                  |
| PCUWA  | Policy and Coordination Unit for Women in Agriculture                   |
| PRA    | Participatory Rapid Appraisal   |
| PVO    | Private Voluntary Organization  |
| RDD    | Rural Development Department  |
| RDI    | Reform Design and Implementation  |
| RMG    | Ready-Made Garments   |
| RNEA   | Regional Office for the Near East (FAO)                                 |
| ROAP   | Rural Organization Action Program (FAO)                                 |
| RWL    | Rural Women Leader  |
| SFD    | Social Fund for Development   |
| SEWA   | Self-Employed Women's Association                                       |
| TC     | Technology Component  |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Program                                      |
| UNFPA  | United Nations Fund for Population Activities                           |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund  |
| USAID  | United States Agency for International Development                      |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

Since 1980, the Egyptian economy, particularly the agricultural sector, has been undergoing major transformations that include land reform laws, privatization of public enterprises, removal of input subsidies, and a declining role of the state in decision making. These reforms have had major favorable economic results. All macroeconomic indicators have increased dramatically, yet poverty has also been on the rise.

The country's macroeconomic indicators are very bright, leading the International Monetary Fund to rate Egypt's policy reform and transition to a market economy as a success story. A recent issue of the *Economist* cites some of the country's impressive economic indicators: a sustained growth rate of about 5 percent, inflation below 4 percent, a budget deficit of around 1 percent of gross domestic product, and foreign reserves amounting to \$18 billion, covering about 14 months' worth of imports.<sup>1</sup> It is reported that by the year 2000, 80 percent of the Egyptian economy will be in private hands. Egypt is now reported to be a "model of a modern emerging market." (A summary of the policy reforms that account in part for these impressive figures is presented in Table E-1 at the end of this executive summary.)

Despite this progress, there have been major problems, including rising levels of poverty and a widening gap between the rich and the poor. A recent report of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI),<sup>2</sup> based on data from a recently completed Egypt Integrated Household Survey found that about 15.7 million persons, or 26 percent of the Egyptian population, are deemed to be poor in 1997.<sup>3</sup> Of these, 5.1 million people are deemed to be ultra-poor. Poverty rates are reported to be higher in rural than in urban areas, where about 63 percent of the poor live. Similarly, the 1995 Demographic Health Survey found significant levels of malnutrition among young children resulting in stunted growth for 30 percent of children under five years of age, 18 percent in urban Upper Egypt, and 40 percent in rural Upper Egypt.

Unemployment levels have risen significantly since 1980, especially among university and high school graduates, hundreds of thousands of whom graduate annually. Few of these have marketable skills and some wait for government employment, which is no longer guaranteed. According to research by several Egyptian economists, unemployment is especially high among female graduates, who make up two-thirds of the unemployed. Furthermore, employment opportunities for women in Egypt continue to shrink in an increasingly conservative social environment and retrenched government. According to the United Nations, women's share of national income in Egypt is one of the lowest worldwide (Human

<sup>1</sup> *The Economist*, March 20, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Guarav Datt, Dean Joliffe, and Manohar Sharma. "Profile of Poverty in Egypt: 1997." IFPRI, Food Security Research Unit of the Agricultural Policy Reform Program in Egypt, in Collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation and the Ministry of Trade and Supply.

<sup>3</sup> Based on a normative threshold equivalent of 3,150 calories of fiber per day for an adult male in urban areas and 3,500 in rural areas, while allowing for some non-food expenditure.

Development Report, 1995). Although opportunities have increased considerably in the private sector for people with the right kind of skills, the challenges also have increased, especially for women, the poor, and those who lack marketable skills, regardless of their educational background.

Another major problem in Egypt has been the heavy reliance on child labor, especially girls, in agriculture and agribusiness. We learned from several stakeholders and from our field visits that children as young as seven years old, together with teenage girls and women, are bussed daily from the villages to work as contract seasonal laborers on large farms or in packing houses. For a daily fee of LE5 to LE7 per day, these girls are contributing to family income at the expense of their own education. These young girls are deprived of schooling to help support their families. This is not only a violation of international laws on child labor, but also a major loss of potential for these young women and their families.

The Government of Egypt (GOE) is concerned about these inequities and is undertaking various measures to address them. The Ministry of Education, with assistance from international donors, is providing incentives to families to encourage them to send their daughters to school. The Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR) has committed itself to bettering the lot of women who participate in the agricultural economy of the country. His Excellency, the Minister, has established an office for the coordination of activities that affect women and has assigned senior staff to this office. In 1998, MALR hosted a major event honoring women leaders in the agricultural sector with certificates of acknowledgement of their contribution. This is a significant recognition of women's contribution to the agricultural economy. Much more is needed at the grassroots level to increase women's skills and incomes, to alleviate poverty, and to empower women to become more active social and economic agents of change in their families, communities, and society.

Donor agencies are also placing a major emphasis on equity and empowerment of women and are calling for the integration of gender concerns into policy formulation and implementation. Gender integration is now a policy of USAID, the World Bank, the United Nations' specialized agencies, and other bilateral and multilateral donors that support the Egyptian government's policy reform efforts. The Beijing Platform for Action and Declaration commits national governments, USAID and other donors, civil society organizations, and the private sector to achieve a set of strategic objectives in all economic and social spheres. Egypt is a signatory to the Beijing Platform for Actions, which calls upon signatory states to "review, adopt, and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty." It urges them to analyze, from a gender perspective, the impact of all policies and programs on poverty, inequality, and the well-being of families, and to adjust them as appropriate to promote a more equitable distribution of productive assets, wealth, opportunities, income, and services.

Egyptian women face numerous constraints that limit their ability to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the policy reforms. They have limited access to resources such as land and water; credit; information, training, and technology; and membership in civil society organizations. Because these constraints result in marginality and invisibility, women and

children are the first to suffer during periods of transition from a socialist to a market-oriented economy. Female-headed households are especially vulnerable. Hence, the main purpose of this APRP gender study is to look at ways to maximize the opportunities and to minimize the constraints and challenges for women resulting from economic policy reforms.

## **AGRICULTURE POLICY REFORM PROGRAM GENDER STUDY**

This is the second of a two-phase study examining the implications of policy reforms in the agricultural sector on women in agriculture in Egypt. The Phase I study, a preliminary gender assessment of policy reforms in Egypt, was completed in September 1998 by a team of Egyptian consultants led by a gender specialist from Development Alternatives, Inc. The study concluded that, although women play a key role in Egyptian agriculture in Egypt, policy reforms have not paid adequate attention to women's concerns and gender issues associated with the reforms. Policy makers, development specialists, multilateral and bilateral donors, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Egypt continue to view women in terms of their reproductive rather than their productive roles and thus pay scant attention to women as producers and decision makers in the agricultural sector. This is despite the declared commitment of MALR and GOE to enhance the position of women in agriculture in the family, community, and society at large.

The Phase I report argued that failure to pay adequate attention to women's concerns and gender issues in policy reforms is likely to exacerbate the hardships endured by many rural women and their families. This neglect may be responsible in part for rising poverty levels in Egypt and the widening gap between the rich and poor, rural and urban populations, and men and women. The Reform, Design and Implementation (RDI) Unit of the Agriculture Policy Reform Program (APRP) supports the efforts of GOE and USAID to liberalize and privatize the activities of the agricultural economy of Egypt. This mandate includes working to ensure that the impact of reforms is positive on all segments of Egyptian society. To date, policy reform efforts in Egypt have failed to address the specific concerns of women as they begin to feel the effects of liberalization and privatization in the agricultural economy. USAID, which supports Egypt's economic reform efforts, considers "gender" a significant cross-cutting issue. USAID-funded projects are required to pay special attention to gender issues and women's concerns in all their activities and programs.

In light of these explicit commitments, the APRP/RDI Unit carried out the first study, "The Impact of Liberalization and Privatization in Agriculture on Women in Egypt: Employment, Incomes, and Participation" (August-September 1998). During that time, the gender research team reviewed the literature on women in agriculture in Egypt and the projects that purport to address women's needs. Through a wide ranging series of field trips, interviews, workshops, and meetings, the team identified five areas in which further study and analyses are needed to ensure that policy reforms will promote increased incomes, employment, and participation of women in the agricultural economy. The APRP/RDI Unit is working in all of these fields and has carried out numerous related studies, workshops, and policy reforms. However, no deliberate attention had been paid to addressing women's needs and constraints in the agricultural sector or the potential impact of the reforms on women and their families. The

Phase I study began this process and focused attention on the importance of addressing the different needs and concerns of women and men particularly in the five areas outlined below, and the necessity of developing specific policy reforms and programmatic actions to increase women's access to resources, productivity, incomes, and contributions to the agricultural economy.

### SUMMARY OF PHASE I STUDY FINDINGS

After an extensive review of the literature, interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, and site visits to various projects and regions in the country, the research team found no empirical studies of the impact of policy reforms on women in Egypt. Instead, the team cited statements made by a few researchers and politicians giving conflicting viewpoints regarding the impacts of policy reforms on women. Some writers warned about the potential loss of jobs as a result of privatization and institutional restructuring, while others predicted expanding opportunities in the growing private sector in agriculture and agribusiness. Policy analysis by the research team highlighted some concerns regarding the potential impact on women and the poor of policy reforms such as the removal of agricultural input subsidies, the land tenancy law, and the declining role of the state in the provision of social services such as education and health. The team argued that these reforms, undertaken by the Egyptian government, with support from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and USAID, are likely to have different effects on women and men, the rich and the poor. Women and the poor are likely to suffer unless specific measures are undertaken to safeguard their interests and to ensure that they do not suffer undue hardships because of the reforms. These impacts need to be examined so that adequate measures may be undertaken to ensure that women and the poor benefit equally from the opportunities provided by the evolving market economy.

The Phase I team highlighted a wide range of projects targeting women in agriculture, a small proportion of which focused on women's productive roles in the agricultural sector. Although the government and donors expend vast resources on "women's productive activities," the main focus has been on traditional income-generating activities considered suited for women. Valuable opportunities are being lost by not harnessing these resources for upgrading the skills of women in agriculture to increase their productivity, incomes, employment options, and contributions to the economy.

The team concluded that efforts to integrate gender concerns into policy reforms would (1) benefit women and their families; (2) contribute to the success of economic reform programs and projects; and (3) help achieve the goals of sustainable economic and social development in Egypt. Incorporating gender concerns in policy reforms and agricultural development projects would increase the returns to investments in agriculture in Egypt, help alleviate poverty, and achieve sustainable socio-economic development.

The Phase I team identified the policy reforms being undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture and discussed some of the constraints facing women in dealing with these reforms (see Table E-1). Eight major policy reform areas were identified including

privatization of public sector firms and the growth of the private sector generally, land reform policies such as the land reclamation and distribution programs, and the liberalization of the relationship between landowners and tenants. Another area identified was agribusiness industries and export promotion. A fifth area was the growing role of NGOs and civil society organizations generally, and the importance of NGOs for capacity building and networking for members and managers, as well as their growing role in the provision of services to other women. Finally, the Phase I team stressed the importance of agricultural extension, training, and technology transfer for women's advancement in all socio-economic and political spheres. These five areas were proposed for further study under Phase II of this gender study.

The Phase I report made its recommendations based on a worldwide concern that most macroeconomic reform policies tend to ignore the productive roles of women and the different impact of reforms on women and men. It cited evidence from a Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report indicating, "Increasingly, the situation of women has been characterized by overwork; low productivity; and little access to credit, land, training, and the use of rudimentary technology." The Phase I report stressed the need to formulate and implement gender-informed policies that take into account the different roles and functions of women and men in agricultural production, and that recognize women's multiple roles and responsibilities in the home, community, and society at large. This policy focus is justified also in light of research evidence linking attention to gender in policy and projects to equitable, efficient, and sustainable outcomes in development.

The Phase I report made a strong case for addressing gender in agricultural policy reforms as a means of achieving sustainable and equitable socio-economic development in Egypt. It argued that incorporating gender concerns in policy reforms should help:

- Enhance economic and social gains from development projects and programs;
- Contribute to the overall success of such projects and programs;
- Increase both men's and women's participation in and benefit from agricultural reform and development;
- Ensure that women and men will have equitable access to productive resources including credit, land, business opportunities, new technologies, and education and training opportunities;
- Help promote food security and alleviate poverty within the framework of people-centered development; and
- Contribute to achieving the goal of agricultural growth and socioeconomic development in general.

APRP agreed to undertake this second phase of the gender study, with support from MALR and USAID. Examining the constraints facing women in the five areas of focus identified in Phase I, APRP aims to ensure that the agricultural policy reforms undertaken by MALR and

supported by USAID will not have an adverse impact on women. The reforms can help, instead, increase their productivity, income, and employment opportunities, and consequently, contribute to achieving Egypt's development goals.

The APRP gender team heard affirmation from all stakeholders about the key role that women play in agriculture in Egypt. In all APRP discussions with stakeholders—government officials, business owners, women farmers, and business owners—mentioned that women are involved in almost everything and are responsible for many agricultural tasks including planting, weeding, harvesting, storage, and livestock care. But there needs to be greater official acknowledgment of women's grassroots contributions. This affirmation has to manifest itself in accurate statistics; better access to resources including land, credit, information, extension, technology transfer, and training services; and increased participation in the organizations that make important decisions about women's work.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE PHASE II STUDY**

The objectives of Phase II of the women in development study were:

- To identify key policy barriers and constraints to women's participation in and benefit from the focus areas cited below, and to develop policy reform recommendations for women in development activities in the agricultural economy (including agribusiness) for inclusion in future APRP policy reform tranches;
- To develop policy recommendations and benchmarks that may be used as leverage with the government and that then might be included in a memorandum of understanding for the disbursement of funds;
- To develop actionable recommendations for activities that may be implemented to promote women's work, enhance women's employment, and increase their incomes; and
- To propose technical assistance activities that USAID may support to promote and expand women's work options and incomes.

### **Focus Areas Under Phase II**

The five areas of focus of the Phase II study were:

- Women's access to and use of land and water resources, since access to land and other resources affects women's productivity, access to credit and to new technology.
- The impact of privatization and institutional restructuring on women: are women disproportionately hurt by privatization and downsizing of government or parastatal work forces? The emphasis was on policy recommendations for the future, not an ex post facto assessment of privatization.

- Access to agricultural extension, training, and technology. The research focused mainly on women's access to extension services and to the results of agricultural and postharvest research. What policy measures can increase and improve the delivery of improved technology and information services to women?
- Women's employment in and income from agribusiness, such as food processing and cotton processing (including garment manufacturing). The research focused on three subsectors: cotton, horticulture, and wheat.
- Women and associations, either as members or decision makers. The research aimed to answer the questions of whether women have access to the advantages that associations bring to their members, such as information, policy dialogue with the government, networking, and promotional activities.

### **TEAM MEMBERS**

Dr. Nagat El-Sanabary, human capacity development specialist and gender specialist at Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), led the team and conducted the research on women's access to extension, training, and technology. Dr. Kamla Mansour, Director of the Policy Coordinating Unit for Women in Agriculture, focused on women and associations. Ms. Bagie Sherchand, a DAI agricultural economist, conducted the research on women and agribusiness. Dr. Lamia El-Fattal, an agricultural consultant, focused on women's access to and use of land and water resources. Ms. Amani El-Fiki, a privatization specialist and staff member of APRP/RDI Unit, focused on privatization and women.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology for data collection used by the research team included the following general activities:

- Review of available research and project documents;
- Interviews with key government officials in the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, Ministry of Public Enterprise, and Ministry of Trade and Supply;
- Interviews with appropriate USAID staff and other donors and with contractors implementing USAID projects and other agricultural projects;
- Site visits and individual and group discussions with members of agribusiness firms, income-generating projects, and the like;

- Focus group discussions with researchers, extension agents, and women and men farmers in the governorates of Gharbia, Sharkia, Beheira, Fayoum, and Luxor;
- Site visits to women's productive activities in the Old and New Lands, as well as visits to several MALR extension, research, and training centers;
- Interviews with businesswomen and men, members of professional and trade associations, and representatives of civil society organizations; and
- A stakeholders' workshop where more than 100 women and men discussed the gender team's initial findings and made recommendations for policy and programmatic changes to enhance women's access to resources in all five focus areas of Phase II of the APRP gender study.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT**

This report is divided into five chapters. Chapter One addresses gender issues related to privatization. Chapter Two deals with women and agribusiness. Chapter Three deals with women's access to and use of land and water resources. Chapter Four focuses on women's access to agricultural extension, training, and technology. The final chapter deals with women and associations. All chapters follow the same format. Each chapter concludes with a set of policy recommendations and programmatic actions to address the constraints in order to increase women's productivity, incomes, and contribution to family welfare and the agricultural economy as a whole.

Following is a brief summary of the main findings of each chapter and the associated policy and programmatic recommendations. Policy benchmarks to be implemented by MALR during 1999-2001 are in Annex A.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Privatization and Women**

Privatization as used in this report refers to the transfer of public enterprises into private ownership and the growth of private sector. Chapter One focuses on privatization of public companies. Private sector growth is addressed in Chapter Two, which deals with potential impacts on women of agribusiness growth.

Chapter One provides general background information on privatization in Egypt and explores some issues related to the impact of privation. The chapter provides general information on the privatization of public firms; the creation of holding companies that facilitate the transition from public to private ownership; the conditions governing this transition, especially with regard to redundant labor; and early retirement schemes.

The chapter indicates that women's employment in the private sector is growing but not fast enough to make up for loss of jobs and limited employment opportunities in the public sector. Attitudes toward women in the society at large and among private sector managers contribute to this situation. Employers fear that women may be less productive than men because of their dual responsibilities and because of the generous maternity benefits granted by law to married women.

Policy recommendations offered include: broaden the scope of the Social Fund for Development's cooperation with holding companies to provide training and retraining opportunities for women retirees; provide training of women in starting and managing a business; develop financial services that are appropriate for women's business; and establish tax holiday incentives for new businesses formed by redundant labor.

### **Agribusiness and Women**

One of the sectors changing because of policy reforms is the agribusiness sector. Egypt's agribusiness sector displays great diversity, with differentiation along public-private, large-small, and urban-rural lines. Although the role of public sector agribusinesses once was significant, its role is now fast diminishing as the employer of first and last resort. Since liberalization efforts began, the private sector has increasingly taken on the responsibility of creating opportunities for employment and economic growth. In 1997, the private sector, of which agribusiness is a significant segment, accounted for nearly two-thirds of the country's total employment (CAPMAS, 1998).

Egypt's formal private sector is dominated by small and medium-sized agribusiness enterprises. According to the Egyptian Export Promotion Center, over 85 percent of the agribusiness enterprises belong to this category; only about 5 percent of the nation's agribusinesses are vertically integrated and large (that is, employing more than 500 workers). In Egypt, it is these small and medium-sized enterprises that are labor intensive and thus provide vital sources of jobs and income for both men and women.

This part of the study focused on private-sector agribusinesses in three subsectors: cotton, horticulture (fresh and processed), and livestock (dairy). The subsectors were selected based on previous subsector studies conducted by APRP which showed that women were most active in these areas both as wage earners and as entrepreneurs.

The objectives of the study were to examine the nature and extent of women's participation in the three subsectors and to identify areas of activities that customarily engage women in large numbers both as wage earners and as entrepreneurs. The study also focused on identifying those constraints and challenges that women agribusiness entrepreneurs face and that hold them back from expanding their enterprises and contributing to the economy.

During its fieldwork, the team identified several clusters of activities that draw women as wage earners. For example, in ready-made garments industries, women make up more than 85 percent of the labor force, primarily working in the sewing and quality control

departments. In horticulture, women are primary candidates for picking and packing labor. Women provide as much as 90 percent of the harvesting and packing labor in commercial farms and processing plants. For women, employment in the horticulture subsector tends to be seasonal.

Women generally veer toward those industries that operate on mainly one shift—for example, the ready-made garments industry. The number of shifts in manufacturing industries is important, not only for cotton but across most sectors in Egypt. This is because Egypt's labor code prevents women (except those in the tourism and health-related sectors) from working night shifts. This restriction implicitly eliminates women from most manufacturing jobs, which operate two to three shifts a day. Industries operating multiple shifts rotate employees to prevent some from getting stuck on the night shift. As a result, this law weighs heavily against hiring women.

The livestock (dairy) subsector is of vital importance to women, particularly in rural areas, as an employment and income-generating activity. Culturally, dairy falls in the domain of women; consequently, they exercise greater control over the revenues flowing from the sale of dairy products. Income from the sale of dairy products contributes as much as 40 percent to the total household income. Smallholder dairy producers supply 85 percent of the country's raw milk supply. This cross-section, however, is operating with very little assistance. Development assistance targeting smallholder dairy producers could significantly benefit not only women but their entire households. Technical assistance is clearly needed in such areas as hygienic and better milking practices, sanitary storage of milk, feed development and management, yield improvement, and marketing.

On a larger scale, as entrepreneurs, urban women were found to be active in the ready-made garments sector as well as in horticulture, mainly as growers and exporters. Although women-owned and -managed agribusinesses are still a minority in Egypt, such enterprises have the potential of proliferating if given the right assistance and support. For example, women's share of the total number of owners of enterprises increased from 5.5 percent in 1984 to 17.1 percent in 1988, even during pre-reform times (Moghadam, 1998). Now that the political and economic environment is increasingly supportive, efforts need to be made to provide the right kind of assistance so that constraints and challenges which restrict women's involvement in the sector can be mitigated.

Egyptian women have a keen awareness of their potential, but to date they have very little voice and no means of expression capable of reaching the right organizations to lend them the appropriate support quickly. The Egyptian businesswomen interviewed by the study team viewed the first four issues listed below as the principal hurdles keeping them from achieving their goals and contributing further to Egypt's growth and development. The fifth constraint applies to female wage earners in agribusiness.

- Obtaining credit;
- Access to relevant market information;

- Lack of timely extension and training assistance:
- Absence of a dedicated organization or entity providing business support services and outreach to women entrepreneurs: and
- Protective labor laws barring women from night work.

Policy and programmatic recommendations offered include broadening the definition of collateral; providing direct support to smallholders and small and medium agribusiness owners, especially women; establishing a women's businesses support center; and ensuring that training programs and extension services target women.

### **Women's Access to and Use of Land and Water**

This section of the report describes women's access to and use of land and water resources in Egypt. The key constraints that limit women's access to these resources are identified, and policy initiatives and actionable programs to improve women's access are recommended. The study is timely because of the government's new privatization and liberalization policies in agriculture. Particularly relevant to women's access to land are the new tenure law and the encouragement of large investment farms in the New Lands.

Data collected from the available literature and from field trips showed that considerably fewer women than men own land in Egypt, even though women are heavily involved in agricultural production. At the national level, about one-tenth of all landholders are women. Women's interface with water is still not very clear, but there is mounting evidence that women are important actors in irrigation and water management. They are just beginning to access the recently set up water user associations. Women are not perceived as important water users, according to policy documents.

Women in Egypt can access land by purchasing, renting, or inheriting it. They also can benefit from the government's program to distribute reclaimed land to graduates, landless farmers, and other disadvantaged groups. Although there are no legal obstacles preventing women from buying or renting land, traditions and customs limit women's incentives to do so. Furthermore, inheritance rights, as prescribed by Islamic law, give women half the share of land that men receive. The direct consequence is that nationally women hold smaller areas of land, on average, than men. Moreover, it is reported that women who inherit land often give up their inheritance rights to male members of their family (usually brothers or fathers) in exchange for protection from their husbands if marital discord occurs or for support in times of need.

Several important policies and programs are suggested to improve women's access to and use of land. These include:

- Canceling the restriction that only unmarried women graduates can apply to the new land allocation programs;
- Expanding the current ministerial decree that currently applies only to World Food Program areas to include all newly allocated lands;
- Increasing spousal ownership of new land from 20 to 50 percent;
- Increasing the percent of women beneficiaries of new land allocation programs from 10 to 30 percent; and
- Initiating awareness raising, legal counseling, and special credit interventions.

It is suggested that any effort to provide women with new employment and income opportunities will no doubt increase their cash earnings and contribute to their ability to access land, either through purchase or rental.

### **Women Access to Extension, Training, and Farm Technology**

Extension, training, and technology transfer are critically important for success and productivity in agriculture, agribusiness, and trade. Chapter Four addresses issues of access and quality of extension and training provided to women, technologies made available to them, and the effectiveness of these technologies in meeting women's needs, mainly for farm production. (Extension and training for agribusiness are addressed in Chapter Two.)

The chapter provides an overview of agricultural extension and training programs for women in MALR and a number of major projects in various parts of the country, including those provided by the ministry, donor-supported projects, and NGOs. It makes general observations on women's access and types of extension and training provided to women farmers and extension agents. It also highlights the constraints on women's participation in these programs and assesses their effectiveness in increasing women's productivity, income, and employment options.

Findings indicate that although there are no legal restrictions on women's access to extension and training, far fewer women than men receive extension and training. The training provided to women focuses heavily on traditional activities considered suited for women such as sewing, knitting, crochet, and other handicrafts. Productive activities in the areas of food-processing, silkworm and silk thread production, bee keeping, poultry, baking, and dairy production (such as butter and cheese making) have been introduced on a limited scale, with different levels of success. Nonetheless, the traditional focus in extension and training for women is still dominant. Access to gender-disaggregated data is a major constraint to identifying and addressing gender issues in extension, training, and technology transfer. This is a problem identified by all the sectors in this report.

This chapter highlights the constraints to women's participation in extension and training. Some of these constraints relate to the general structure of extension and training services and affect women and men alike. These include the multiplicity of organizations providing these services, lack of coordination among them, missing links between research and extension, and limited financial resources. There are additional constraints that affect women only. The most important of these is the lack of sex-disaggregated data, which makes it difficult to assess the level and pattern of women's participation. Other constraints include the isolation and marginalization of women in development activities from the main stream of extension and training services; the different treatment of women and men based on stereotypes that view women in terms of their reproductive rather than productive roles; high rates of female illiteracy, which limit women's ability to benefit from formal training programs; the absence of gender issues and women's concerns from the policy dialogue about extension and training; limited mobility and time constraints; the limited number of village-based female extension agents; and the home economics background of about half of the female extension agents. The chapter argues that extension in Egypt is a male-dominated institution for an agricultural sector that has been abandoned by males.

The chapter discusses briefly the training of extension agents. It points out that although most of the agriculture extension agents (or engineers), male and female, are graduates of colleges of agriculture, few of them have extension specialty. The majority of the female extension agents specialize in home economics. Most of the agents receive training provided by the MALR, but the quality and effectiveness of this training seems to be ineffective in enhancing their skills and improving the services they provide to women farmers. There is little systematic evaluation of the training and its impact on the trainees.

The chapter points out also that women farmers have limited access to equipment and appropriate technology. Most of the research does not include information on women's access to farm machinery, equipment, and tools. One study that looked at this issue found that less than 2 percent of women farmers own farm equipment and machinery. This is due in part to women's limited access to funds and lack of collateral for credit. Furthermore, women's limited access to extension cuts them off from a vital source of information about new farm technologies.

The extension issues identified in collaboration with the stakeholders include:

- Need for expanding extension and training services in the areas of productive activities to help increase women's productivity and incomes in agriculture;
- Need to increase the number of village-based female extension agents and provide them with training and support services;
- Need to increase the awareness of male and female extension agents and administrators of women's productive activities and their contribution to the agricultural economy; and
- Need to involve women farmers in the design, implementation, and monitoring of extension services.

Three training issues are identified:

- Critical need for skills training to increase the productivity of women employees and to provide marketable skills to unemployed village-based female graduates;
- Need to increase women's participation in training programs and to link their training to the requirements of the new market economy; and
- Need for more rigorous follow-up, monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of training in increasing productivity, income, and employment options for women.

The main issue with regard to access to and use of production technology is the need to increase women's access to appropriate farm technologies that increase their productivity, income, and employment options.

To improve extension and training for women in agriculture, policy and programmatic actions are recommended to be undertaken by MALR and other appropriate ministries, donor agencies, and NGOs. The report proposes the development of a gender-sensitive national extension policy and a supplementary policy on extension and training for women; collection of gender-disaggregated data; provision of gender awareness training for all extension agents and project managers, male and female; and an increase in the number of village-based female extension agents. Programmatic actions proposed include developing gender-appropriate extension material and messages; using existing research findings on women and agriculture in Egypt in the design and implementation of extension programs for women farmers and microentrepreneurs; and developing technical assistance and support services to women farmers. Whenever possible, extension and training programs for women need to be integrated with other services such as literacy, environmental education, and health and family planning. Finally, the APRP gender team recommends that USAID, which has been very supportive of this research on women and agriculture in Egypt, incorporate attention to gender in all of its agriculture and agribusiness projects.

## **Women and Associations**

Participation in associations provides excellent opportunities for access to information, networking, and participation in decision making. During Phase I of the APRP gender assessment, the literature review and field visits indicated that rural women's participation in associations is very limited. This is true of farmers groups, cooperatives, business associations, water user associations, and civil society organizations in general. Various factors account for women's limited participation in associations. For instance, membership in cooperatives is limited to landowners, and since fewer women than men own land, many are ineligible for membership. Likewise, women who participate in associations often have limited opportunities to participate in decision making that affects their productive activities and their general welfare.

Chapter Five focuses on a number of critical issues that limit women's participation in associations and their effectiveness in meeting rural women's needs. It begins with a general discussion of the multiplicity of associations in Egypt, the different terminology used in identifying various associations, and the rules governing them. It indicates that despite women's historic participation in associations in Egypt, and the efforts of these associations to meet women's welfare and educational needs, rural women's participation in associations has been limited both in mixed associations of men and women and in women's NGOs.

Most of the assistance provided to rural women by associations focuses on literacy, health and family planning, and traditional income-generating activities. Few associations provide assistance related to women's productive activities in agriculture and agribusiness, although their number is increasing because of a recognition of women's need for production support services. Examples include the Agricultural Cooperative for Food Security Association founded in 1993 by the Project for Productive Activities for Women Farmers in the New Lands in Com Ombo, and similar organizations being established in Bangar El-Sukkar in the Beheira Governorate. Other examples are the Alexandria Home Economics Association and the Green Lands Women's Association in Bangar El-Sukkar. These associations provide women with training and help them market their products. Women's participation in the newly formed private seed associations and water users associations, however, is still very limited, partly because women do not know about the existence of these associations or their functions.

Constraints on associations and women's participation in them are numerous. They include excessive government control based on Law 32 of 1964, which has recently been modified but still maintains much of the previous controls. There are also financial constraints limiting the ability of associations to serve the needs of rural women. Environmental constraints include drought, desertification, drainage problems, and poor sanitary and health conditions in rural areas. These pose serious difficulties for the associations and constrain women's ability to participate in them. Other constraints limiting women's participation in associations include lack of information, lack of time and limited mobility, mistrust of the associations and what they can do for women, society's attitude toward women, and women's leadership and decision-making skills.

The chapter includes a discussion of the various kinds of cooperatives in rural Egypt and the constraints facing them during the period of transition from public entities to semi-private ones. They are struggling to survive in the era of market reforms and private sector growth.

Several recommendations are made for enhancing women's participation in associations. These include training and capacity building of association leadership and staff; support for production and marketing; and networking among associations.

## CONCLUSION

This report shows that all the agricultural policy reforms undertaken by MALR have important implications for women. Although this has not been an impact study, it is clear

from the research that women need to be taken into account of in the design and implementation of policy reform measures. Many reforms have been undertaken and have affected women in many ways—some positively, others negatively. Many male and female redundant employees in privatized public companies have taken advantage of early retirement benefits. Women have been found to be less likely to invest the money in income-generating microbusinesses; those who do are less likely to succeed because they lack skills and knowledge of business management and marketing. Since the government has drastically reduced its employment of graduates since 1990, there are virtually no new jobs in the shrinking public sector, especially in agriculture. Private business, either formal or self-employment, is the main option available for graduates. The section on agribusiness shows vast potential job creation in agribusiness. Women face constraints there as well, however, because of the bias in the private sector against women's employment and a host of other constraints highlighted in Chapter Two. The team recommends the establishment of business support services for women's businesses, especially micro and small businesses. Land reform measures have important implications for women as owners and renters of land. Only a small proportion of women farmers own land and their landholdings are much smaller than men's. Women are becoming aware of the importance of managing their own land, but the proportion who do so is small. Many female landowners leave the management of the land to male relatives. Raising women's awareness about the importance of land ownership and control could help increase the proportion of women who manage their lands successfully. Furthermore, the report proposes removing the constraints on women's access to new land under the land reclamation and distribution programs of MALR, in order to improve equity, contribute to family welfare, and spur economic growth.

Extension, training, and technology transfer are critical for the success of men and women in agriculture and agribusiness. Fewer women than men, however, participate in agricultural extension and training, a major source of skills development and information about new technologies and loan programs. Moreover, the extension and training that women do receive differ substantially from what men receive. Women's extension and training generally focuses on traditional income-generating activities that contribute minimally to increasing the income and productivity in the agricultural tasks they already do. There has been a substantial increase in non-traditional female extension and training, but issues of quality control and sustainability persist. There is a critical need to increase the number of village-based female extension agents and to enhance the gender awareness of male and female extension agents and project managers in order to improve access and quality of extension and training for women farmers and microentrepreneurs.

Association membership and participation in decision making are important for women farmers and business owners. Supporting women's participation in associations as members and decision makers is critically important, especially in the newly formed rural and business associations.

Addressing gender issues and women's concerns identified in this report will contribute substantially to increasing women's productivity, incomes, and contributions to the agricultural economy. It will ensure that Egypt achieves growth with equity and that it can compete in the global market economy.

To consolidate all the findings of this APRP study, Phases I and II, we present the following policy matrix, Table E-1, which was developed by the Phase I team and included in the Phase I report. The table has been modified to consolidate the policy reform areas and to add recommendations of the Phase II team for policy reforms and programmatic actions to increase women's productivity, incomes, and contributions to the agricultural economy.

Based on this study, the APRP/ RDI Unit has proposed that MARL implement the benchmarks shown in Annex A in the next two years. This is a major step in the right direction. It is not enough, however, to have one benchmark on gender and women's concerns in the agricultural economy. We suggest also that all APRP benchmarks be examined from a gender perspective to ensure that gender issues and women's concerns are addressed in all policy reform benchmarks that APRP proposes for MALR and related ministries.

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**Table E-1: Agricultural Policy Reforms from a Gender Perspective, 1980-1998**

| <b>Policy/Action/Start Date</b>   | <b>Purpose</b>   | <b>Target Population</b>                                      | <b>Status of Constraints on Women</b>  | <b>Policy/Programmatic Actions</b>  |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <u>Land</u><br>- Land reclamation, 1980   | Expand agricultural land areas; increase agricultural products; substitute for government jobs; settle new communities beyond the Nile Valley.                                 | Private-sector landlords, farmers, and new graduates          | Inadequate infrastructure and support services; restricted eligibility to unmarried women; inadequate extension and training services for women.   | Remove restriction on married women's eligibility for new lands' acquisition; equal spousal ownership; 30% of allocated land goes to women. |
| - Improved tenancy law, issued 1992, implemented 1997   | Raise land rent and crop-sharing value; stimulate investment in land; promote cultivation of high-value crops; foster a free market for land transactions.                     | Landlords and tenants   | Female tenants lack information and negotiation skills; women are unaware of their legal rights and lack the skills to manage their land.  | Awareness raising; legal counseling; special credit interventions to allow women to purchase/rent land.                                     |
| <u>Water Resource Policies</u><br>- Improve irrigation-water cost recovery/sharing, 1995  | Foster more efficient water usage.   | Farmers/water users   | Decreases the number of cultivated areas that require heavy water usage.   | Provide information to women regarding water resource policies.   |
| - Improve the irrigation system, 1994   |  | Farmers/water users   | Fosters cost-effective water usage.  | Provide environmental education to women farmers to improve water usage.  |
| - Create water user associations, 1994<br><br>- Reuse drainage  |  | Farmers/water users   | Ensures water supply to end users; ensures principal users are represented in the decision-making process.   | Provide information to women to promote their participation in water user associations.   |
| <u>Cropping/Farming</u><br>- Reform the structure of seed production and marketing, 1987  | Promote greater involvement from the private sector, improve the market environment.   | Agricultural researchers; investors in the agriculture sector | Women may be unable to function in a competitive environment because of a lack of cropping-pattern knowledge and extension information.  | Improve extension and training for small farmers, women and men. Provide direct extension to women regarding cropping and animal husbandry. |
| - Remove procurement quotas for all crops except sugar cane<br>- Eliminate subsidies on all inputs<br>- Eliminate cropping-area restrictions. 1987-1994 | Allow greater choice for farmers; increase productivity and incomes; reduce the burden on the government of controls, release government subsidies for other productive areas. | Agricultural producers and traders; input suppliers           | Yields may stagnate because of high production costs; small farmers; especially women, cannot afford higher prices on inputs. Uncontrolled cropping diversity (small farms); declines in cotton cropping area. | Provide essential support services to female and male farmers.  |

| Policy/Action/Start Date   | Purpose  | Target Population   | Status of Constraints on Women  | Policy/Programmatic Actions  |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen food security through subsidies for essential food, such as bread and oil, 1980</li> </ul>   | Ensure a minimum level of food supply.   | Poor classes (urban/rural)                                | Subsidies are not well targeted.  |  |
| <u>Agribusiness</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support food processing/fiber manufacturing and biotechnology; increase the role of the private sector in agribusiness, 1980</li> </ul>             | Enhance business; reduce food gaps; increase exports   | Poor classes (urban/rural); farmers, growers, and traders | Increases farm income; stabilizes the economy and promotes economic growth; creates loose alleviated land.                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve extension and training based on actual needs.</li> <li>- Broaden definition of collateral.</li> <li>- Establish business support services centers for women entrepreneurs.</li> </ul> |
| <u>Credit and Finance</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improve import and export regulations, 1984</li> </ul>  | Impose restrictions on some imports; liberalize exports  | Agricultural input/output traders                         | Government's low prices for exports are not competitive.  | Provide information to women about marketing and export and import regulations.  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shift from credit based on collateral to credit based on need, 1986</li> <li>- Restructure financial institutions such as PBDAC and its regional banks, 1987</li> </ul> | Convert to a market-driven economy; compete for customers in free markets; improve terms of trade for agriculture and private-sector agricultural investments. | All investors in the agriculture sector                   | Collateral still required for some loans; lack of information; few female credit officers; lack of knowledge about viable microenterprises. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raise gender awareness among loan officers.</li> <li>- Broaden definition of collateral.</li> <li>- Include women in retraining programs for redundant labor.</li> </ul>                      |
| <u>Market and Trade</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote exports, ongoing</li> </ul>   | Promote economic growth through exports  | Producers, businessman, and businesswomen                 | Women are engaged mainly in limited vending activities and lack relevant information and marketing skills.                                  | Provide marketing information and support for women farmers and entrepreneurs.   |

| Policy/Action/Start Date   | Purpose  | Target Population                                 | Status of Constraints on Women   | Policy/Programmatic Actions  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <u>Technology Transfer</u><br>- Use modern technology in farming; expand the use of food technology, ongoing | Increase the number of products and improve product quality; increase marketing, exports, and farm income. | Farmers, growers, exporters, and extension agents | Women have limited access to new technology; majority of extension workers are male; women lack information and marketing skills.        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote appropriate technologies for farm women.</li> <li>- Enhance women's participation in new agricultural technology transfer and promotion programs.</li> <li>- Improve the quality of food processing technologies provided to rural women.</li> </ul>  |
| <u>Associations (ongoing)</u>  | Promote sector participation through associations; encourage formation of rural associations               | Farmers, traders, entrepreneurs                   | Women's access to associations in general is limited because of limited time, limited mobility, and lack of information on associations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage women's participation in newly founded rural associations.</li> <li>- Encourage women to form new associations and join established ones.</li> <li>- Provide capacity building to women's associations.</li> <li>- Promote linkages among stronger ties among associations to improve coordination and pool resources.</li> </ul> |

## CHAPTER ONE WOMEN AND PRIVATIZATION

The Government of Egypt (GOE) has embarked on an aggressive liberalization and privatization program to modernize its economy. Egypt is moving from a centrally planned, public sector-dominated economy toward a competitive, market-based one in which the private sector plays the leading role.

In many developing and transitional economies, economic reform programs create the potential for women to contribute to economic growth, increase income levels, and create jobs. One of Egypt's goals needs to be helping women take advantages of existing opportunities, especially in new and non-traditional jobs and sectors, and utilize their capabilities as entrepreneurs and business owners.

The Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program (ERSAP) has had a major impact on women and men. The main issue has been the loss of jobs among redundant labor in privatized companies and the need to create jobs for displaced workers. Numerous employment opportunities exist in the private sector for individuals with the right kind of skills. Other sources of employment and income are self-employment and microenterprise development. Both require extensive training and retraining.

The agriculture sector, including agribusiness, makes up approximately 50 to 60 percent of the workforce in Egypt. It is expected that liberalization and privatization will lead to substantial growth in employment in the long term. This will help compensate for the loss of jobs in the initial stages because privatized enterprises will need to reduce their staffs so that they can increase efficiency and attract private investors. But as privatized firms are rehabilitated, they will require many more jobs than those jobs that have been lost. Hence, the long-term effects of privatization will be an overall growth in employment and worker productivity. For instance, initial results from a Reform, Design and Implementation (RDI) Unit study of rice milling indicates that, with liberalization of the rice milling sector, overall employment seems to have risen 25 percent since the early 1990s, in spite of job losses in the public sector. In addition, the rapid growth of the private sector in Egypt is expected to increase employment opportunities for women, although it is not yet known precisely what types of job opportunities will be created. Some of these issues are explored at length in Chapter Two.

### Objectives

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the general issues relating to privatization and its impact on women in Egypt. The emphasis here will be on analysis of existing data and policy recommendations for the future, not an ex post facto assessment of privatization. Specifically, the objectives of this part of the study were to:

- Conduct a general analysis of gender issues relating to privatization and gender in Egypt in light of existing data;
- Make policy recommendations (especially those related to the labor law and tax holiday incentives to be given to small-scale businesses, many of which have been formed by redundant labor) to increase employment levels in general and to enhance women's employment in a market economy;
- Make specific recommendations for activities, including training and technical assistance, to prepare institutions and the women working in them for the transition from public to private sector companies (or other possibilities, including self-employment); and
- Propose actions that may be taken by GOE financial institutions, associations, and private business to increase the rate of new businesses formed by women.

## **Methodology**

The methodology used in this study included the following:

- Collecting data from the Ministry of Public Enterprise and its affiliated technical office, the Public Enterprise Office, on the current status of gender and privatization for public enterprises in general and specifically for those related to the agriculture and agribusiness sectors;
- Meeting with officials in the Public Enterprise Office and public enterprise companies in different stages of privatization to investigate women's views on the early retirement schemes adopted by these companies; and
- Collecting data and conducting visits and interviews at the Principal Bank for Development and Agricultural Credit (PBDAC) and the Social Fund for Development, which was formed in 1992 to provide technical and financial assistance for the redundant labor expected from the privatization and liberalization measures adopted by the government.

## **IMPORTANCE OF PRIVATIZATION FOR THE EGYPTIAN ECONOMY**

### **Economic Reform in Egypt**

In 1992, the Egyptian government started a major economic and restructuring program with the assistance of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It adopted policies aimed at the transformation of the economy from a centrally planned model to a decentralized, market-based, liberalized one. One important measure undertaken by the

government to implement ERSAP was the initiation of a restructuring and privatization program of 314 public enterprises.

The government's privatization strategy has been to use all methods of privatization that promote and accomplish an efficient, transparent, and competitive transfer of government-owned assets to the private sector. Since its start, the privatization program has incorporated three different activities: (1) the transfer of ownership, (2) increase in competitiveness within the market, and (3) the impact of this competitiveness in changing the business order. The government's step-by-step approach has been to implement the privatization program while carefully monitoring its political acceptability, social implications, and financial risk. This strategy has yielded benefits that were not clearly envisioned during the initial stages of privatization.

The social impact of the privatization program has been one of GOE's major concerns. The government has always been alert about the social and economic impact of privatization on the public regarding employment and income levels. The government's social protection policy stated that the money saved from the automatic cut-off of credit and investments in public sector firms would be used to expand government social services. The effective use of proceeds from the privatization of public sector companies, through the use of one-third of the proceeds to an early retirement program, has maintained social stability and allowed Egypt to undertake privatization smoothly and peacefully. Another one-third of the proceeds was used for restructuring in firms that had a chance of survival to make them more attractive to private investors.

### **WHY GENDER MATTERS IN PRIVATIZATION**

Experience in countries that have undergone economic restructuring indicates that women have been more adversely affected by economic reforms than men. A major assumption of this study is that the same would occur in Egypt. At the same time, in many countries, the growth of the private sector, especially in manufacturing and export businesses, has led to a greater demand for—and an increase in—female employment. Experience indicates also that as privatized public sector firms achieve greater efficiency and productivity, they experience an increased demand for labor and are able to hire more workers at all skill levels. In many countries, women have benefited from this shift in employment and management.

In Egypt today, laws and regulations protect women and accord them equal rights. In practice, however, habits and traditions often compromise these rights. The Egyptian government and public firms have been the main employers of women in Egypt for decades. Many of these women do not have well-defined jobs. Hence, restructuring and privatization have been expected to result in a significant initial loss of public sector jobs among women. Because women are traditionally seen as supplementary wage earners (despite research findings indicating that most women work because of need), it has been expected that a greater percentage of women would lose jobs than men. In addition, the same attitudes that led to a loss of jobs for women in the public sector make it hard for them to obtain jobs in the private sector.

Economic forces often have an impact on Egyptian women's employment. Because the state is the major employer of women, when its role decreases under a privatized market economy, women risk losing jobs and benefits. Women are already the majority of the unemployed in Egypt. Their chances of entry into the private sector are less than men's because of attitudes discussed throughout this report. It often is remarked that the public sector is more friendly to women employees than the private sector. This statement makes one think hard and pause to contemplate the impact of privatization on women and their families in terms of employment, gain or loss of income, and the availability of public services such as education. This report is mainly concerned with employment and incomes.

During the Agricultural Policy Reform Program (APRP) Phase I study in 1998, the research team noted conflicting ideas among various Egyptian researchers and policy makers about the actual and potential impact of agricultural policy reforms generally and on women in particular. The research report cited writers who argued that greater liberalization and privatization would increase opportunities for women to act as traders, factory and farm workers, entrepreneurs, investors, and farm operators, while others suggested that these same liberalization policies may also place greater hardships on women and their families (El-Sanabary et al., 1999).

The report added that privatization of public enterprises affects mainly women in the formal agricultural sector, which includes the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR) and its associated institutions, such as PBDAC and the regional banks, the textile and garment industries, and many other public sector companies. This target population is very important because MALR employs thousands of women in its various branches, research institutes, and financial institutions. Restructuring these institutions is usually associated with vast numbers of redundant labor, a large proportion of which consists of women. Therefore, it is especially important to assess what happens to women employees in these institutions as a result of privatization and institutional restructuring.

To ensure that women have equal opportunities for success in agriculture as farmers, business managers and owners, employees, and entrepreneurs, the government needs to undertake some basic reforms that will improve women's employment, incomes, and participation in the agricultural economy.

## **THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN THE WORK FORCE**

### **Women in the Economy**

To figure out the effect of privatization on women employment, a quick review of the Egyptian labor force market before and after 1992 is necessary. This section focuses on the effect of privatization on female employment.

According to the Labor Force Sample Survey (LFSS) in 1989, the percentage of economically active female labor was 28.8 percent of the total labor force; in 1995, it

declined 22.5 percent. As Table 1 shows, Egyptian women workers are mainly concentrated in two sectors—the agriculture and services sectors. The 1995 LFSS reveals the overall decline in the female percentage of the economically active population in all industries except the agriculture and services sectors. There is a significant decline in women's participation in the manufacturing sector (-7.4 percent from 1984 to 1992). That decline may be due to women's lack of education and inferior status in the labor market, which is reinforced by limited access to technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial training. For these reasons, women's wages are far below men's in the same industrial branches.

**Table 1: Economically Active Population by Industry and Percent Female**

| Industry   | Percent Female (1989) | Percent Female (1995) |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Agriculture, hunting, and fishing                      | 41.1                  | 41.9                  |
| Mining and quarrying                                   | 3.2                   | 0.1                   |
| Manufacturing  | 17.6                  | 8.1                   |
| Electricity, gas, and water                            | 11.2                  | 0.5                   |
| Construction   | 1.7                   | 0.5                   |
| Restaurants and hotels                                 | 17.7                  | 7.2                   |
| Transportation, storage, and communications            | 5.9                   | 1.5                   |
| Finance, insurance, real estate, and business services | 18.1                  | 1.5                   |
| Community, social, and personal services               | 26.1                  | 38.8                  |
| Others   | —                     | —                     |
| Total economically active population                   | 28.8                  | 22.5                  |

Source: Labor Force Sample Survey statistics for the years 1989 and 1995.

A study of Egyptian women's participation in the Egyptian economy (Coopers & Lybrand, 1995) noted a disturbing trend in the Egyptian labor market is growing unemployment. Several Egyptian economists have emphasized the seriousness of this problem (Assaad, 1996; 1997). Rising unemployment can be traced to several factors. On the supply side, an increasing percentage of the working age population is not properly trained for the types of work required in a liberalized economy. On the demand side, government services and public enterprises are expected to play a limited role in absorbing labor. Since the adoption of ERSAP, public enterprises have adopted highly restrictive policies on hiring new labor, while the government no longer honors its previous commitment to hire all university and high school graduates.

### Women in Holding Companies

To facilitate the privatization process taking place in Egypt, the Egyptian government established holding companies in 1994 to replace public sector organizations (authorities). The subsidiaries of these holding companies replace the companies supervised by those organizations. Sixteen holding companies were formed. Each is composed of a number of affiliates that form their own portfolios. (Holding companies include companies for

pharmaceuticals and chemicals, spinning and weaving and cotton, food industries, electricity, construction, tourism and cinema, maritime, inland transportation, mills, metallurgic, engineering industries and agricultural development.)

- The percentage of women employed by holding companies varies from a high of 37 percent in pharmaceuticals and chemical industries to a low of 3 percent in the metallurgy industry.
- For the agriculture and agribusiness holding companies (a total of six holding companies) the percentage of women varies from a high of 17 percent in the holding company for spinning and weaving ready made garments and to a low of 10.5 in the holding company for food industries.
- Women make up 12 percent of the total work force for the 16 holding companies.
- Sixty-three percent of women workers in the 16 holding companies are in the six agriculture and agribusiness holding companies.
- Forty-two percent of women workers in the 16 holding companies are in three holding companies: spinning and weaving, cotton and international trade, and textile manufacturing.
- Women's share of employment in the public enterprise sector decreased from 13 percent to 8.3 percent while it remained unchanged in the private sector at the level of 19.7 percent.

### **The Early Retirement Program**

The government has used early retirement packages as an incentive to reduce overcrowding in public sector firms and to deal with redundant labor (see Table 2 for the results in selected holding companies). Implementing the early retirement program starts in privatized public enterprises affiliated with the holding companies according to the priorities and regulations set by every holding company. The regulations state the following:

- Early retirement is optional for employees wanting to end their service before the legal retirement age (60 years) and is done with the full cooperation of the holding companies and their affiliates, the Egyptian labor syndicate union, and the employee.
- The age groups targeted by this program are males ages 50 to 58 years and females 45 to 58. The employee must have spent no less than 20 years on duty in the company or any other entity that insured the employee.

- The compensation value is to be specified, when leaving for the early retirement, with a maximum amount of LE35,000, including the insurance compensation of the 10 months bonus for the end of service at the age of 60, and a minimum of LE12,000 to LE15,000. The exact compensation value is to be decided according to the service period, degree, job, or the difference between the specified pension and the last salary given. The bonus is to be issued in guidance with the matrix of the financial levels built on the basis of the service period or the employment level.
- The age groups that are younger or older than the previously specified age, wanting to leave the service may be considered by the syndicate organization, the holding companies, and its affiliated companies.
- The holding company determines the period during which applications for early retirement rights are submitted. However, the right to exercise that benefit drops after a certain specified period.

**Table 2: Actual and Expected Early Retirement of the Labor Force in Selected Holding Companies**  
(as of December 31, 1998)

| Name of Company  | Employment (June 30, 1998) |    |        |    |        | Early Retirement Data (June 30, 1998) |     |          |    |        | Expected Early Retirement (Dec. 31, 1998) |    |          |    |        |
|--|----------------------------|----|--------|----|--------|---------------------------------------|-----|----------|----|--------|---|----|----------|----|--------|
|  | Male                       | %  | Female | %  | Total  | Above 50                              | %   | Under 50 | %  | Total  | Above 50                                  | %  | Under 50 | %  | Total  |
| Holding Company for Weaving Textiles and Ready-Made Garments | 66,055                     | 83 | 13,543 | 17 | 79,598 | 1,508                                 | 100 | 1        | 0  | 1,509  | 3265                                      | 91 | 337      | 9  | 3,602  |
| Holding Company for Textiles and Trade                       | 68,067                     | 85 | 11,810 | 15 | 79,877 | 6,647                                 | 61  | 4,249    | 39 | 10,896 | 10104                                     | 78 | 2,850    | 22 | 12,954 |
| Holding Company for Cotton and Foreign Trade                 | 32,273                     | 85 | 5,671  | 15 | 37,944 | 4,325                                 | 86  | 723      | 14 | 5,048  | 6174                                      | 60 | 4,069    | 40 | 10,243 |
| Holding Company for Food Industries                          | 56,537                     | 89 | 6,679  | 11 | 63,216 | 3,707                                 | 66  | 1,948    | 34 | 5,655  | 1409                                      | 43 | 1,893    | 57 | 3,302  |
| Holding Company for Mills and Grinding                       | 38,663                     | 85 | 6,561  | 15 | 45,224 | 576                                   | 83  | 116      | 17 | 692    | 2048                                      | 95 | 119      | 5  | 2,167  |
| Holding Company for Agricultural Development                 | 10,720                     | 84 | 2,002  | 16 | 12,722 | 1,751                                 | 46  | 2,017    | 54 | 3,768  | 136                                       | 32 | 293      | 68 | 429    |

### *Women and Early Retirement*

Since the privatization of public sector companies began, women employees seem to have been more eager to take advantage of early retirement incentives than men. The fact that the eligibility age for the early retirement for women is lower than men's, 45 instead of 50 years, encourages women to do so. Given the prevailing social climate and attitudes towards women, this is an easy way to push women out of the labor market. It is argued that women

prefer to retire early rather than work under new private sector management. During interviews with the study team, some of women interviewed stated their reluctance to work in the private sector because they believed that they would have to work longer hours under more difficult conditions. Furthermore, working women in Egypt face numerous hardships getting to and from work and may see early retirement as a way of avoiding these hardships. Sometimes, women take the retirement incentive because the family needs the money for a major expense such as a son's or daughter's marriage. They are often unaware of the long-term implications of their early retirement if they do not invest the money in a microenterprise.

It is not known what women usually do with their retirement money—whether they spend it on necessary family items, save it, or invest it by purchasing assets or starting a business. We found no research on the subject, but we were told that women are more likely to spend this money on a major purchase or family event, such as a wedding, than to invest it in a new business. Women need information, training, and support to enable them to invest the money wisely.

Our interviews with various stakeholders indicated that retired employees from privatized public companies often do not know what options are available to them during this transition in their careers. They need retraining to acquire the skills needed by private sector companies. This applies mostly to employees who work in industries such as spinning and weaving, ready-made garments, food processing, and other industries where the public sector has been involved for decades and the private sector is still entering the business.

Some initial findings regarding the early retirement program from the start of the program to December 31, 1998, reflects the direct impact of the privatization program. Our analysis shows the following:

- Out of the 606,158 employees currently working in the 16 holding company affiliates, 53,385 (almost 9 percent) were expected to benefit from the early retirement program through December 31, 1998.
- Of these 53,385 employees, 26,795 employees (50 percent) are in the textile industry where women predominate. We were unable, however, to find information about early retirement among women in this industry, since the companies do not keep sex-disaggregated data.
- Since the government began allowing private spinners to operate in 1995, private spinners have been increasing in number and are producing to fulfill demand in both local and export markets.
- Generally, it is expected that these retirees would find new jobs in growing private sector companies, especially in spinning and ready-made garments. But it is likely that this would apply mostly to men, since women view work in the private sector as hard, with long working hours. This fear hinders their involvement in the private sector.

- Awareness is needed for both men and women about employment or entrepreneurial opportunities in the private sector after retirement from public sector jobs. At the same time, appropriate training is needed, according to market requirements.
- Early retired and redundant women in public sector holding companies and privatized companies need to collaborate to form business units.
- There are indications that many women who receive early retirement benefits and use them to start their own businesses fail because they are unable to market their products.

### **Women in Some Privatized Companies**

The impact of privatization on women's employment can be traced by examining its decline during the pre-privatization phase. This phase is characterized by the early retirement program and the decline in new employment in government positions.

Since the majority of employed women in the formal economy work for the government in ministries or public enterprise, privatization is expected to result in greater reduction of women public sector workers as a result of redundancy. The example of the PBDAC illustrates this impact. The POWER study (Coopers & Lybrand, 1995), as quoted in the APRP Phase I report, noted that the percentage of women who took early retirement was larger than men during the early stages of the privatization of the PBDAC. More recent data received by this team indicated that although the fewer women took advantage of early retirement than men, their percentage to women employees is much higher. This means that the gender profile of employees in PBDAC is becoming more skewed in favor of men.

PBDAC is a good example of a company undergoing staff reduction and voluntary separation programs. It is an organization that has undergone major changes in its objectives, organization, and operations in the process of privatization. Two significant changes were the termination of its agricultural supply activities and the pending sale or lease of much of its non-banking physical plant, warehouse, and storage facilities. This divestiture process has created a severe redundancy of employees, which has forced the bank to address general overstaffing problems and to institute manpower planning and performance-based compensation systems.

At the beginning of 1993, the entire PBDAC system had 32,000 employees. Between 1993 and 1995, the bank developed a staff reduction plan to reduce the number of employees by 9,000 by 1995. That reduction was to take place mainly through voluntary separation plans, while other reductions (which were estimated to reduce an extra 2,900 employees) were to take place through normal attrition and contract termination (see Table 3).

**Table 3: PBDAC Planned Staff Reduction, 1993-95**

| <b>Category</b>   | <b>1992-93</b> | <b>1993-94</b> | <b>1994-95</b> | <b>Total</b>  |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Normal attrition  | 550            | 500            | 550            | 1,600         |
| Voluntary separation  | 1,500          | 4,500          | 3,000          | 9,000         |
| Terminated temporary contracts or<br>seconded to other agencies | 550            | 400            | 350            | 1,300         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>2,600</b>   | <b>5,400</b>   | <b>3,850</b>   | <b>11,900</b> |

Source: PBDAC, Plan for Personnel Reduction 1993-95

Although the target number of 9,000 was a modest goal, the company had to increase the attractiveness of separation and develop incentives to achieve its goal. The first of these incentives was an offer to provide employees grants for training in a qualified training programs of their choice. As a further incentive, the bank introduced and publicized a lending program for those retirees who wish to establish new businesses or expand their existing business activities.

According to research done in 1995 using data provided by PBDAC, the majority of those who accepted early retirement packages were women, who may have ended up using the funds for consumer purposes, such as to pay for a marriage or to buy a major household item. The information in the text box provides clues to the potential ramifications of such behavior. More recent data may help identify more specific effects on women who have accepted the early retirement packages from PBDAC.

In 1995, the APRP gender assessment team leader participated in a study on the role of women in the economy and reform for the Economic Growth Center at USAID/Washington. There, an initial assessment was made of the potential ramifications of restructuring PBDAC. Based on interviews and available literature, the study concluded that women are more disproportionately affected by restructuring than are men, as shown by the information in the text box (Coopers & Lybrand, 1995).

### The PBDAC Plan for Personnel Reduction

The privatization of more than 300 public manufacturing enterprises by the Government of Egypt over the next few years will result in significant labor redundancy in these firms. For the moment, the Egyptian government has guaranteed employment to all privatized employees for a period ranging from three to five years. It is expected that the firms involved will initiate various personnel reduction plans. Although women constitute no more than 8 percent of employees in these firms, early evidence, such as that provided by PBDAC, suggests that they may be disproportionately affected by the process of voluntary personnel reduction.

For several years, USAID has supported the conversion of PBDAC from a bank concentrating on agricultural input supply and output marketing to a true commercial bank. By 1992, this conversion had been largely accomplished. Of the nearly 9,000 redundant employees, 6,000 were expected to leave the organization voluntarily. A consultant's report indicated that "voluntary separation of as many as 12,000 or more employees could occur without adverse impacts on the Bank's operations" (Gregory, 1993a, p. 3). The report goes on to say that, "Over 50 percent of the Bank's work force has been determined to be redundant, and therefore as contributing nothing to the productivity of the enterprise" (Ibid., p. 7).

Beginning in early 1993, PBDAC offered a separation allowance of 120 months of base pay, actually only about one-third of total pay because of numerous supplements. The separation allowance thus represents about 3.3 years of future pay. Several other sweeteners were offered, including grants for training and a lending program for starting new businesses.

Statistics on voluntary retirement obtained from PBDAC indicate that women and men are not equally affected by this program. Overall, women, who represented 10.5 percent of bank employment at the end of 1992, were nearly twice as likely to accept early retirement than men. Thus, over the two-year period 1992-1994, some 11.7 percent of female employees, but only 6.4 percent of males, left the bank.

The highest proportion of female bank employees was located at PBDAC headquarters in Cairo and at the bank's two large branches in Alexandria and Cairo. Among the 3,470 urban-based employees, of whom 29.3 percent were women, women were 2.6 times as likely as men to leave the bank. Thus, of this urban contingent, 14.3 percent of women, compared with only 5.6 percent of men, opted out of bank employment between December 1992 and December 1994. In absolute numbers, in fact, women slightly outnumbered men, 145 to 138 (51 percent to 49 percent), in retiring voluntarily from the large urban PBDAC branches.

If PBDAC reaches its minimal goal of 6,000 voluntary retirees over the next few years in the same proportion as during the past two years, it is likely that some 1,065 of these will be women, equal to 31.5 percent of their total number in 1992. In comparison, some 4,935 men will retire voluntarily, equal to 17.1 percent of their number at the beginning of the campaign.

If this scenario is repeated during the privatization of public enterprises, and civil service employment remains stalled, there will be a substantial net reduction in female employment in the formal economy over the medium term. Moreover, as discussed in further detail in this report, women's chances of reemployment in the formal private sector are considerably fewer than those of men. Hence, an even larger drop in the female participation rate can be expected over time.

Source: Coopers & Lybrand, "Participation of Women in the Economy and Reform: Egypt Country Assessment," draft report, June 1995.

## Women in the Growing Private Sector

As anticipated, women's employment in the private sector companies is growing, but not to the extent that makes up for the loss of jobs in the public sector. Women employed by the private sector are either semi- or unskilled workers on assembly and packing lines, jobs that are low paying and low status (see Chapter Two). The data on women in agribusiness indicate that modern agribusinesses are providing new employment opportunities for women and men. Women, however, tend to be concentrated in low-skill, low-status, and low-paying jobs. At the same time, young women with technological skills can easily find jobs in the modern private sector, mostly for office work. But their number is miniscule.

## CONSTRAINTS ON WOMEN

### Constraints in the Private Sector

New male entrants are gradually making the adjustment to a private sector-led economy. Young female entrants are not making the adjustments, however, and are increasingly joining the ranks of the unemployed.

#### *Attitudes toward Women*

Employers always fear the dual role and responsibilities that working women have. Married women in particular are perceived to be less reliable and committed employees because of their "natural preoccupation" with family responsibilities. A CAPMAS study states "there seems to be implicit discrimination against female employment, especially in the private sector, mainly because of women's work discontinuity due to child bearing and rearing." Both male and female employers cite the riskiness of hiring women employees.

Even young women without family or household responsibilities are considered less stable and more costly than their male counterparts because they are expected to get married and have children. If the woman does not leave a job after she marries and starts a family, employers believe she will become more costly (because of maternity benefits and absenteeism) and less productive (because of added responsibilities). Thus, for many employers, a woman has to be a much stronger candidate than a man to warrant the investment and risk of hiring and training her. Because private sector employers are reluctant to hire women, women are losing ground in the Egyptian labor market. Even in banking, a traditionally strong sector for female participation, there has been in recent years a worrisome decline in the number of women in entry-level positions. It is now common for banks in Egypt to advertise positions as "males only."

Perceptions also play a role in women's ability to advance in companies. A survey conducted by CAPMAS in 1998 indicated that 9 percent of women surveyed in urban areas and 11 percent in rural areas referred to different kinds of disparity between men and women in

work. The most significant disparity in urban areas was in the type of work given to women. Women may not be considered for promotion because male employees do not feel comfortable being led by a woman. Women may also be bypassed because promotions may require a large commitment of time, relocation, or frequent travel. Because practices and environments differ between the private sector (where vast disparities exist in human resource systems) and government agencies (where personnel practices are based on seniority within a strict hierarchical structure), women cannot be assured of equal access to advancement opportunities.

### *Constraints on Women's Starting and Managing a Business*

*Family structure and link to family.* There is a high correlation between a woman's labor force status and the status of other members of her household. Women with male public sector workers in the household are more likely to be in the public sector, and those with male private sector workers in the household are more likely to be observed in the private sector. The presence of a family business owned by the father appears to be positively correlated with self-employment for males.

Resistance to women's work outside the home is often diminished in the face of economic necessity. Increasing poverty in rural areas is leading to greater female participation in the rural economy, either as wage laborers or self-employed microentrepreneurs.

*Access to credit.* Most male and female entrepreneurs of small-scale businesses do not use formal banking channels to serve their financial needs. Women's access to formal sources of credit may be further constrained because most people believe that the small-scale projects initiated by women at home are activities that require and deserve no financial assistance. Moreover, they believe that women use these loans for consumption purposes. Women face other constraints when applying for financial assistance; these are discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

*Lack of information about lending programs.* One of the most critical constraints is lack of information among women about lending programs. This is especially true of farm women who need small amounts of money to finance micro-projects (for example, dairy products, rugs, and traditional bread).

Lack of collateral is also a problem. Women's access to credit is much more limited than men's, mainly because many women do not own land or other property that they can use as collateral, which is required by most formal lending programs. (See Chapter Two for more details on this issue).

*Lack of experience when dealing with official financial institutions.* Loan conditions are heavily biased toward male-headed households. In the case of agriculture, the most common loans to those who can provide collateral are input loans to finance crop production.

*Organizational support.* Currently, few organizations can provide Egyptian women the support and services they need to pursue their economic activities. Women's organizations, labor unions, and business and professional associations fail to contribute to enhancing the participation of women as either an employee or a business stakeholder. This is mainly because of the lack of adequate funding and the technical ability among these organizations to undertake the research to design and implement programs that target women. On the other hand, many Egyptian women do not see the need to take advantage of such support and services. As such, Egyptian women need to learn about business opportunities and how to take advantage of them.

*Women's limited participation in associations.* Rural women's participation in associations is very limited. Relevant associations include cooperatives, water user associations, and farmers groups of various kinds. Various reasons account for women's limited participation in associations. For instance, fewer women own land than men, and only landowners can participate in cooperatives. Women's limited participation means they have little say in decision making. (See Chapter Five for more detailed information.)

## **PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE CONSTRAINTS**

### **Social Safety Net: The Social Fund for Development**

The Social Fund for Development (SFD) is an autonomous governmental agency working under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister. It was formed to facilitate the implementation of the Government of Egypt's economic reform program and to mitigate the adverse effects of structural adjustments on low-income population groups.

One of the main objectives of SFD is to increase employment opportunities for workers displaced as a result of public enterprise privatization and restructuring and for female-headed households. One of SFD's selection criteria is that its projects should guarantee women's participation.

Through one of its projects, the Small Enterprise Development Program, the SFD promotes employment and income-generating opportunities in the micro and small enterprise sector. It provides credit, technical assistance, training, and know-how to potential entrepreneurs, especially women and female employees wishing to leave their public enterprise jobs under the privatization program.

Moreover, the SFD established a gender unit in January 1995 as part of the community development program so that women's issues and concerns are addressed in all the SFD programs and projects. In recent years, the emphasis of the gender unit has shifted from a specific women in development approach to mainstreaming of gender in all the SFD programs and projects. This is a healthy shift that has helped increase women's participation in most of the SFD lending and training programs.

The SFD cooperates with the Ministry of Public Enterprises in terms of:

- Organizing business awareness programs so that redundant labor in holding companies can learn about the market conditions and how to start new small businesses (these programs are designed and implemented by the SFD at the request of the holding company); and
- Assisting redundant labor to undertake feasibility studies for their new projects, as well as extending loans to these projects.

In 1998, the total donor funds channeled to public holding companies by the SFD in Phase II of the support program amounted to LE188 million and constituted 14 percent of total funds channeled to governorates, ministries, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and banks.

## POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy Recommendations

- Encourage the government to undertake quick steps towards liberalizing the textile sector and opening it up for international trade (this would open up employment opportunities for the many women who work in this sector);
- Revise privileges granted by the labor law to women in order to encourage the private sector to hire more women;
- Broaden SFD's scope of cooperation with holding companies to provide training and business orientation programs as well as to provide loans to retired workers, especially women;
- Encourage redundant women to form business units with the help of holding companies;
- Organize or finance training programs for women to be prepared for the participation in new businesses, especially from the managerial perspective;
- Educate or train redundant labor who started their own businesses how to market their products;
- Encourage NGOs to form proper institutional services for women for child care assistance and other household duties; and
- Create opportunities for women in new and non-traditional jobs and sectors;

- Establish tax holiday incentives for new businesses formed by redundant labor, whether they are granted loans from the social fund or not (projects financed by SFD are granted tax exemptions for 15 years); and
- Develop financial services that are appropriate for women's business needs and women's improved access to these services.

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## CHAPTER TWO AGRIBUSINESS AND WOMEN

Since economic policy reforms began in 1991, Egypt has made impressive improvements in its transition to a private sector-oriented, free-market economy. The reform efforts are even more striking in the agriculture sector—agriculture is now the most privatized sector of the Egyptian economy (Coopers & Lybrand, 1995). Currently, reform efforts are continuing to further improve the sector's performance and contribution to the country's employment and economic growth.

One of the sectors experiencing positive policy changes is the agribusiness sector. Agribusiness is defined in this report as those enterprises, regardless of size and location, that add value to agricultural commodities in the transformation process. Agribusiness activities include processing, storage, transportation, pricing, promotion, and distribution. As such, growth in agribusiness and related activities promises vast employment and income-earning opportunities for both men and women. Women, however, have more of a stake in the growth of agribusiness given their important role in agriculture and agricultural-related activities.

As discussed in greater depth in the following sections, women's participation in the sector is high and research suggests that there is an increasing involvement of women in agribusiness. Previous studies, however, were not clear on the industries that overwhelmingly drew women as participants. Research also was not clear on why women chose particular subsectors and what constraints they faced participating in the sector. This chapter identifies those industries that customarily engage women in large numbers and identifies those constraints and challenges that women face in agribusiness.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this part of the study were to carry out an analytical effort that systematically uncovered relevant policy and operational issues that women employees and entrepreneurs face in agribusiness. In addition, the study also sought to:

- Identify and describe those subsectors and industries that customarily engage large numbers of women, and those that can add new employment and provide opportunities to expand income-generating sources for women;
- Determine the nature and extent of women's participation in agribusiness, both as wage earners and entrepreneurs;
- Identify policy constraints and obstacles faced by female employees and entrepreneurs in women-dominated agribusiness activities;

- Suggest policy options and programmatic interventions to remove the constraints on women's participation in agribusiness so that their participation and income from agribusiness can increase more.

## METHODOLOGY

Given the breadth and complexity of the study, the team applied a number of methods and accessed numerous sources of data. The gender study team collaborated with the APRP team in identifying relevant subsectors and industries that draw women in large numbers, both as employees and entrepreneurs. Reports on women in the Egyptian economy and sector-specific information were collected from various sources to get the essential grounding on women and agribusiness in Egypt. (A list of documents consulted in the course of this assessment is included in the bibliography.)

The team also conducted interviews, went on field and site visits, and held focus group discussions. Interviews were held with key officials from the MALR, PBDAC, multilateral donors (U.N. Development Program, Food and Agriculture Organization, and International Fund for Agricultural Development), and other bilateral agencies (Canadian International Development Agency and Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit [GTZ]).

The study team conducted a series of extensive site visits and in-depth interviews with industry participants, leaders, and representatives. In addition to meetings with relevant USAID project team directors from Agriculture-Led Export Business (ALEB), Agricultural Technology Utilization and Transfer (ATUT), Expolink, and APRP, the team interviewed industry representatives from the Horticultural Export Improvement Association (HEIA), Egyptian Export Promotion Center (EEPC), Egyptian Export Association (EEA), and Dairy Industry Development Association (DIDA). In-depth interviews were conducted with male and female business executives, owners, market practitioners, and key informants in the private sector involved in the cotton, horticulture, and dairy subsectors. Focus group discussions were also held with employees, as well as women business owners and managers, to determine the level of female participation, contributions, and constraints.

The team made field trips and site visits to several targeted agribusinesses in the Delta, Upper Egypt, and the New Lands to determine the current level of participation of women in the targeted agribusiness sectors.

Lastly, a stakeholders' workshop was held to present the issues identified by the team for review by a large group of interested and concerned men and women from the public and private sector. Workshop participants worked on the policy issues relating to women and agribusiness to produce a shared vision for improvement and change. The workshop was attended by more than 100 women and men from the public and private sectors.

## AGRIBUSINESS IN EGYPT

Agriculture and agribusiness in Egypt account for approximately 40 percent of the gross domestic product, 22 percent of exports, and 50 percent of total employment (USAID, 1996). Together, the nation's agriculture and agribusiness affect more people than any other sector in the Egyptian economy.

Egypt's agribusiness sector displays great diversity, with differentiation along public-private, large-small, and urban-rural lines. An analysis of the structure of the sector helps one in understanding the range and variety of enterprises in the agribusiness sector since market liberalization efforts began in 1991.

### Public Sector Agribusiness

Before liberalization and economic reform, the public sector played a large role in the agricultural industry in Egypt, employing thousands of people (exact data were not available). The public sector assured employment to a large percentage of its labor force through its various processing enterprises (mills, refineries, and storage). State-owned enterprises were expected to operate profitably as business entities while, at the same time, they had to serve as practical channels of employment. Consequently, many of the public enterprises were large and some continue to be so, as shown in Table 4.

In cotton, for example, the government continues to be dominant, holding almost 60 percent of the country's textile production capacity and employing approximately 200,000 people throughout its various holding companies. Together, the holding companies control a large segment of the country's cotton ginning, trading, spinning, and weaving capacity. Another example is the wheat subsector, where 126 public mills continue to provide about 50 percent of the country's milling capacity. In rice, only 9 percent of the total milling capacity remain in government hands—compared to 38 percent in 1990-91—because seven mills recently transferred ownership to their employees (APRP subsector maps). Virtually all sugarcane processing remains in the public sector. However, restructuring and privatization efforts are underway in many of these enterprises as the country shifts toward a market-driven economy.

**Table 4: Public Agribusiness Enterprise and Employment**

| Public Enterprises                                   | Employment (as of June 30, 1998) |              |               |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
|  | Total                            | Female       | Male          |
| Holding Company for Textiles and Ready-Made Garments | 79,598                           | 13,543 (17%) | 66,055 (83%)  |
| Holding Company for Textiles & Trade                 | 79,877                           | 11,810 (15%) | 68,067 (85%)  |
| Holding Company for Cotton & Foreign Trade           | 37,944                           | 5,671 (15%)  | 32,273 (85%)  |
| Holding Company for Food Industries                  | 63,216                           | 6,679 (11%)  | 56,537 (89%)  |
| Holding Company for Agricultural Development         | 12,722                           | 2,002 (16%)  | 10,720 (84%)  |
| Total  | 273,357                          | 39,705 (15%) | 233,652 (85%) |

Source: Public Enterprises Office, Cairo, June 1998.

Public sector enterprises are the largest employers of women, outside of primary agriculture. In public sector agribusiness, women account, on average, for approximately 15 percent of the labor force. However, where women gravitate in large numbers depends on the industry and level within the enterprise. For instance, in the cotton subsector, women are mostly seen in disproportionate numbers in the ready-made garments industry, where they account for as much as 85 percent of the labor force. Women are mostly engaged in sewing, while men are engaged in pattern cutting and pressing. In the cotton spinning and weaving industries, women make up between 15 and 17 percent of the labor force, with most working as unskilled laborers.

The food industry is another example where, on average, women make up about 11 percent of the total labor force, but participation varies within the industry by type of employment. For example, about 85 to 90 percent of women workers are found in the packing lines, where they provide unskilled or semi-skilled labor.

As state-owned enterprises retrench and labor absorption rates decline, however, women are more likely to retire early or be laid off than men. There is also the concern among women that they will have fewer opportunities than men to be hired as employees in the private sector given the prevailing perception that the private sector's labor absorption capability is still limited.

### **Private Sector Agribusiness**

Since economic liberalization and reform began in 1991, the private sector has become a major source of employment in Egypt. Since 1991, the private sector has increasingly taken on this responsibility to create opportunities for employment and economic growth. The private sector's share of the industrial sector output increased from 51 percent in 1990-91 to 59 percent in 1992-93 (Coopers & Lybrand, 1995), and reached 66 percent of gross domestic product in 1996/97. In 1997, the private sector accounted for nearly two-thirds of the total employment (CAPMAS, 1998). Much of the private sector contribution to gross domestic product is attributed to agribusiness, a significant segment of the private sector.

Egyptian agribusiness enterprises are involved in a large range of products. Cotton, wheat, rice, maize, ready-made garments, and food processing are important sectors. Agribusiness enterprises in food processing and ready-made garments are growing more rapidly than other sectors in terms of output and employment (Cooper & Lybrand, 1995). In terms of employment, crops such as rice, cotton, and wheat show that the private sector generates nearly twice as many jobs as public sector enterprises do (see Table 5). Furthermore, income earned from private sector enterprises is also reportedly higher than that from public sector enterprises (Cooper & Lybrand, 1995).

The size and scope of agribusiness enterprises in the private sector vary from large, vertically integrated enterprises to medium and small enterprises to microenterprises.<sup>4</sup> To date, however, the Egyptian private sector is dominated by small and micro-sized agribusiness enterprises, the majority of which are informal and encompass more than 90 percent of the total private sector employment outside of agriculture (Moghadam, 1998).

**Table 5: Employment in Select Agribusiness Subsectors**

| Subsector            | Production       | Processing     |                | Total Employment |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
|                      |                  | Public Sector  | Private Sector |                  |
| Cotton               | 274,400          | 227,729        | 286,012        | 788,141          |
| Rice                 | 231,000          | 6,600          | 14,818         | 252,418          |
| Wheat                | 180,000          |                |                | 180,000          |
| Milling              |                  | 14,868         | 34,798         | 49,666           |
| Confectioneries      |                  | 11,282         | 124,937        | 136,219          |
| Horticulture         | 1,317,713        | 10,825         | 63,000         | 1,393,704        |
| Horticulture trading |                  |                | 10,000         | 10,000           |
| Livestock (dairy)*   | 520,833          | 802            | 6,550          | 528,185          |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>2,523,946</b> | <b>272,106</b> | <b>540,615</b> | <b>3,338,333</b> |

Source: APRP-RDI Subsector Maps, Various. See Annex C for source of derivation.

\* Source: Dairy Industry Development Association, 1998. See Annex C for derivation.

### *Large, Vertically Integrated Enterprises*

In Egypt, large, vertically integrated enterprises in the agribusiness sector are best represented by cotton textile and ready-made garment factories. These factories employ thousands of workers. In the cotton subsector, state-run manufacturing companies dominate the spinning, weaving, dyeing, and finishing segments, where employment can be as high as 28,000. In the private sector, large and vertically integrated manufacturing companies employ as many as 6,000 workers. These large, integrated companies are mostly prevalent in the knitting and ready-made garment industry.

Large, vertically integrated enterprises also exist in the food industry, where food processing plants prefer to produce, process, and market their own products. However, to date, enterprises of this size are only a handful—according to Krenz (1998), of the 122 firms engaged in processing, only 8 were large (employing 500 to 5,000 workers). The Egyptian Export Promotion Center (EEPC) estimates that less than 5 percent of Egypt's total agribusiness enterprises belong to this category. In these enterprises, women are mostly found working as semi-skilled or unskilled workers.

<sup>4</sup> The definition of what is large, medium, and small varies by agency and institution (Weidemann, 1992). USAID's definition of small usually includes those with 6 to 15 employees, medium is usually those with more than 15 but less than 50 employees, and any firm employing more than 50 is large. Microenterprises are usually defined as having 1 to 5 employees. Some World Bank projects categorize as small those enterprises with as many as 50 employees.

### *Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises*

Egypt's private sector landscape is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises. A significant proportion of these enterprises employs as many as 500 and as few as 10 employees; they are the most dynamic enterprises. Many of these enterprises operate in the formal sector, are commercially viable, and are engaged mostly in the food and garments industries.

The newer enterprises tend to be relatively more vertically integrated, technologically complex, capital intensive, and managerially sophisticated, thus requiring more skilled than unskilled labor. This is most true in the dairy processing and export-oriented food processing industries, where machines operate at full capacity and employees work three shifts.

Many of the modern and newer enterprises tend to locate in industrial zones and parks to take advantage of the tax breaks provided by the government. Of the 1,217 licensed enterprises in the food industry, only a small percentage are high tech. The dairy industry is one area that is almost all high tech. The country's 17 dairy processing companies are modern and technologically advanced (DIDA, 1998).

### *Microenterprises*

Microenterprises in Egypt tend to be more in the informal than the formal sector. It is said that 90 percent of the microenterprises are in the unregulated sector (Coopers & Lybrand, 1995). Informal or unregulated enterprises are defined as enterprises operating without a registration or license issued by a government department or agency. A recent study indicates that at a time when opportunities in the public sector are shrinking and the formal sector is growing at a modest rate, micro and small enterprises are offering avenues for employment and income in both urban and rural areas (Moghadam, 1998).

In rural areas, microenterprises are primarily agriculturally based. A recent tally of SFD projects indicates that of the approximately 150,000 microenterprises it funded, 49 percent or about 73,000 were agribusiness related. Of those in agribusiness, an overwhelming number (91 percent) were for dairy activities and 6 percent were for food industry activities (Table 6). Most of these enterprises in rural areas are operated by women, given that dairy and food preparation and processing (such as pickles, cheese, ghee, and jams) fall within the domain of women in Egypt. As a result, in rural areas, agribusiness microenterprises are overwhelmingly operated by women.

In urban areas, as in rural, women are engaged in informal and home-based activities, mostly dealing with the food and garments industries (Coopers and Lybrand, 1995).

**Table 6: Rural Enterprise and Jobs Generation by Subsector**  
(as of May 11, 1999)

| Enterprise | No. of Projects/<br>Businesses | Jobs Generated |                                   |           | Ave. No. of Jobs per Project/<br>Business | Ave. Size of Loan per Project (in LE) |
|------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|---|---------------------------------------|
|            |                                | Total          | Permanent + Permanent Equivalents | Temporary |   |                                       |
| Food       | 4,406 (6%)                     | 13,591         | 9,209                             | 4,382     | 3.08                                      | 19,604                                |
| Dairy      | 66,172(91%)                    | 75,525         | 59,220                            | 16,305    | 1.14                                      | 7,486                                 |
| Other Ag.  | 2,194 (3%)                     | 5,179          | 3,217                             | 1,962     | 2.36                                      | 17,665                                |
| Total      | 72,772 (100%)                  | 94,295         | 71,646                            | 22,649    | 1.29                                      | 8,562                                 |

Source: Social Fund for Development, Small Enterprise Development Organization, Egypt, May 1999.

## WHY GENDER MATTERS IN AGRICULTURE AND AGRIBUSINESS

### Gender and Agriculture

Egyptian women are a major resource in agriculture and agribusiness. Given women's predominant role in agriculture, food production, and home-based income-generating activities, this is hardly surprising. Women's involvement is most visible in the rural areas, where they are seen working alongside men and individually, providing most of the manual labor. Women work particularly long hours during planting, weeding, and harvesting times. Statistics indicate that women make up about 40 percent of the total agricultural labor force (USAID, 1996). In rural areas, however, more than 50 percent of the women are in agriculture, with as much as 83 percent of them engaged in all aspects of agriculture, including postharvest handling, transportation, processing, storage, and marketing activities (Mansour, 1994; Weidemann, 1994).

Women are also heavily engaged in livestock production, which includes cattle production and sheep, rabbit, poultry, and duck raising. In addition, women are exclusively responsible for milking, dairy processing, and its marketing. Previous studies, along with our own field interviews, point out that women spend well over 70 percent of their working time on animal husbandry and related activities, which includes milking and dairy processing.

Livestock and dairy production are an integral and important aspect of the country's farming system, accounting for one-third of Egypt's agricultural production and serving as a key source of ready income for most smallholders. According to available data, 40 percent of the annual cash income for an average farm comes from the sale of dairy products, largely women's earnings.

National statistics, however, do not fully capture women's contribution to agriculture. Women's responsibilities, including domestic tasks and duties, add to their workload, totaling up to as many as 15 to 19 hours a day (Weidemann, 1994). This oversight is

primarily due to subsistence agriculture and home-based workers being excluded in the overall estimation (Assaad, 1998).

### *Lack of Gender-Disaggregated Data*

Statistics on women's contribution to agriculture differ by sources (Moghadam, 1998). The difference in official statistics is due more to definitional and measurement issues than to participation (Assaad, 1998). Socially, there is widespread recognition of women's participation and contribution. Many surmise that the reasons for statistically underestimating women's participation in agriculture are twofold: inconsistent measurement of non-market activities, and non-recognition of unpaid, shared (*zemala*), part-time, and seasonal labor—which in turn keep women out of the data. As many as 74 percent of the unpaid laborers are said to be women who work mainly on family farms and, hence, are unrecorded in national statistics. Undercounting women's participation and underestimating their contribution continues to be a problem in Egyptian labor force statistics (Assaad et al., 1999). Consequently, data on women are unreliable. Such data deficiencies not only do disservice to women but also to the agriculture sector as a whole.

In the absence of accurate information, understanding women's role and contribution can be difficult. Consequently, it leads to bypassing this segment of the labor force in terms of allocating financial resources and technical assistance. This is evident in the field—for example, relatively fewer women than men are directly targeted to receive extension and training assistance or access to inputs. Moreover, many women farmers and laborers find it difficult to obtain information on better farming practices and appropriate technology. As a result, returns to labor for women are discouragingly low.

The impact of low returns is particularly serious for those women farmers and laborers who head households and are the sole income earners. According to available data, as many as 20 percent of Egypt's households are headed by women; the headship is higher in rural areas, increasing to the 30 percent range in upper Egypt (Weidemann, 1994).

From a macro perspective, continuing to underestimate women's participation in agriculture will mean underestimating that proportion of the labor force that is necessary to improve the agriculture sector.

While attempts are under way to correct this problem,<sup>5</sup> gender-based analytical efforts are not widespread (Assaad, 1997). It is imperative to recognize that insufficient attention to labor productivity is itself a major constraint to agricultural development. Therefore, as important as agriculture is to Egypt, it cannot afford to underutilize and underequip half of its agricultural labor force and, thus, undercut agricultural productivity, production, income, and household welfare. This perspective alone provides reason as to why gender matters in agriculture.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the initiatives undertaken by CAPMAS to collect gender-disaggregated data.

## Women's Participation in Agribusiness Enterprises

In agribusiness, gender matters because in the face of uncertain employment and income opportunities in traditional and subsistence agriculture, agribusiness is expanding women's options to participate in gainful employment and augment family income.

Currently, the agribusiness sector is one of the more dynamic sectors in the economy. Egyptian agribusiness enterprises are mainly focused on specific subsectors like cotton, wheat, rice, horticulture, and food processing. In many of these agribusiness enterprises, women provide a sizeable share of the total labor. As shown in Table 7, women's participation stands out especially in cotton, horticulture, and livestock (dairy).

Table 7: Female Employment in Agribusiness (1998)

| Subsector            | Production | Processing    |                | Total Female Employment | Percent of Total Employment |
|----------------------|------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                      |            | Public Sector | Private Sector |                         |                             |
| Cotton               | 151,200    | 34,370        | 141,101        | 326,671                 | 41                          |
| Rice                 | 66,990     | 1,188         | 2,667          | 70,845                  | 28                          |
| Wheat                | 18,000     |               |                | 18,000                  | 10                          |
| Milling              |            | 2,676         | 6,264          | 8,940                   | 18                          |
| Confectioneries      |            | 2,778         | 24,987         | 27,765                  | 20                          |
| Horticulture         | 583,091    | 3,579         | 25,400         | 612,070                 | 44                          |
| Horticulture Trading |            |               | 1,000          | 1,000                   | 10                          |
| Livestock (dairy)*   | 416,667    | 205           | 1,014          | 417,886                 | 79                          |
| Total                | 1,235,948  | 44,796        | 202,433        | 1,483,177               | 44                          |

Source: APRP-RDI Subsector Maps, various. See Annex D for source of derivation.

\* Source: Dairy Industry Development Association, 1998. See Annex D for derivation.

Egyptian women are seen participating in agribusiness in two ways: as wage earners and as entrepreneurs/managers. As wage earners, women make up almost 80 percent of the workers, providing low-end, unskilled, or semi-skilled labor in factories and farms. However, given prevailing social perceptions about women's abilities, combined with the existing Labor Law,<sup>6</sup> opportunities for women vary along the chain of activities involved in agribusiness. For example, in horticulture, women provide as much as 85 percent of the seasonal harvesting and packing labor in the fields, pack houses, and processing plants. In the cotton subsector, women provide about 70 percent of the cotton harvesting labor, and 85 to 90 percent of the sewing, finishing, and packing labor in the ready-made garments industries. Relatively few if any women participate in cotton ginning (APRP Subsector Maps, various).

In traditional food processing plants, women are employed for cleaning, sorting, grading, and packing. In the newer, more modern computer-controlled processing plants, relatively fewer

<sup>6</sup> Egypt's Labor Law restricts women from working in most sectors (except for tourism and health-related sectors) after sundown, preventing them from working night shifts. This restriction limits women's employment by type and work hours.

women participate on the factory floor. However, demand for quality control and quality assurance has led many of these modern, export-oriented processing plants to establish in-house laboratories and quality control teams. Our findings suggest that this demand for quality has created a whole new practice area within private food processing companies in Egypt. This new practice is opening doors for women at the professional level in quality control laboratories.

Women now represent as much as 50 percent of the employees in factory/plant laboratories, tissue-culture labs, and quality control and quality assurance departments in the private sector. The percentage of women employees is also steadily increasing in accounting and bookkeeping departments as agribusinesses become more formal and sophisticated. As these export-oriented, labor-intensive agribusinesses expand, the demand for both skilled and less-skilled female labor will expand as well.

### *Women's Participation as Entrepreneurs*

As entrepreneurs, Egyptian women are increasingly turning to agribusiness for various reasons. Our interviews with both rural and urban women entrepreneurs suggest that agribusiness opens up avenues to expand economic opportunities in ways that enhance their earning potential. Because many agribusiness activities utilize traditional skills, require simple technology and low start-up capital, and can start small, women find them attractive as income-generating options (according to IFPRI [1999], 74 percent of businesses start with own funds). Furthermore, many agribusinesses are based at home, which allows women to fulfil two roles—that of homemaker and income earner (Weidemann, 1994).

In essence, agribusiness offers women the entry point to embark into the business world, while allowing them to maintain the sensitive balance between their responsibilities dictated by socio-cultural norms and mounting economic needs. Consequently, one finds relatively large percentages of Egyptian women entrepreneurs gravitating toward enterprises in the dairy and food stuffs processing, horticulture production, and ready-made garments industries.

Women-owned enterprises often tend to be small to medium-sized, and they create employment opportunities for others (Table 8). In rural areas, a vast majority of women entrepreneurs operate home-based microenterprises (Weidemann, 1994).

Rural women entrepreneurs are overwhelmingly engaged in dairy processing and poultry raising (Assaad, 1998). Data from the Social Fund for Development indicate that 49 percent of SFD project loans fund agribusiness activities. More than 90 percent of these are dairy activities (SFD, 1999). Although not entirely commercial, home-based income-generating activities produce surpluses that are marketed. Many rural women sell their milk, cheese, butter, and chicken directly in the market as well as through traders who collect from the homes (according to IFPRI [1999], 45 percent of the crops and milk). Studies show that such productive activities contribute significantly to household income and are an important part of women's survival strategies.

Whether by choice or by necessity, women are increasingly participating in more agribusiness activities than is generally assumed. Our findings indicate that this sector is

**Table 8: Jobs Generated by Women-Owned Businesses**

| Agribusiness                                | Total Employment |      |        |
|---|------------------|------|--------|
|   | Total            | Male | Female |
| Egyptian Trade & Industry (FAFO) (garments) | 40               | 17%  | 83%    |
| Angelic Garments                            | 30               | 40%  | 60%    |
| Uni-Dress (garments)                        | 30               | 33%  | 67%    |
| Sara (garments)                             | 19               | 16%  | 84%    |
| Farha (garments)                            | 50               | 76%  | 24%    |
| Raytex (curtains)                           | 100              | 85%  | 15%    |
| Youssef Farms                               | 20 full-time     | 95%  | 5%     |
|   | 60 seasonal      | 15%  | 85%    |
| Nimos Farms (& pack house)                  | 65 full-time     | 93%  | 7%     |
|   | 50 seasonal      | 10%  | 90%    |
| Mirhom Farms (dairy)                        | 75               | 72%  | 28%    |

Source: Field interviews, April 1999.

pivotal to women's economic and social welfare. Any development assistance hoping to empower women and improve their lives will reach and benefit more women if directed to the subsectors discussed below.

### WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THREE PRINCIPAL SUBSECTORS

The following section discusses, in greater depth, the three principle subsectors—livestock/dairy, cotton, and horticulture—that customarily engage large numbers of women in Egypt. These subsectors draw women both as wage earners and entrepreneurs.

#### Women's Participation in the Livestock/Dairy Subsector

Livestock, particularly dairy, is an important source of income and employment in Egypt for smallholder farmers, particularly women. Livestock and dairy production is an integral aspect of the country's farming system. In Egypt, more than 90 percent of the 5 million cattle (buffaloes and cows) are owned by smallholder farmers, with an average of one to three head of cattle per household (DIDA, 1998). Smallholder dairy farmers hold about 80 to 85 percent of the country's productive capacity in milk. Although most of the milk is consumed and processed at home (for example into cheese, butter, and cream), a sizeable amount gets sold in the local market. Milk marketing at the smallholder level is largely done individually, particularly during market days. There is some marketing conducted through village milk collectors who collect milk twice a day at the farmgate. Marketing of home-processed dairy products such as cheese, cream, ghee, and butter are done directly in the market by women.

either by the processor herself or through merchant women who trade the products in the market (CIDA, 1999).

Per capita consumption of milk and dairy products in Egypt is about 40 kilograms per year (DIDA, 1998). Annual total production is estimated at 2.4 million tons per year. As mentioned, 80 to 85 percent of the total supply comes from smallholder dairy producers based in the Delta and the Old Lands. Milk produced by smallholders is often unprocessed and produced under unhygienic conditions. Given that little attention is paid to quality during milking or processing, the likelihood of bacterial contamination occurring because of unsanitary milking and caring practices is high. Furthermore, street milk is also said to be often adulterated with unclean water and hazardous preservatives like formaldehyde (Aglink, 1995).

### *Role of Cattle in Egyptian Households*

The *baladi* cows and buffaloes commonly held by smallholders are reportedly low yielding—the yield per *baladi* cow is estimated at 3 liters per day compared with improved breeds like Holsteins at 25 to 30 liters per day (DIDA, 1998). Therefore, given the low yield, the cost of milk production at the smallholder level is high (Aglink, 1999). However, because of the special status cows and buffaloes have in rural families, decisions about keeping poorly performing cattle are based on emotions and not economics. Cattle presumably provide social status, serving as a symbol of wealth and a measure of economic stability; they are often viewed as a “savings account.” As one smallholder dairy producer told the study team, “We don’t think in terms of costs when raising livestock. We get a lot out of them that helps our family, such as milk, butter, cheese, and cream.” In Egypt, the feeding and caring of animals fall in the domain of women.

### *Women’s Role in Dairy Production*

Women’s role in animal husbandry and dairy processing is significant and traditional. Although men may participate in livestock production, women are exclusively responsible for milking and production of dairy products. Several studies estimate that 70 percent of women’s working time is devoted to animal husbandry and related activities, including milking and processing. Cash income from the sale of milk, cheese, ghee, and butter is high, which is usually used to meet household needs. According to available data, this is an important activity from an overall perspective since about 40 percent of a household’s yearly cash income is generated from the sale of dairy products.

### *Extension and Training Needs*

Women, however, could do better financially in this subsector if they received the right technical assistance. Currently, women receive very little direct assistance in training on proper approaches to milk production or on animal hygiene and health care. Veterinarians are

used only when animals show visible signs of extreme illness. Extension services directed to the agricultural sector are virtually blind to women in smallholder dairy production and marketing. Consequently, issues such as animal health and hygiene, feed/nutrition management, breed and herd management, and the quality of milk are ignored.

To date, women smallholder milk producers and processors have very few extension agents who help them. What information is provided is provided to the husband, who is then expected to teach his wife, sister, or mother. Tradition prohibits males from entering the house. This practice is still being strictly observed. Given the lack of or inadequate access to information, training, and other services to improve quality, there is a great need for women extension agents in this subsector. Farmers are willing to pay for services if they are shown that they will receive a direct benefit from the services. Furthermore, they prefer women extension agents because society permits women to freely visit women inside the house and to show them how things should be done. Currently, however, a vacuum exists, which has left the smallholder dairy subsector unattended and isolated.

Development assistance targeting smallholder dairy producers could significantly benefit not only women but the entire household. Technical assistance is clearly needed in such areas as hygienic and better milking practices, sanitary storage of milk, feed development and management, yield improvement, and marketing.

### *Marketing and Information*

Marketing programs that reach smallholder dairy producers have the potential of making a tremendous impact on issues like improving milk supply, milk quality, and household income. There is a need to consider programs that tap existing milk-collection systems. The systems that currently operate in Egypt are those systems organized by private milk processing companies for procuring their own supply, and those set up by middlemen. Another marketing approach that smallholders could look into is to organize their own milk and processed products marketing association.

Marketing associations that tap local resources have a higher chance of being successful and sustainable. An example of a local resource that could be used to benefit women dairy processors are the *tagra*, or merchant women, who are already knowledgeable about trading and markets. *Tagra* women by tradition are granted the "right" to travel freely and by themselves to distant markets. With relatively little training, these women could help fill a badly needed gap to link farms to markets.

Furthermore, improving access to information, services, and marketing assistance in a manner that is culturally sensitive could also greatly improve the quality of milk being marketed and, simultaneously, could help women receive a higher price, increase their income-generating capability, and secure the welfare of the rural households. Development assistance directed toward this sector offers tremendous opportunity to raise incomes, expand employment, and alleviate poverty. As John Mellor (1999) points out in his recent report,

“Impact Assessment of Agricultural Policy Reform on Employment,” when referring to the livestock sector, “there is no other growth strategy that does as much for women.”

### *Egypt's Commercial Dairy Industry*

At the commercial front, Egypt's commercial dairy industry accounts for an estimated 15 percent of the country's total milk production. In contrast to smallholder dairy farms, commercial dairy farms own high-yielding herds that are fed nutritionally balanced feed and are machine-milked in modern facilities. Milk produced in modern plants is sold to leading commercial milk processors, which in turn sell to supermarkets catering to higher income consumers in cities like Cairo and Alexandria. According DIDA, there are currently 17 commercial milk producers and processors.

From an employment perspective, the commercial or “organized” dairy sector employs relatively few women workers—except for commercial dairy farms, where many of the milkers are girls. In commercial milk processing plants, women representation among workers is lower.

**Table 9: Jobs Generated in Dairy Subsector by Select Companies and by Gender**

| Agribusiness in Dairy                  | Total Employment (FTE) |      |        |
|--|------------------------|------|--------|
|  | Total                  | Male | Female |
| Greenland                              | 1,000                  | 90%  | 10%    |
| Enjoy                                  | 400                    | 90%  | 10%    |
| Mirhom Farms (dairy)                   | 70                     | 72%  | 28%    |
| Tahrir Farms (dairy)                   | 20                     | 50%  | 50%    |
| Smallholder dairy (1-3 head of cattle) | 520,833                | 20%  | 80%    |

Source: Personal firm interviews; For Smallholder Dairy, April 1999.  
See Annex C for derivation.

As Table 9 shows, machine-intensive factories tend to hire men. The women who do work in these plants do so mostly in packing lines. The following reasons were given to us as to why commercial dairy is more male-labor intensive:

- Modern plants require hard work that often calls for heavy lifting, which women find difficult.
- Modern plants have machinery, most of which is computer controlled and mechanical. This work is seen as dangerous for women because many lack the right training and background.
- Processing plants need to run around the clock, and thus require two to three shifts. Employees working two or three shifts often must rotate shifts so all can live a normal life. Hiring women to work in shifts becomes extremely difficult because labor laws prevent women from working night shifts.

- The turnover rate is high among women, especially among young women—they tend to leave when they get married. High turnover hinders production, profitability, and investments made in training them.

## Women's Participation in the Cotton Subsector

The cotton subsector in Egypt is the largest employer in the country, employing over 2 million people across all levels and segments of the marketing channel, from cotton production through manufacturing to retailing and exports. Women's participation in this labor pool is highest in cotton production and ready-made garments manufacturing. Women contribute about 54 percent of the cotton production labor<sup>7</sup> and about 85 percent of the labor required in the ready-made garments industry.

### *Ginning, Spinning, Weaving, Dyeing, and Finishing*

Ginning, spinning, weaving, dyeing, and finishing—activities where the public sector is dominant—employ about 178,000 workers across the various activities, and only about 10 percent are women. In the private sector spinning and weaving industries, the percentage of women workers relative to men is only slightly higher. Ginning, whether public or private, employs few if any women. During our field visits, the following reasons were presented as justification for the mostly male presence in these industries:

- They operate at least two to three shifts per day.
- They tend to be heavily machine-intensive.
- They require heavy lifting and tough work—work deemed unsuitable for women in Egypt. The women who do work in these industries are generally employed as unskilled laborers.

### *Ready-Made Garments*

The cotton subsector map created by APRP shows that cotton production, processing, and marketing (excluding retailers) activities together employ over 1.5 million workers (Krenz et al., 1997).<sup>8</sup> The ready-made garments activity employs by far the largest number of workers (150,000); as mentioned previously, approximately 85 percent tend to be women and 15 percent men (who work mainly in cutting and pattern making). In this industry, women are

<sup>7</sup> Applies to all tasks involved in cotton production. In harvesting only, women provide 70 percent of the labor.

<sup>8</sup> Krenz and colleagues estimate that there could be over 150,000 retail clothing stores employing at least 2 employees each. This would add another 300,000 to the employment pool. Additionally, the forward and backward linkages related to the cotton sector add another 150,000 workers, bringing the total number of direct employment in the subsector to approximately 2 million.

commonly concentrated in the sewing, finishing, quality assurance, and packing departments. It is also common to find women in sewing-line supervisory and management positions, something uncommon in other industries.

Cutting and pattern making in ready-made garments favor men over women. Presumably these activities need attributes such as mechanical dexterity, muscle strength, and technical school training to be able to operate the cutting machines that slice through industrial-sized layers of materials.

The ready-made garment industry generally prefers to hire women for the bulk of its activities because, as many employers point out, women are better sewers, and their inclination for detail and eye for quality, style, and fine work make them better employees. Women, on the other hand, gravitate toward ready-made garment enterprises because these enterprises often only operate one shift, pay for overtime work, and pay by piecework.

### *Work Shift*

Because of Egypt's labor code, the issue of shifts in employment in manufacturing industries is important, not just for cotton but across most sectors in Egypt. As mentioned earlier, Egypt's labor code prevents women in most sectors (except for tourism and health-related sectors) from working past sundown or working night shifts. This restriction implicitly eliminates women from most manufacturing jobs that must operate two to three shifts a day. Industries operating multiple shifts rotate employees to prevent some from getting stuck on the night shift. As a result, this law weighs heavily against hiring women.

Moreover, hiring women in such enterprises implies training two sets of employees, which increases training costs. Employers bemoan the high turnover of female employees,<sup>9</sup> which makes investments in human resources unprofitable. These issues increase the cost of labor and, thus, have turned into disincentives for employers. For female employees, the very law designed to work for them appears now to be disfavoring them.

The ready-made garments industry, therefore, provides an easier and better employment option for women than other cotton processing industries.

### *Potential Expansion in the Ready-Made Garments Sector*

The ready-made garments sector also offers women the best potential for employment given the expansion experienced by the industry since the economy embarked on a free-market track. Industry experts indicate that over the last several years, the ready-made garments sector has seen production expand by over 25 percent per year (Dahmouh, 1998). These same experts also believe that the ready-made garments industry can expand even more once low-count Egyptian yarn is priced right. Currently, a significant percentage of the production

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<sup>9</sup> The general practice among young Egyptian women is to work for a couple of years and then leave their jobs soon after marriage.

of ready-made garments is being fueled by cheaper but lower quality short-staple cotton yarn imports from Pakistan and India. Improving the price and quality of Egyptian yarn will allow the ready-made garments sector to expand further. Expansion of the ready-made garments sector will mean expansion of employment opportunities for women who are central to this sector.

Table 10 provides an illustration of the employment and labor composition in some private sector companies visited by the study team.

**Table 10: Employment and Labor Composition in Select Cotton Companies—An Illustration**

| Agribusiness in Cotton   | Total Employment (full time) |      |        |
|--|------------------------------|------|--------|
|  | Total                        | Male | Female |
| <b>Ready-Made Garments</b>   |                              |      |        |
| Giza Ready-Made Garments   | 1,300                        | 15%  | 85%    |
| Beshara Group Ready-Made Garments  | 550                          | 45%  | 55%    |
| Angelic Garments   | 28                           | 40%  | 60%    |
| Fafo Trade & Industry (bathrobes; linen)   | 47                           | 30%  | 70%    |
| International Co. for Ready-Made Garments (Ted Lapidus)  | 650                          | 10%  | 90%    |
| Nile Clothing  | 9000                         | 15%  | 85%    |
| World Trading Co. (representing 15 companies in the sector employing an average of 1,000 per firm) | 15,000                       | 17%  | 83%    |
| Sahara Clothing Company  | 180                          | 20%  | 80%    |
| <b>Spinning, Weaving, Dyeing, and Finishing</b>  |                              |      |        |
| Beshara Group Textiles (weaving/dyeing)  | 252                          | 95%  | 5%     |
| Giza Spinning & Weaving  | 900                          | 99%  | 1%     |
| DIB-Egypt (spinning)   | 450                          | 95%  | 5%     |
| Basyotex Cotton Co. (spinning)   | 40                           | 70%  | 30%    |
| Misr Cotton Spinning Co. (spinning)  | 20                           | 75%  | 25%    |
| Mohamed Metwalli Sons (spinning and weaving)   | 60                           | 50%  | 50%    |
| Attalah El Togariah (spinning and weaving)   | 170                          | 50%  | 50%    |
| Spinco and Blanco (spinning and weaving)   | 150                          | 70%  | 30%    |
| International Company for Spinning   | 50                           | 100% | 0%     |
| <b>Trading</b>   |                              |      |        |
| Modern Nile Export Co.   | 15                           | 80%  | 20%    |
| Port-Said Cotton Export Co.  | 861                          | 75%  | 25%    |

Source: From personal interviews with the firms, April-June 1999.

## Women's Participation in the Horticulture Subsector

The horticultural subsector is a major employer of women in Egypt. Women participate actively at all levels of the subsector, from production all the way to processing and marketing. The proportion of female participation, however, varies by commodity and task. For example, commodities such as grapes, strawberries, apricot, green beans, artichokes, and valley-grown potatoes employ more women than other crops since these commodities require more manual labor during production and harvesting (ATUT, 1999). In grape production, for example, women provide as much as 56 percent of the total labor required for both pre- and postharvest activities. For harvesting only, women provide about 70 percent of the required labor (El-Messeri, 1998). Strawberry production and harvesting follow similar patterns, but harvesting strawberries requires significantly more labor than harvesting grapes. Table 11 shows that female labor participates significantly in artichoke and green bean production—52.6 percent and 50 percent respectively.

**Table 11: Labor Requirements and Estimated Women's Contribution in Pre- and Postharvest Activities—Select Commodities**

|                                      | Grapes<br>(New<br>Lands) | Strawberries<br>(New Lands) | Apricot<br>(New<br>Lands) | Green<br>Beans | Garlic<br>(Valley) | Artichoke | Potato<br>(Valley) |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Labor requirement:                   | Hours per Feddan         |                             |                           |                |                    |           |                    |
| - Production                         | 568.3                    | 1,191.0                     | 384.3                     | 960.0          | 580.0              | 609.0     | 712.0              |
| - Postharvest                        | 775.0                    | 2,400.0                     | 325.0                     | 800.0          | 533.3              | 666.7     | 800.0              |
| Total labor requirements             | 1,343.3                  | 3,591.0                     | 709.3                     | 1,760.0        | 1,113.3            | 1,275.7   | 1,512.0            |
| Estimated women<br>contribution      | 754.9                    | 2,098.8                     | 369.7                     | 880.0          | 541.3              | 671.5     | 791.2              |
| Percentage of women<br>participation | 56.2%                    | 58.4%                       | 52.1%                     | 50.0%          | 48.6%              | 52.6%     | 52.3%              |

Source: Agricultural Technology Utilization and Transfer Project, 1999.

Furthermore, as a result of the expansion into new horticultural products and new lands, the number of jobs created in this sector has been significant (see Table 5). This trend is expected to increase as more desert and Delta lands are brought into horticultural production. Statistics indicate that a large percentage of horticulture is already being produced in the New Lands, especially on large commercial, export-oriented "corporate" farms. Krenz (1998) reports that 47 percent of the New Lands is devoted to fruit production. Women provide much of the labor on these corporate farms, where women are hired as seasonal agricultural laborers for picking and packing.

### *Horticultural Food Processing*

In the food processing industry, particularly those using vegetables and fruits, women are the main source of labor. Women provide approximately 85 to 90 percent of the cleaning, sorting, grading, and packing labor, which requires nimbleness, dexterity, and patience (see Table 12). Even in modern plants where the cleaning, sorting, and grading are done by machines, women provide the bulk of the packing labor. For example, in frozen vegetable processing, women make up the bulk of unskilled labor required to perform the basic but

routine tasks. As in horticultural production, women are generally hired on a seasonal basis. Men, on the other hand, tend to be mostly permanent workers—machinists, engineers, technicians, and supervisors. Men are also hired to perform the heavier and “harsher” tasks often required in processing plants, such as stacking, hauling, and lifting. These tasks are usually perceived by both employers and female employees as unsuitable for women.

**Table 12: Labor Composition by Gender  
in Select Horticultural Farms and Food Processing Factories**

| Agribusiness in Horticulture                     | Total Employment (full time) |      |        | Total Employment Seasonal (daily) |      |        |
|--|------------------------------|------|--------|-----------------------------------|------|--------|
|  | Total                        | Male | Female | Total                             | Male | Female |
| <b>Fresh Horticultural Farms and Pack Houses</b> |                              |      |        |                                   |      |        |
| Youssef Farms                                    | 20                           | 100% | 0%     |                                   | 10%  | 90%    |
| Nimos Farms                                      | 65                           | 93%  | 7%     | 60                                | 17%  | 83%    |
| Shiaty Farms                                     | 7,000                        | 43%  | 57%    |                                   |      |        |
| El Baraka Farms                                  | 40                           | 100% | 0%     |                                   | 50%  | 50%    |
| Sekem  | 1,500                        | 60%  | 40%    |                                   |      |        |
| Mabrouk Farms                                    |                              |      |        |                                   |      |        |
| <b>Processing Factories</b>                      |                              |      |        |                                   |      |        |
| La Poire   | 600                          | 85%  | 15%    |                                   |      |        |
| Faragalla  | 5,000                        | 65%  | 35%    |                                   |      |        |
| Farm Fritz                                       | 220                          | 98%  | 2%     |                                   |      |        |
| Montana  | 400                          |      |        |                                   | 10%  | 90%    |
| Kaha   | 2,000                        |      |        |                                   |      |        |
| Sonac  |                              |      |        |                                   | 15%  | 85%    |
| Giverex  | 10                           | 90%  | 10%    | 200                               | 10%  | 90%    |
| Foodico  | 240                          | 100% | 0%     | 300                               | 0%   | 100%   |
| <b>Fresh, Middle East Foods</b>                  |                              |      |        |                                   |      |        |
| HiTadi   | 10                           | 100% | 0%     | 40                                | 20%  | 80%    |

Source: Personal interviews with firms, April 1999.

### *Seasonal Employment*

The expansion and growth taking place in the horticultural subsector is encouraging because it has increased opportunities for productive work. A large proportion of the employment is generated as a result of the expansion into the New Lands.

Many of the jobs open to women in these large, corporate farms and food processing plants are seasonal.

Value added in the food processing sector increased from US\$1.7 billion in the late 1980s to US\$3.4 billion in 1996 (30 percent of industrial value added) (USAID, 1998).

Seasonal jobs affect women in several ways. First, seasonal jobs are synonymous with unskilled labor and, thus, are remunerated accordingly. The average daily wage is around LE5 to LE7 for women.<sup>10</sup> Second, because seasonal jobs are temporary, and the same

<sup>10</sup> The wage rate is for eight-hour days. The daily wage for girls (ages 14 to 17), who provide a large percentage of seasonal labor, ranges between LE4 and LE6.

laborers might not return every season to perform the same tasks, employers have little incentive to invest in seasonal workers to upgrade their skills beyond the basics. Third, although women are engaged as seasonal workers, they can, if they choose to, be employed year-round. Women that choose to work year-round may work in the same factory season to season or may move from one farm or factory to another. Although such arrangements provide women the freedom to enter or exit the labor force at will, the implied inconsistency inherent in seasonal jobs prevents them from rising through the ranks to higher paying, more stable positions. Fourth, even though processing factories operate 10 to 11 months out of the year, hiring seasonal labor is easily justified on the grounds that production lines change by season. Those women who work year-round as hired seasonal workers thereby miss the opportunity of being permanently employed. This has implications on the wage rate and benefits women receive.

### *Wages and Benefits*

Wages in Egypt are determined more by type of employment and less by gender. Egyptian women are guaranteed full political and legal rights. Egypt has progressive laws granting extensive maternity rights and childcare facilities, as well as social security and equal wages. However, because of the labor law which prevents women from working after sundown in some sectors, most women (especially those with few skills and little education) have difficulty finding appropriate jobs. Moreover, the kinds of work that women engage in offer lower wages. Consequently, women receive lower wage rates than men, who net higher wages because the jobs that men take on are "harsher," require more effort, and therefore receive more remuneration.

Furthermore, because of their seasonal status, female hired laborers are unable to claim full benefits provided to permanent employees. Full benefits include childcare (one to two hours paid daily) and maternity leave (three months paid leave). These benefits also include other job security provisions such as health care and social security. The labor law also makes provisions for childcare facilities in work places where more than 50 married women are employed on a permanent basis. Although these provisions are progressive and women-friendly, they are "backfiring" against married women.

The costs of female-specific benefits can add up the cost of production. Even though employers are not passing on the cost of these benefits to the employees, as pointed out by Ragui Assaad (1997) these additional costs may instead limit female employment in that sector. The study team's interviews suggest that these legal protections offered to women are being implicitly construed as disincentives by some employers. It is our assessment that the relatively high cost of female protection may be one factor contributing to the high incidence of unmarried girls (ages 13 to 18) working as hired labor in many factories and farms.

### *Smallholder Horticulture*

The importance of horticulture in increasing employment and income, especially for smallholder producers, is clear. Horticultural production offers smallholder farmers the

ability to grow crops, especially high-value vegetables, on small plots with minimum equipment. This means the returns to labor for smallholder farmers are much higher with horticultural crops than with traditional crops. The high returns to labor in horticulture are clearly recognized by smallholders. This recognition is manifested by the planting of vegetables instead of fruit in the Delta and the increase in number of smallholders. Pietrus (1999) reports that hundreds of thousands of small farmers in Egypt are increasing their production of horticultural crops, especially vegetables.

Horticulture production in Egypt has developed into a thriving industry. Based on the sector's performance the last few years, horticulture is expected to do even better in the near future. In response, large, commercial export-oriented horticultural farms are being established and expanded in the New Lands. The performance of the horticulture sector has also encouraged the formation of associations and producer/marketing groups to promote exports. The same, however, is not happening among smallholders. Smallholder farmers by and large continue to operate individually.

|  |
|--|
| <p>Horticulture production (vegetables and fruit) increased by 37 percent to 18.7 million tons in 1996 from 13.6 million tons in 1990 (Pietrus, 1999).</p> |
|--|

Given the potential profitability of horticultural (especially vegetable) production, programs that support the organization of smallholder farmers are sorely needed. Assistance that links smallholder production to markets and marketing has the potential to expand production, accelerate its commercialization, and increase household income.

To date, donor-funded programs have been directed mainly toward large farmers and processors in the new lands and have not directly targeted smallholders in horticulture. The potential exists to bring the large number of smallholders in the Delta into export markets. USAID experience elsewhere has demonstrated that doing so will not only increase exports but also contribute to increasing employment and income. But this cannot be actualized without targeted assistance to smallholders.

Assistance to smallholders can be provided through the introduction of instruments, such as contract farming, that directly involve and benefit small farmers. Contract farming has proven to be extremely effective and successful in countries that have used it as a tool to organize smallholders for export production. In Egypt, contract farming is being successfully used by Sekem, a producer and exporter of organic horticultural products. Both Sekem and its 450 contract farmers are successful and happy since such contractual arrangements provide assured markets, access to services, and easier access to credit.

If horticulture is to make its full contribution to the economy, then production must be expanded into the Old and New Lands, and smallholder farmers must be included in the program. Contract farming may be the tool to expand production and increase income and employment.

## Policy Reform and Its Potential Impact on Women's Employment in the Agribusiness Sector

The current privatization and liberalization efforts are expected to increase productivity and production in the agricultural sector. The impact of the economic reform process on certain subsectors, like cotton and horticultural/food processing, will be greater and positive. With privatization and liberalization taking effect, enterprises are expected to gain from new investments, private management, and increased efficiencies. Increased competition in the marketplace is already encouraging the formation of new enterprises, which in turn are creating new job opportunities. Since women make up a large proportion of the labor pool in these two subsectors, any increase in job opportunities will have a positive impact on women's employment possibilities.

As mentioned earlier, cotton production and textile processing industry contribute a large share of the country's economy because it employs almost 2 million people and generates significant export earnings. As also mentioned, a large component of the cotton industry is still in public hands in various stages of restructuring. If this subsector succeeds in rekindling its competitiveness and begins reclaiming its former glory in terms of cotton quality, downstream industries such as knitting, textiles, and ready-made garments could expand several fold. Since the ready-made garments subsector employs 85 percent women, employment and incomes for women will likely increase as well. Based on APRP's 1999 projections of its policy reform activities, increases in women's employment in the ready-made garments sector alone could reach well over 100,000 in three years if this policy reform program is successful (Table 13).

**Table 13: APRP Projections of Impact APRP Activities on Various Subsectors**

| Subsector                      | Employment            |                                     | Employment Indirect Due to Multiplier | Value of Exports (millions) | Direct & Indirect Incomes (millions) | New Investments (millions) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
|                                | Direct in Agriculture | Direct in Forward/Backward Linkages |                                       |                             |                                      |                            |
| Cotton                         | 144,000               | 132,000                             | 365,500                               | \$260                       | \$168                                | \$675-\$875                |
| Horticulture                   | 177,250               | 42,553                              | 342,119                               | \$705                       | \$168                                | \$164                      |
| Fertilizer (distribution jobs) |                       | 10,000                              | 20,000                                | \$115                       | \$9                                  | \$100                      |
| Rice (milling jobs)            |                       | 6,000                               | 12,000                                | \$60                        | \$4                                  | \$50                       |
| Maize (processing)             |                       | 7,500                               | 15,000                                |                             | \$7                                  | \$25                       |

Source: "APRP Projections of Impact." APRP Activities on Various Subsectors. Submitted to USAID. January 18, 1999.

Although the horticulture subsector has not been directly affected by GOE policies, other GOE policies and regulations have had an indirect adverse impact on exports (Pietrus, 1999). On the other hand, successful policy reforms in other agricultural areas have had a positive impact on horticulture. Policies that improve the agricultural resource base have expanded horticultural production. Reforms in water saving policies—through the introduction of short-season rice varieties—and implementation of efficient irrigation techniques in

sugarcane production that are already underway give the option for a third crop, possibly horticulture.

Rapid increases in horticulture production and exports have already been witnessed, and improved input supply with reduced costs is expected to further increase this rate of growth. Given that 60 to 70 percent of the workers in horticulture production are women (for example, in strawberry and green bean production), female employment in horticulture is also expected to increase by over 100,000 in the next three years.

In the food processing industry, which accounts for an additional 10 percent of the total value of production, women represent about 40 percent of the employment. Women generally work in production and packing lines. Consequently, another 20,000 jobs in processing are expected for women in the next three years if the policy reforms now under way continue to stimulate this shift to horticulture.

### **CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES TO EXPANSION OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PRIVATE SECTOR AGRIBUSINESS**

Agricultural policy reform efforts are continuing to address the major constraints that stifle growth in agriculture and agribusiness industries. Furthermore, the intent to make the reform process gender sensitive is also increasingly being demonstrated. Within the MALR, issues regarding women's rights and women in development have been receiving fairly high-level attention as evidenced by several ministerial decrees<sup>11</sup> and creation of a policy coordination unit, PCUWA, for the advancement of women in agriculture. These continuing efforts are a clear indication of the ministry's commitment to the improvement of the status of women.

To further assist the MALR and its agricultural policy reform process to be more sensitive to gender and more supportive of working women, this section identifies, and delves into, some key constraints and challenges that restrict women's active involvement as entrepreneurs and employees in the agribusiness subsector.

Although some constraints discussed below apply to both men and women, women business owners and managers view them as being more limiting on women. The perception in the Egyptian agribusiness subsector is that men and women are challenged by the same sets of problems, face the same barriers, have access to the same resources, and qualify equally for the same opportunities. In practice, however, constraints and problems are felt more acutely by women entrepreneurs, and for many women, access to resources does not necessarily translate into securing resources to take advantage of opportunities.

The constraints below were identified by a wide range of agribusiness owners and managers, both female and male, as being the most critical and most important at the sectoral level. The Egyptian businesswomen that the study team interviewed view the first four constraints listed below as the principal hurdles keeping them from achieving their goals and further

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<sup>11</sup> An MALR ministerial decree issued in 1997 focused on improving women's ownership of land in the newly reclaimed lands (see Chapter Three).

contributing to Egypt's growth and development. The fifth constraint applies to female wage earners in agribusiness.

- Credit
- Market information
- Extension and training
- Business support services and outreach
- Protective labor laws barring women from night work

### **Difficulty Obtaining Credit**

Although access to credit is gender neutral—in that both men and women experience similar problems and impediments—women have more difficulty obtaining credit. Egyptian women find the loan process more cumbersome than men, not only because of amount of time they must spend completing the registration and application process, but also because most formal credit institutions have inflexible requirements and strict conditions (such as collateral). Because some credit institutions require women borrowers to obtain a man's signature as guarantee, many female borrowers believe that they are not taken seriously as business professionals. Given strongly held tradition attitudes, it is not surprising that loan officers, who control the loan-granting decision-making process, tend to take women who are borrowing lightly.

Traditional and cultural attitudes aside, at stake is the issue of land ownership because land serves as collateral or financial guarantee. Collateral, the ultimate determining factor in who gets the loans, is defined in primarily one way: as hard assets—land or building. As mentioned in Chapter Three, women's little control over or access to land, which leaves them with little asset-based collateral. Often the amount of land and other hard assets women own is not sufficient to mortgage in order to secure bank loans. Consequently, a considerable percentage of women who are interested in borrowing and have access to credit do not qualify for the loans necessary to finance new or existing agribusinesses—simply because they lack sufficient or appropriate collateral. As a result, a large percentage of the women borrow from outside formal financial channels. Not all women, however, are lucky enough to have access to personal or family resources.

Many women entrepreneurs and agribusiness managers feel powerless because obstacles such as these exclude them from entrepreneurship and its rewards. These impediments have also created unequal conditions, which are giving rise to a perception of asymmetric rights and responsibilities. Current commercial banking practice leaves room to do more in order to alleviate the obstacles and improve rates of borrowing (for both investment and cash-flow purposes) among women entrepreneurs, who tend to run mostly small and medium-sized enterprises because they prefer to use their own resources.

### **Lack of Relevant Market Information**

Another factor holding back the development of women-owned agribusinesses is the lack of sufficient and appropriate market information. Information on prices, sources of supplies, grades of commodities at major market centers, market alternatives, trends, and market opportunities is not readily available. For many women, information of this sort is virtually inaccessible. When available, the transmission of information is not fast enough to be operationally advantageous to many agribusiness owners and operators.

Market information is key to the success of any endeavor. If systems were created to share relevant information, they would assist farmers and agribusiness owners in planning appropriately and making informed business decisions. There is need to develop an easily accessible market information system where women can readily access consistent and reliable information.

Currently, there are few entities dedicated to serving the needs of women-owned agribusinesses or determining business opportunities for women agribusiness owners or managers. Market information is an area that needs serious attention if private agribusiness—in particular women-owned agribusiness—is to develop further and be responsive to markets.

### **Lack of Appropriate Training and Extension**

Another principal constraint is that many women entrepreneurs lack management, business administration, and entrepreneurial skills. These are the very skills and experience, however, that are necessary to be able to identify and respond to opportunities under the free-market system. Business skills, such as preparing business plans, marketing, finance, contracting, are gravely needed. Training in technical skills such as processing or production input management also is lacking. Training and retraining in appropriate subject areas can have a positive impact.

### **Absence of a Business Support Services and Outreach**

Trade groups and associations sympathetic to businesswomen's concerns and needs are few and far in between. Consequently, women have been unable, in many instances, to defend or protect themselves from unfavorable policy decisions. Although women's business associations have come into being recently, networking and information sharing among working women are still weak and vulnerable. There is a need to organize a unit or an agribusiness working group dedicated solely to assisting small- to medium-scale women-owned commercial agribusinesses. Such an entity would serve as

- An advocate for the interests of the women-owned and -operated agribusiness community and female agribusiness workers;
- A contact point for policy as well as business-related information and consultations; and

- A source of expertise on agribusiness matters, offering assistance not only to current businesswomen but also to budding women entrepreneurs.

An entity that is established for the sole purpose of moving the agribusiness sector forward among women could serve as a means not only for delivering technical assistance and training but also for disseminating information on technology and strengthening the marketing systems of its members.

In addition to promoting business and market development for its members, agribusiness support services of this kind could advocate for business interests. Business organizations could provide a myriad of technical- and management-related services—such as support networks, business advice, formal and informal training, consultation on legal and financial matters—and could conduct feasibility studies, market research, and the like. Such an entity could serve as a catalytic agent and guide to help members adopt productivity enhancing practices and technologies.

### **Protective Labor Law Barring Women from Night Work**

Egypt's Progressive Labor Law offers women employees generous entitlements and protections such as maternity leave (three months paid), childcare provisions (one hour daily nursing break and presence of nursery in close proximity), and protection from night work (between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m.). Although noble in theory, the law (Law 50, Article 157) preventing women from working night shifts is having contrary effects and is actually limiting women's employment opportunities.

Because of this protection, women are implicitly eliminated from being hired in most manufacturing jobs that operate two to three shifts a day. Agribusinesses operating multiple shifts rotate employees so that none get stuck working only night shifts. As a result, what started out a protective measure is now playing against women as the law weighs heavily against hiring women in such types of jobs—jobs many women desperately need.

In addition, hiring women in such types of enterprises implies training two sets of employees, which increases training costs. In many instances, employers (however reluctantly) would not mind paying the extra costs if female employees worked more years. Employers bemoan the high turnover rate of female employees, which makes investments in human resources unprofitable. Consequently, these issues increase the cost of labor and so have turned into disincentives for employers. For female employees the very law designed to work for them appears now to be disfavoring them.

### **POLICY OPTIONS AND PROGRAMMATIC ACTIONS FOR CHANGE**

In light of the constraints and problems discussed above, the following policy options and programmatic actions are presented. The policy options and programmatic actions presented below are a culmination of a workshop held in April 1999 where practitioners and policy

makers convened to discuss and propose options and approaches for improving and expanding opportunities for women in the agribusiness subsector.

### Policy Options

- Broaden definition of collateral;
- Provide direct support to smallholders and small and medium-sized commercial agribusiness owners, and target women entrepreneurs; and
- Rescind Labor Law 50, Article 157, dealing with protecting women from night-shift work because it is working against those women who need jobs.

### Programmatic Actions

**Establish a business support services center for women:** Women play a significant role in the agricultural economy of Egypt. However, there is no association or trade group championing the technical and business needs and concerns of women entrepreneurs in agriculture and agribusiness. This absence calls for the establishment of a business support services center that is dedicated solely to addressing practical business and technical needs and concerns of existing and potential women agro-entrepreneurs. Such a center could directly address women's technical, managerial, financial, and business needs through the provision of basic as well as customized technical assistance and training services. Services would include assisting women agro-entrepreneurs to identify opportunities or create new agribusinesses, improve their competitive position, increase productivity, and remove impediments that hinder growth in terms of employment and income generation. It would serve as contact point for policy as well as business-related information, advocacy as well as consultations. It would serve as a source of technical expertise, workshops, business planning, feasibility studies, and support for access to credit in order to help the agribusiness sector move forward. Furthermore, a center for women only is likely to reach more potential women entrepreneurs currently unable to avail themselves of ongoing project technical and financial assistance because of social, cultural or financial reasons.

The current PCUWA under Dr. Kamla Mansour could be expanded and modified to play this catalytic role to enhance and strengthen women owned-enterprises and expand local agro-enterprises development among Egyptian women.

**Provide innovative and creative sources of credit to finance women-owned small and medium-sized agribusinesses:** Collateral, the ultimate determining factor in granting a loan, is defined in primarily one way in Egypt: as hard assets—land or buildings. This factor alone constrains women borrowers as women's control over and access to land is fragile, leaving them with little asset-based collateral. In cases where women do own land, the amount (dictated by tradition) is often insufficient to mortgage in order to secure bank loans. Such

obstacles have given birth to feelings of powerlessness and dampened the entrepreneurial spirit among many enthusiastic women entrepreneurs.

Broadening the definition of "collateral" to include marketable goods and non-asset-based collateral (chattel lending), for example, could open doors for many women entrepreneurs to obtain credit and unleash their entrepreneurial talents and capabilities, as would the creation of enterprise development funds. Enterprise development funds can extend resources to reduce capital constraints and risks for existing or new women-owned agro-enterprises in the sector.

**Improve database on tasks and activities by gender for use in policy formulation:** As pointed out by Ragui Assaad (1998, 1999), there is a paucity of reliable gender-disaggregated data. Such data deficiencies not only do disservice to women but to the agriculture sector as a whole. Improving data on activities by gender will improve the understanding of the role and contribution both men and women make, which in turn will significantly improve the ability to identify gender-based issues and to propose policy reforms required to resolve these issues.

**Ensure training programs and extension services target women and reach beneficiaries:** To date, there is a dearth of direct training by women extension workers to women beneficiaries, particularly smallholder farmers. Given the cultural context of Egypt, the necessity of providing women extension agents to rural women seems all the more important given that rural women play crucial roles in such important subsectors as dairy and horticulture. In dairy, smallholder farmers hold about 80 to 85 percent of Egypt's capacity in milk. Animal husbandry and dairy processing largely depend on women. Returns from dairy products contribute as much as 40 percent to the overall household income. This segment of the agricultural sector, however, remains unattended and isolated. The need for extension services in areas such as better milking practices, sanitary storage of milk, feed management, yield improvement, and marketing are critical. With appropriate assistance, women dairy farmers have the potential to better themselves financially and to improve the lives of their households.

In horticulture, extension services in the areas of better production and harvesting practices, value-added activities, marketing and business-linkage strategies, and introduction of instruments that directly benefit small farmers are greatly needed. The importance of horticulture to increasing employment and income, especially for smallholders, is clear. But most smallholders continue to operate individually. Given the potential profitability of horticultural production, targeted extension services to smallholders have the promise of further expanding production in the Old Lands, accelerating its commercialization and increasing household income.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### WOMEN'S ACCESS TO AND USE OF LAND AND WATER

Over the past 20 years, the Government of Egypt has decreased its intervention and regulation over the agricultural sector and has worked hard at increasing the role of market forces in rural areas. Market forces replaced government pricing of agricultural inputs and outputs, and a new land tenure law was promulgated that provides the basis for the development of a land market.

#### OBJECTIVES

The important question addressed in this chapter is whether women's access to agricultural land and water has been affected by these new market liberalization policies. It is important to note here that this study is not an impact study but, instead, an effort to evaluate women's access to these important resources, identify the constraints that limit their access, and propose several policy initiatives to improve this access.

#### METHODOLOGY

To achieve the above objectives, several methodologies were utilized:

- Interviews were held with key officials from MALR and the Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources. Women with small and large landholdings in the Old and New Lands, were visited, as well as landless women, female household members of large and small farms, and their spouses. Discussions were held with extension officers and field experts, researchers, donors, agricultural cooperative representatives, NGO staff, program and project officers, and policy experts (see Appendix B for list of interviewees).
- Published and unpublished documents were reviewed.
- Available data were analyzed.
- Field trips were made to the following locations to discuss land and water issues with local experts and women and men farmers:
  - Noubariya (International Fund for Agricultural Development project, New Lands)
  - Luxor Governorate (Old Lands)
  - Beheira Governorate (Brigat village, Old Lands)
  - Wadi Rayan, Fayoum Governorate (New Lands)
  - Bangar El-Sukkar and Site 20 (Noubariya Governorate, New Lands)

- A participatory stakeholders' workshop was held. A variety of interested and concerned men and women from the government and the private sector attended the workshop. The goal was to build consensus on the policy issues pertaining to women's access to land and water resources and to produce a shared vision for improvement and change, including problem solving and action planning required to bring about change.

### AVAILABILITY OF ARABLE LAND AND WATER

In Egypt, arable land and water, both of which are scarce, are the country's most valuable natural resources. Approximately 99 percent of the population in Egypt lives on 3 percent of the country's total land area. According to Alexandrou (1995), Egypt has an extremely high person-to-land ratio (19.2 persons per hectare of potential arable land), making it the most densely populated country per unit of arable land.

Egypt has approximately 7.6 million feddans of arable irrigated land. Of this irrigated land, 79.4 percent is in the Nile Valley and Delta (Old Lands) and 20.6 percent is new reclaimed land (New Lands). Widescale urbanization, desertification, and land degradation from waterlogging and salinization also are contributing to land scarcity.

Land productivity in Egypt depends first and foremost on the availability of water for irrigation. According to Keith and colleagues (1998), however, water is the agricultural sector's most limited resource, with no real potential for increasing water supplies except through better management. Except for water from the Nile River (restricted to 55.5 billion cubic meters per year), and much smaller amounts of groundwater, no other significant sources of water exist. Water scarcity is being exacerbated by a rapidly increasing demand for water, primarily because of the country's high population growth (2.6 percent per year).

Recent GOE policy has focused on improving agricultural productivity in the Old Lands,<sup>12</sup> increasing arable land in the desert area through land reclamation efforts, and improving water management and sustainability (Hussein et al., 1999). Expansion of arable land has been the central to Egypt's agricultural development policy since the 1952 revolution. In the 1980s and 1990s, expanding arable land in the desert became a national imperative, with an estimated 2.6 million feddans reclaimed to date. Newly reclaimed lands are being developed for several important purposes: to increase agricultural production, farmers' incomes, and exports; contribute to Egypt's food security; provide small tracts of land to landless and unemployed people; and ease the population burden in the Nile Valley and Delta (Hussein et al., 1999).

One striking feature of agriculture in Egypt is that landholdings are highly fragmented and unevenly distributed. According to EHDR (1996), almost 70 percent of farmers own less than one feddan, and 93 percent own less than 5. At the same time, 50 percent of the land is owned by 10 percent of all landowners.

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<sup>12</sup> There have been substantial yield gains in strategic crops such as wheat, maize, rice, and cotton, as well as in self-sufficiency ratios in food crops, and impressive increases in agricultural exports.

Access to agricultural land in Egypt can be achieved in various ways. Besides buying and inheriting land, people can obtain informal and formal rental contracts financed through cash or in-kind sharecropping arrangements. Furthermore, landless farmers, graduates, and poor families can gain access to new land as part of an overall government effort to reduce overpopulation in certain areas, and to give disadvantaged segments of the population income and employment opportunities. Between 1988 and 1992, for example, 45,086 graduate families obtained five feddans each from the government through this initiative (Hussein et al., 1999).

## WHY GENDER MATTERS IN LAND AND WATER ISSUES

### Women and Land

Access to land is vital to all farmers, men and women alike. Land is the basis for agricultural production and is a crucial determinant in employment, income, and access to other productive resources, services, and credit. Studies elsewhere in the world have shown that land productivity can be improved if people own the land they are working.

Land produces food for household consumption and contributes to household nutritional security. There is evidence from other countries that when women own land and receive income, their contribution to household food security is bigger than men's (Quisumbing et al., 1995). Land also produces crops that farmers sell for cash, which is then used to purchase food and household items, health and education services, and other necessary items and services.

Women and men farmers in Egypt value land highly. According to Weidemann (1994), "most farmers aspire to save money to buy additional land, which they regard as a secure asset" (p. 6). Mansour (1998) states that "land ownership is a particularly important determinant of socio-economic status in rural Egypt" (p. 15).

For women in rural Egypt, access to land is important because they are heavily involved in growing food for subsistence (wheat and maize); producing cash crops (such as cotton, sugarcane, rice, and horticulture); weeding, harvesting, and processing; selling agricultural produce (fruits, vegetables, poultry, dairy products) on a small scale; and caring for livestock and poultry. Although women's participation in agriculture in Egypt varies according to region and class,<sup>13</sup> it has been estimated that women's contributions to this sector is high. Women sow, transplant seedlings, fertilize, irrigate, weed, harvest, grade, pack, store, and

<sup>13</sup> Women's work in agriculture is also dependent on male migration. During the 1970s and 1980s when male migration to the Arab Gulf countries was high, agricultural production was heavily dependent on women labor. This trend has been on the decline because demand for Egyptian male labor in the Arab Gulf region has declined significantly.

market agricultural, produce, dairy, and poultry products. Generally speaking, women are more involved in labor-intensive and less involved in mechanized tasks than men:<sup>14</sup>

- Women are responsible for 40 percent of all livestock production.
- Women provide 54 percent of the labor required in cotton production.
- Women provide 40 percent of all labor required in crop production in the Delta.
- Women provide 75 percent of the labor required in berseem harvesting, 83 percent in rice planting, 85 percent in wheat storage, 72 percent in maize fertilizing, 45.8 percent in soybean thinning, 50.3 percent in seed treatment of peanuts, 45.6 percent in lentil transportation, 24.3 percent in broad bean weeding, 7.6 percent in tomato land preparation, and 14.8 percent in pest control of the potato crop (Mansour, 1994).

Women's access to and control of land and water is important not only because women work long and hard hours in agriculture, but also because the burden of poverty falls disproportionately on the landless population and on women in particular (Weidemann, 1994). According to El-Laithy (1996), female-headed households, which constitute approximately 16 percent of all rural households, are twice as likely to be poor than male-headed households in rural Egypt.<sup>15</sup> El-Laithy (1996) estimates that 70 percent of female-headed households in rural areas cannot obtain their minimum basic requirements of food and non-food commodities.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, improving poor women's access to land may be one way to alleviate the harsh conditions in which they live and provide them with income and employment opportunities.

Rural women have strong connections to the land and all that it produces. Women farmers interviewed for this study showed intense feelings when talking about land. Land, they stated, was important because of social status, history, and culture. For them, land is a social space. It is a point of convergence for the family, a place where family relations and outside interactions occur. Land is the basis of social order and village life.

By not owning land themselves, women who work in agriculture do so as unpaid family labor or as daily or seasonal (but rarely permanent) agricultural laborers. It has been estimated that 23 percent of agricultural workers in Egypt are women.<sup>17</sup> According to a survey of 4,448 people by Datt and colleagues (1998), 14.1 percent of women respondents worked as casual wage laborers. Women are paid very low wages, considerably less than

<sup>14</sup> Another factor that might affect the extent to which women participate in agricultural work as family labor is the distance between their homes and the field. The closer women live to plots owned by the family, the more likely they are to work on the plot.

<sup>15</sup> According to the Agricultural Census of 1990, approximately 3.8 percent of rural women-headed households had no land or any other kind of holding.

<sup>16</sup> Poverty of female-headed households is particularly prevalent in the governorates of Assiut, Menya, Souhag, Beni Suef, and Fayoum.

<sup>17</sup> According to a 1992 survey of five governorates by Cairo University's Center for Agricultural Economic Studies.

those paid to men for similar work. A study of 50 families in Dakahlia showed that for eight working hours women received LE4.68 while men received LE6.19.<sup>18</sup>

Women who do have land are more economically secure than those without, and they are likely to be better off during personal crises, such as widowhood or divorce. Land ownership reduces women's economic and social dependence on men. Data collected from elsewhere in the world have shown that when women own land, their incomes improve, as does their status in the family, including their negotiating and bargaining power with other family members.

Women's access to land is important because it is the traditional form of collateral that allows them to apply to banks for formal credit. Most formal lending programs in Egypt require land as collateral. Women need credit to start new microenterprises and purchase machinery, buildings, more land, and all other necessary inputs to improve production efficiency. In 1993, however, men received 88 percent of the short-term production loans and 84 percent of the investment loans from PBDAC, while women received 12 percent and 16 percent respectively (El-Sanabary et al., 1999).

## Women and Water

There is little available information on the role of women in water management and irrigation. Until recently, the general perception in Egypt was that irrigation is a man's job because it is mechanized and because much irrigation occurs at night. For the most part, women's experience with water was basically perceived as being limited to household usage.

Recent interest and research on women and water issues has shown otherwise. A study conducted by Ibrahim (1999) in two governorates (Menoufia and Menya) showed that although women do not operate irrigation pumps, they often turn on water and supervise its flow in the field, supervise workers during irrigation, and dig and clean ditches. Women (and never men) are also involved in collecting and transporting water for household use (drinking, washing, cleaning, cooking, laundry), as well as getting rid of household wastewater by either carrying it to the ditch for disposal or throwing it near the house (Mansour, 1998).

According to Ibrahim (1999), women are members of the recently established water user associations, although women farmers interviewed for this project were keen on expressing their concerns over water problems such as water scarcity and water pollution. In his analysis Egyptian water policies, Ibrahim found no mention of gender in any water policy document.

A survey of 355 farmers' wives in a study to collect information on the knowledge, attitude, and practices of Egyptian farmers toward water management commissioned by GreenCom

<sup>18</sup> In the village of Brigat in Beheira Governorate, which this team visited, women are paid LE6 compared to LE8 paid to men for a seven-hour work day. Differentials in daily wages between men and women working in agriculture have been well documented. For example, see Mansour (1994) and Weidemann (1994).

Egypt III and prepared by El-Zanaty and Associates, indicated that almost one-third of the women surveyed helped in irrigation and most showed considerable knowledge of irrigation problems and their consequences.

Because of their different roles in water use, men and women have different perspectives of this important resource. More research is needed to understand women's role in water use so that their needs, problems, and priorities are properly understood and addressed by policies and programs.

### WOMEN'S ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER LAND AND WATER

Islamic tradition and rural culture place high value on the family as a unit of social structure and as a unit of production and welfare. This is especially true for farm households in Egypt. According to Hopkins (1993), it is vital to understand:

the importance of the family and the household as key organizational units in agriculture and rural life. The household is not only important as a managerial unit, but also as the institution in which the reproduction of society occurs. The household is the link between the labor process in agriculture on the one hand and family and social continuity on the other (p. 185).

Although labor is divided along gender lines in rural Egypt, the division does not extend to there being "men crops" or "women crops," or "female plots" and "male plots," as is the case in sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, women and men work together and share agricultural labor responsibilities and decision making.

This sharing is evidenced by the fact that with the exception of dairy and poultry household production (a woman's job) and most marketing activities (a man's job), most other productive activities are performed by men and women alike. Furthermore, women manage the farms and control all farm work when the men are absent, ill, or deceased. Thus, it would be reasonable to state that although most landholdings belong to men, women are not excluded from benefits received from the land. Discussions with farmers (men and women alike) brought forth the concept of *musharakah*, or sharing. Here, the idea is that the family as a whole benefits from the land, irrespective of who holds it. It would be useful to keep this notion of *musharakah* in mind when interpreting the data presented in the following sections.

Considerably fewer women than men own land in Egypt. At the national level, about one-tenth of all landowners are women, with considerable variation among regions.<sup>19</sup> A breakdown of land ownership records by gender in six villages in Gharbiya, four in Minya, and four in Giza governorates indicates that 27.9 percent, 26.8 percent, and 19.6 percent of total landholdings, respectively, were registered in women's names (Department of Taxation, 1989).

<sup>19</sup> Data in Mansour (1994) show that 15.5 percent, 11.6 percent, and 4.1 percent of all holdings in Middle and Upper Egypt, Lower Egypt, and the desert governorates were owned by women according to estimates from the Agricultural Census, 1990.

To better understand women's access to land and water resources in Egypt, it would be useful to distinguish their access according to whether the land is new or old. According to a recent USAID-funded gender study on the grape sector in Egypt (El-Messiri, 1998), women landholders are more common in the Old Lands than in the New Lands. El-Messiri argues that the New Lands are inhospitable to women and lack the benefits of the close kinship and community ties that exist in the Old Lands.

### Women's Landholdings in the Old Lands

In the Old Lands, women generally come to own land through inheritance. Although there are no data to substantiate this finding, it is evident from conversations with various key actors in this field that only a small portion of women choose to purchase land with their savings, preferring to buy real estate and jewelry instead.

It is not entirely clear from the limited data available on the extent to which women rent land in Egypt. Some argue that women rarely rent land. One reason given is that they prefer to put the rental agreement in a male family member's name in case of litigation (especially for credit defaults) and possible imprisonment. Data from a survey study by Mansour (1999) show that only two women in Kalyubia out of a total of 2,000 households in this governorate and three other governorates rent land.

Male landowners are skeptical of renting out their land to women because they believe that women are unlikely to abide by the terms of the rental agreement and will not be successful farmers. Conservative traditions and culture also stand in the way of women renting in the Old Lands. These relate to the idea that women who rent are more likely to be independent and less accountable to men.

When women do own land, the vast majority do not manage the land themselves. In the Old Lands, tradition and custom are often extremely rigid and more restricting than in the New Lands. Women's roles in agriculture are more defined and limited to certain activities in certain crops (for example, in cotton harvesting). In Luxor Governorate, where over 40 percent of the land is used for sugar cane, tradition and custom prevent women from working in sugar cane fields and sugar processing plants and from being casual agricultural laborers. One explanation given for their lack of participation is that sugar cane requires heavy manual work, which women are incapable of performing. Others explained that it is undesirable for women to enter a sugar cane field because it can conceal potential encounters with men. Although women do own land in Luxor, only 12 of the 1,560 *hiaza* card holders<sup>20</sup> in one Luxor village were women.

An examination of *hiaza* card holders in the village of Brigat, a village in the Governorate of Beheira with a population of approximately 70,000 that the team visited, yielded similar

<sup>20</sup> *Hiaza* cards are the only official document that landowners and tenants have to prove ownership and tenancy rights to land. The cards are issued by the local agricultural cooperative. Before liberalization, the government used the card as a way to control agricultural production by the farmer. Today, the card is used only for taxation purposes and to receive credit, production inputs, and marketing services.

findings with respect to the low number of women *hiaza* card holders. Out 1,200 card holders, only 51 were women (4.2 percent).

Using the Egyptian General Survey Authority database and records from local cooperatives, Ganter and Abou-Zeid (1997) estimated that of the 26,000 landowners in the Kom Ombo district of Aswan Governorate, 36 percent of them were women. In the Nubian village of Dakkah (which was established in 1962 as part of a resettlement scheme), an examination of the *hiaza* cards at the village cooperative showed that 61 percent of card holders were women. According to the authors, the relatively high proportion of women landowners in Dakkah is attributed to the fact that government employees and those unable to work the land were excluded from this land allocation program, thus encouraging their wives to apply instead as primary beneficiaries. Furthermore, Nubian matrilineal customs make it easier for a woman to own land because "she remains with her own kinship after marriage" (p. 27).

A survey to define the socio-economic characteristics of 2,000 selected families in the four rural governorates of Beheira, Kalyubia, Fayoum, and Souhag by the Policy Coordination Unit for Women in Agriculture indicated that the percentage of 4,780 women over 15 years of age who own land did not exceed 5 percent (1 percent in Souhag, 1.7 percent in Beheira, 2.9 percent in Kalyubia, and 4.1 percent in Fayoum). Furthermore, women landholdings were quite small, averaging less than 1 feddan for the four governorates.

### Women's Landholdings in the New Lands

In the New Lands, where communities are still relatively new and living conditions are harsher, the frontier mentality there demands participation from all members of the community—men, women, and children alike.<sup>21</sup>

Compared to the Old Lands, women's labor participation in agriculture in the New Lands appears to be greater. In discussions held with women in the New Lands, women indicated that they are involved in all aspects of crop and animal production, including irrigation and postharvest activities. Women's participation declines somewhat as the new communities settle in and farming systems and social organizations are established. According to field experts, it is not uncommon for women in the New Lands to drive tractors, use heavy machinery, supervise daily male workers in the field, and engage in all aspects of production, including fertilizing and spraying pesticide.

On the New Lands, 60,000 graduates have received land to date, about 12 percent of which are women. In the New Lands Agricultural Services Project, which this team visited in Noubariya, about 8 percent of graduates who received land were women.

The number of women beneficiaries in the New Land schemes varies from location to location and village to village, ranging from none in some sites to 33.9 percent in other sites (Table 14).

<sup>21</sup> Personal observations in Wadi Rayan, Bangar El-Sukkar, and Site 20, as well as from conversations held with field experts.

Table 14: Number and Percent of Women Graduate Beneficiaries

| Village             | Location         | Men   | Women | % Women <sup>22</sup> |
|---------------------|------------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|
| Abu El-Yusr         | Site 20          | 681   | 19    | 2.8                   |
| Suleiman            | Site 20          | 681   | 59    | 8.6                   |
| Al-Yashaa           | Site 20          | 1,034 | 88    | 8.5                   |
| Adam                | Site 20          | 598   | 70    | 11.7                  |
| Bilal               | Site 20          | N/A   | N/A   | —                     |
| Abdul Wahab         | Site 20          | N/A   | N/A   | —                     |
| Village 1           | Bangar El-Sukkar | 91    | 14    | 15.4                  |
| Village 2           | Bangar El-Sukkar | 44    | 11    | 25.0                  |
| Village 3           | Bangar El-Sukkar | 29    | 3     | 10.3                  |
| Village 4           | Bangar El-Sukkar | 36    | 11    | 30.5                  |
| Village 5           | Bangar El-Sukkar | 127   | 18    | 14.2                  |
| Village 6           | Bangar El-Sukkar | 68    | 6     | 8.8                   |
| Village 7           | Bangar El-Sukkar | 36    | 10    | 27.8                  |
| Village 13          | Bangar El-Sukkar | 171   | 8     | 4.7                   |
| Village 14          | Bangar El-Sukkar | 155   | 39    | 25.1                  |
| Village 15          | Bangar El-Sukkar | 191   | 3     | 1.6                   |
| Village 16          | Bangar El-Sukkar | 116   | 84    | 72.4 <sup>22</sup>    |
| Village 17          | Bangar El-Sukkar | 166   | 33    | 19.9                  |
| Village 18          | Bangar El-Sukkar | 181   | 17    | 9.4                   |
| Village 19          | Bangar El-Sukkar | 160   | 22    | 13.7                  |
| Village 20          | Bangar El-Sukkar | 193   | 20    | 10.4                  |
| Village 21          | Bangar El-Sukkar | 152   | 21    | 13.8                  |
| Al-Markazia         | Bangar El-Sukkar | 203   | 44    | 21.7                  |
| Salamah Hijazi      | Bangar El-Sukkar | 130   | 28    | 21.5                  |
| Muhammad Farid      | Bangar El-Sukkar | 152   | 20    | 13.1                  |
| Al-Tanmieh          | Bangar El-Sukkar | 392   | 67    | 17.1                  |
| Sayed Darwish       | Bangar El-Sukkar | 189   | 64    | 33.9                  |
| Al-Oula             | Bangar El-Sukkar | 478   | 39    | 8.2                   |
| Al-Zuhoor           | Bangar El-Sukkar | 440   | 37    | 8.4                   |
| Khaled Ibn Al-Walid | Bangar El-Sukkar | 136   | 0     | 0                     |
| Baghdad             | Bangar El-Sukkar | 124   | 0     | 0                     |
| Al-Busra            | Bangar El-Sukkar | 128   | 0     | 0                     |
| Abu Masoud          | Bangar El-Sukkar | 128   | 0     | 0                     |

Source: Local Administrative Units

### CONSTRAINTS ON WOMEN'S ACCESS TO, USE, AND CONTROL OVER LAND

Under the Egyptian constitution, women are guaranteed equal rights with men. Women have full political and economic rights, with no legal codes that prevent them from buying, selling, and renting land, livestock, machinery, or any other resource or input necessary for agricultural production.

<sup>22</sup> Village 16 in Bangar El-Sukkar was especially set up as a women's graduate village.

## Inheritance Laws

Under Islamic law (*shari'a*), women enjoy explicit economic rights such as the right to own and control personal assets, including land, and the right to be involved in all economic transactions, such as trading and commerce. Islam clearly calls for separate ownership of property between husband and wife and does not require women to support their families in times of financial crisis (Antoun, 1968; Tully, 1990).

Although the *shari'a* allows women to inherit, women's inheritance rights are not equal to those bestowed to men. In Islam, women inherit one-half of the share that men receive when both have the same relationship to the deceased. The reasoning behind this is that husbands are obliged to support their wives and families and thus receive a larger share of the estate, whereas women are not obliged to do so, because they are already taken care of by their husbands. Islamic inheritance laws are inflexible, because they are prescribed in detail in the Quran.

Because women inherit smaller amounts of land than their male counterparts, women in Egypt own smaller areas of land than men (Mansour, 1994; El-Zanaty and Associates, 1998). According to a national survey conducted on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of Egyptian farmers toward water resources, the mean cultivated area for women was only 1.2 feddans, compared with 2.4 feddans for men.

Table 15 presents landholding size by gender for the years 1982 and 1990 by region in Egypt. The average woman's landholdings are consistently smaller than the average man's landholdings in all regions (except for Middle and Upper Egypt in 1990, where men's and women's average holdings were the same).

**Table 15: Landholding Size by Gender**

| Year | Region                 | Average Holding Size | Men: Average Holding Size | Women: Average Holding Size |
|------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1982 | Lower Egypt            | 2.6                  | 2.7                       | 1.9                         |
|      | Middle and Upper Egypt | 2.1                  | 2.1                       | 1.7                         |
|      | Desert Governorates    | 8.4                  | 8.5                       | 5.2                         |
|      | National Level         | 2.5                  | 2.5                       | 1.8                         |
| 1990 | Lower Egypt            | 2.5                  | 2.6                       | 2.0                         |
|      | Middle and Upper Egypt | 2.0                  | 2.0                       | 2.0                         |
|      | Desert Governorates    | 11.2                 | 11.3                      | 9.9                         |
|      | National Level         | 2.4                  | 2.4                       | 2.0                         |

Adapted from Mansour (1994)

Furthermore, although women do inherit land according to *shari'a*, cultural traditions and norms, which are often very conservative with respect to women, often reduce woman's access to and control over her land. A woman often chooses, or is encouraged, to give up her inheritance rights (and ownership rights) to brothers or other male members of the family in exchange for protection from her husband and his family in times of crisis, or for support in times of need.

The issue of inheritance is a highly sensitive one. It has been discussed by women's groups in Egypt for decades. Changing the laws will most likely be difficult. There is a need, however, to educate women about their legal rights to land and the importance of land ownership. It is important also to teach women how to manage their own lands so that they do not shy away from land ownership for fear that they cannot manage it. This is especially important in view of new tenancy laws that allow women landholders to gain control over rented land. Unless they know how to manage it, women may sell their land or give control over it to male relatives, thus losing a valuable resource.

### **Criteria for Distributing New Lands to Women Graduates**

The Mubarak Graduate Project began distributing new lands in 1987. About 37,000 graduates have been selected for this project thus far. The Executive Branch of University Graduates, based in Noubariya City, has an ad hoc selection committee, which is responsible for establishing criteria for selecting beneficiaries, placing advertisements in newspapers, and interviewing potential beneficiaries. Potential recipients were ranked according to a point system used to select them. The conditions that have been set are:

- Applicants must not be older than 30;
- Applicants must not be employed;
- Applicants must be exempt from military service; and
- Applicant must not have a past felony record.

Applicants receive additional points if they have an agricultural background or if they live in rural areas and belong to a farming family.

An additional criterion affects women applicants only. That is: *women applicants must be unmarried to qualify for this program*. This criterion is based on the reasoning that unmarried women are in need of employment (versus married women, who most often give up their jobs to stay home to do household work and raise children), and thus are more deserving in this project. Moreover, married women are not as needy as unmarried ones because they are already provided for by their husbands. Further reasoning in defense of this criterion was given based on the argument that husbands of women recipients would most likely be unwilling to relocate to their wife's land and be dependent on them or be "at their mercy."

Although this criterion limits women's access to new land provided by the Graduate Project, it is important to note that in practice, it is not a serious deterrent to women applicants, and most married women get land anyway. This is because by the time the application is submitted, the beneficiary chosen, the land allocated, and the graduate relocated, several years have passed, by which time most women beneficiaries have gotten married and had children.

One important recommendation that stems from this discussion is to open applications to receive land to married and unmarried women graduates alike. Furthermore, a certain portion of the land distributed can be reserved for women applicants. The distribution system must be fair to ensure that women are not inadvertently being allocated poorer lands in land distribution schemes where land quality is variable and access to water is dependent on location.<sup>23</sup>

## IMPLICATIONS OF POLICY REFORMS ON WOMEN'S LAND OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

### Changes Aimed at Increasing Women's Land Ownership

The GOE—MALR in particular—is clearly committed to the advancement of rural women in general, as well as to the importance of land and water resources to women farmers. To illustrate this commitment, a ministerial decree was issued in 1997 that improved women's ownership of land in the newly reclaimed areas.

In 1997, because of the dedication and commitment of Suzan M. Kamel,<sup>24</sup> Executive Director of World Food Program Project ARE 2499/3, MALR issued a ministerial decree that required that in all World Food Program-assisted settlement projects in Egypt, 20 percent of the land allocated to each household (graduates or landless farmers) would be in spouses' names. This decree effectively guarantees women's ownership of land in the case where the man is the primary beneficiary, and vice versa. It also allows spouses—men and women alike—to become members in the village cooperative and, consequently, have access to credit.

The decree was implemented in 1998. In addition to giving women some control over land, the decree is expected to discourage polygamy and divorce, especially given that the land itself is not sellable until after 30 years of use by the original beneficiaries. It is expected that this decree will be increased to 40 percent in the near future. In addition to this effort, Kamel is working to ensure that 25 percent of the land distributed to graduates and 10 percent of the land distributed to landless farmers is allocated to women. This will improve access to land by poor women who head households and who are usually divorced or widowed, or support a disabled husband.

Several important issues, however, do limit women's access to land. These will be discussed at length in this section.

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<sup>23</sup> This question is also valid for lands divided after inheritance.

<sup>24</sup> Ms. Kamel was presented the 1999 International Women's Day Award by the World Food Program for efforts in this area.

## New Tenure Law to Formalize Land Ownership

In an effort to develop a land market, the GOE passed Law No. 96 in 1992, which provided landowners with the right to take back their land from tenants and charge annual rents based on market conditions. This new law canceled Agrarian Reform Law No. 178 of 1952, which gave complete security to tenants and allowed contracts to extend to tenant heirs, making contracts eternal. Rents remained fixed and extremely low and had no relationship to the productive value of the land (Sharaf et al., 1997).

To ensure the smooth application of the new law, the GOE gave tenants and landlords a five-year transition period, from 1992 to 1996. To implement the new law, each district set up reconciliation committees to settle all disputes that arose between tenants and landowners.

It is not clear from the available statistics how much land or how many tenants and families are affected by the new tenancy law. Estimates have ranged from 13 to 24 percent of the total land area and 286,000 to 500,000 tenant holders (Assaad and Rouchdy, 1998). Furthermore, it is unclear how the new land tenure law has affected small landholders and landless farmers.

To address the problem of tenants whose contracts were not renewed and have no other means of employment, the GOE has given them the option of applying for new land in the reclaimed areas. PBDAC also has established a special program to provide loans to tenants to purchase land, but the terms of the loans are difficult.<sup>25</sup> The Social Fund for Development also assisted, with limited success, tenants who are willing to purchase land they already hold or to establish alternative enterprises.

Under the old law, only the eldest brother, or the person who worked the land, had cultivation rights to lands redistributed to landless peasants after the 1952 revolution, conditional on his giving his siblings their fair share of the land's production, according to Islamic practices. With the new tenure law, all those who inherit these lands have the right to cultivate and are landholders with *hiaza* cards.

Although no studies have been conducted to verify these issues, the new law is likely to have both negative and positive effects on women. On the one hand, poor landless families (women and men alike) who have lost their tenancy as a result of this new law will be negatively affected, particularly female-headed households, who constitute the poorest rural households and whose employment and income opportunities in agriculture are limited. The loss of land will force women from poor households to work in unstable jobs as wage laborers at very low rates (Ganter and Abu Zeid, 1997).

On the other hand, women who inherit redistributed land will have greater control over their inherited property, because the new law provides all inheritors (women and men alike) with

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<sup>25</sup> A landless tenant has to pay up to 70 percent of land value at 7 percent interest on a repayment period of 7 to 10 years.

*hiaza* cards, unlike under the old law, when only the older brother (or someone acting on his behalf who worked the land) received this benefit. This latter system was confusing to inheritors and was the cause of family disputes and conflict.

### **The Impact on Women of the Policy Favoring Medium and Big Investors in the New Lands**

Currently, economic liberalization policies in Egypt strongly encourage large, privately developed new lands, such those lands along the Cairo-Alexandria road, or in more distant and isolated locations such as Toshki, East Owainat, and the North Sinai Development Projects. These lands are expected to be used for profit-oriented agricultural enterprises equipped with modern technology, to grow mainly high-profit drip-irrigated, horticultural crops for export. GOE supports these projects because it hopes that the farms will generate new employment opportunities, as well as shift population to these areas and relieve overpopulation in the Delta and Nile Valley

Privately developed new lands depend heavily on mechanization but also on humans. Generally speaking, though, these farms offer employment mostly to men, most of whom live on the farm in housing provided by the investor. These men live and work on the farm for weeks at a time and return to their homes for week or 10-day breaks.

Only new farms that are close to well-established communities employ women, usually as daily or seasonal laborers and almost never permanently. As such, women (usually girls and young women) travel long distances every day for relatively low wages. They are expected to give a considerable portion of their wages to the labor contractor or transporter.

In more isolated areas where new lands are being privately developed, such as East Owainat for example, women do not appear to constitute any portion of the agricultural labor force, and the distances involved prevent women from working in these regions as daily or seasonal workers. Wives of employees on these farms do not appear to be choosing to move with their husbands either, even though these projects are set up with the intention of creating new family communities with housing, schools, hospitals, and other services.

The fact that these new investment farms do not utilize women labor has two important implications for women in the agricultural sector. First, these farms are reducing women's potential participation in agricultural production in the New Lands, yet, at the same time, they are increasing the workload and responsibilities (mainly unpaid work) of those women left behind by male family members working far away on the new investment farms.

Creating new communities is no easy task. But to ensure the success of these new agricultural businesses, the availability and efficiency of the labor force is essential. More thought must be given to ensure community life and happiness. This can be understood to mean, in addition to physical comfort and the provision of services, especially childcare, a labor force made up of men and women who can work in crop production as well as in food processing and other related agricultural services.

## POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC ACTIONS FOR CHANGE

The following recommendations stem from a careful examination of the data collected for this study, as well as from the discussions and findings of the stakeholders' workshop. They are consistent with USAID's overall strategy in Egypt, are respectful of cultural norms and religious teachings, and are in accordance with GOE's overall position regarding the importance of empowering rural women through income and employment generating opportunities. The objective is to improve the policy environment within which rural women operate.

### Policy Options to Improve Women's Access to Land

- Expand and increase the 1997 ministerial decree. Although the 1997 ministerial decree is a great step in the right direction, more is needed to improve women's access to land. This could be achieved by:
  - Expanding the decree to include all newly reclaimed areas, rather than just the areas where the World Food Program operates.
  - Increasing spousal ownership of land from the current 20 percent to 50 percent, and ensuring that this program targets women from the Old Lands who have lost their tenancies as a result of the new land tenure law.
  - Increasing the percentage of women beneficiaries from the current 10 percent to 30 percent.
- Remove the restriction that only unmarried women graduates can apply to new land allocation programs, which will allow married women to benefit as well.

### Areas for Programmatic Interventions

- *Awareness raising through media campaigns and extension:* Changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practices can be achieved through thoughtful and well-designed media campaigns. These campaigns can target both women and men, and they can be designed in a way to increase women's awareness of their legal rights to land ownership and control. Training programs can be designed by extension specialists to inform women farmers of their legal rights to land. Village leaders (for example, *omdas* and *shiekhs*) could be targeted since they are an influential group whose responsibilities include mediating land conflicts at the village level.
- *Legal counseling:* Many women who inherit land enter disputes and conflicts with other members of the family. One way to assist women in these conflicts, and safeguard their rights to land, is to establish a legal counseling office that encourages women to register their lands formally and provides assistance in buying, selling, and inheriting land.

- *Special credit interventions:* Innovative credit programs can be designed using non-traditional forms of collateral such as a woman's character, completion of a training program, an analysis of the proposed enterprise, livestock holdings, or group guarantees for individual or collective loans. Special projects—such as Women's World Banking, which is a program that guarantees loans made to women by commercial banks—can be instituted. Local institutions (such as women's groups, which could assume collective liability) can be established to ensure that women are able to obtain credit to lease or buy land to expand their economic activities. Women can be trained and provided with administrative support to handle money and dealings with lending institutions.

Needless to say, any successful effort to provide women with new employment and income opportunities will increase their cash earnings and contribute to their ability to access land. Such projects could provide training in productive skills and education; credit and special funds in productive/income generating activities; development of appropriate technologies to reduce women's work in traditional home activities such as water hauling and milling; and technologies that directly improve their productivity in food harvesting, processing, storing, and transportation to markets. Projects could concentrate on livestock and horticulture, for example, where women's labor participation is high. Equally important is to provide training and general education for rural women in productive skills to increase their employment opportunities outside agriculture.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### EXTENSION, TRAINING, AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER TO WOMEN

The transition of the Egyptian agricultural economy from a socialist system to a market-based economy has drastically changed the role of MALR and its relationship to farmers. The policy reforms instituted since 1991 have reduced the role of the state and given greater responsibility to individual farmers and their households. The GOE is no longer involved in making farming decisions or in providing agricultural inputs. Instead, it promotes private sector growth and the privatization of public companies, and encourages exports and agribusiness.

The reforms, which are summarized in Table E-1 of the Executive Summary, have serious implications for research, extension, training, and technology transfer, all of which are essential for improving farm practices, increasing productivity and incomes, and enhancing the growth of agribusiness and trade. MALR is no longer in the business of telling the farmers what to plant and when, giving them the seeds to plant, or purchasing their crops to market. MALR's responsibilities have shifted to research and development of new technologies (including new seed varieties, appropriate fertilizers, and pesticides) and their proper utilization, and provision of information, extension, training, and technology transfer to farmers. His Excellency, Yusuf Wali, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, has recently confirmed this policy shift by announcing that the ministry will, henceforth, focus mainly on research and extension, which will be greatly strengthened to meet the demands of the new market economy. Accordingly, the role of extension system and of the extension agent is no longer providing top-down instruction from the state to the farmers or ensuring that farmers follow government orders. Extension is now a means of developing and disseminating knowledge and training in skills required for new market economy. Quality control is also a major concern of MALR.

This transition poses challenges and opportunities for the government, extension agents, and farmers alike. The challenge for the government is how to restructure extension and training to meet the needs of thousands, if not millions, of decision makers, both men and women. The research, extension, and training systems need to be restructured in response to the transformation of the agricultural sector as a whole. The extension agents need to assume new roles and responsibilities that require new training and skills development to increase their effectiveness in meeting farmers' needs. They need to be able to work with all stakeholders to identify needs and resources for extension and training. This will make them more effective in helping the farmers enhance their knowledge base and skills. Farmers who have depended for decades on MALR to make decisions for them are now at a loss in deciding which crops to plant; which varieties of seeds to use; which fertilizers and pesticides to use; and above all, how and where to market their farm products. The need for information and skills is greatest among women farmers.

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS SECTION

This chapter has a twofold purpose:

- To assess the level and pattern of women's participation in extension, training, and technology transfer;<sup>26</sup> and
- To recommend policy reform and programmatic actions that may be undertaken by the Egyptian government, especially MALR, to increase women's productivity, income, and contributions to the Egyptian agricultural sector.

The discussion and analysis presented here are limited to agricultural extension and training of farmers and extension workers. Training and extension for agribusiness are discussed in Chapter Two.

## METHODOLOGY

The information and recommendations in this chapter are based on data obtained from the following sources:

- Review of research and project documents;
- Interviews with key stakeholders, including officials in MALR's research, extension, and training departments; women and men professors in colleges of agriculture (at the universities of Alexandria, Cairo, and Menoufia); contractors of major USAID agricultural projects; and staff members of representative donor agencies;
- Focus group discussions with researchers, extension agents, and women and men farmers in the governorates of Gharbia, Sharkia, and Beheira.
- Site visits to women's productive activities, as well as to several MALR extension and training centers;
- Observations of a GTZ female farmers' learning group in Sharkia;
- A stakeholders' workshop where more than 100 women and men discussed the gender team's initial findings and made recommendations for policy and programmatic changes to enhance women's access to resources in all five focus areas of Phase II of the APRP gender study.

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<sup>26</sup> The paper does not deal with technology development since little information is available on the subject, particularly in relationship to women.

## **IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION, TRAINING, AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER TO THE EGYPTIAN ECONOMY**

Agricultural extension, training, and technology transfer are critically important because they provide the information, skills, and technologies which increase the likelihood that farmers will participate in and benefit from opportunities provided by the new market economy in Egypt. After taking part in effective extension and training programs, farmers are more likely to adopt new technologies that will increase farm productivity and, thus, increase their income and alleviate poverty. Through extension programs, women and men learn about farm practices and new crop varieties, new irrigation techniques, effective fertilizer and pesticide use, and the care of livestock so that they can make informed decisions in these areas. Similarly, credit-related extension and training make farmers better able to access and benefit from the growing number of credit programs provided by the Egyptian government and donor agencies. Extension and training are also the best available means of developing marketable and income-generating skills for the ever-increasing number of unemployed male and female high school and vocational education graduates in rural areas.

Technology development and transfer are a key concern of international donors, especially USAID, which has provided substantial support for technology transfer, export promotion, and training as vehicles for promoting agricultural growth and development.

### **WHY GENDER MATTERS IN EXTENSION, TRAINING, AND TECHNOLOGY**

Egyptian women, who have always played an important role in agriculture, have assumed greater responsibilities for agriculture work in recent years as men have taken on non-farm work in villages or urban areas. Women are increasingly managing and operating farms on a regular and full-time basis.

Extension and training are the best available means of knowledge acquisition and skill development for illiterate women, who are estimated to be 65 percent of the rural female population (compared with 35 percent for males). Without adequate extension and training, these women will continue to be concentrated in the non-formal agricultural economy as low-paid casual and seasonal workers or in unskilled low-paying employment in the formal economy. According to the Egypt Demographic Health Survey of 1995, less than one in five women work for cash. Only 14 percent of women own any assets they can sell without permission. Only a small proportion interact with modern financial institutions: barely 3 percent have a savings or a bank account, and only 5 percent know of a non-traditional source of credit (primarily banks or employers) (EDHS, 1995). Effective extension and training can help reverse these low indicators and empower women socially and economically.

Agricultural extension and training are particularly important for peasant women who often manage small landholdings (0.25 to 1 feddan) and for female heads of households, estimated to be between 17 and 23 percent of the rural population. These women are often very poor,

and they lack training and management skills to be able to manage their farms properly or to negotiate equitable wages as laborers. These women shoulder the whole responsibility for farm production. They play a key role in food and cash crops for the household, in postharvest activities, and in poultry and livestock care and dairy production (Mansour, 1994). They are hampered by the common belief that women do not need direct extension services since they can get the information from their male relatives.

If women are given access to quality information and training, all development indicators can improve. Research findings over the past two decades in different countries show that educating and training girls and women helps improve the nutritional and health status of children; reduce child and infant mortality rates; and increase child and maternal survival rates. Education and training also increases women's decision-making power in the family and community and their participation in civil society organizations.

Research by the World Bank suggests that "increasing women's physical and human resource capital to the level of men's will bring significant gains in agricultural production" (Fong and Bushan, 1996). Economist T. Paul Schultz, after studying the returns to investment in education in several countries, argued that increasing investment in women's human capital, especially education and training, has significant economic and social returns. This is especially true in countries where the gap between male and female education is greatest. He concludes that economic efficiency considerations make a strong case for more investment in women's education and training (Schultz, 1998).

Two decades of experience in developing countries have shown that addressing gender issues and women's concerns in extension and training contributes to project success. For instance, managers of the Egyptian/German Cotton Sector Promotion Project and the Integrated Pest Management Program found that including women in training and extension enhanced the application of extension messages and helped increase efficiency and productivity. It also contributed to social cohesion and family welfare.

## **OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AND TRAINING**

Many organizations are providing extension and training for farmers and microentrepreneurs. In Egypt, the primary responsibility for providing extension and training for women rests with the Central Administration for Extension in MALR. In addition, 14 other research institutes (belonging to the Agricultural Research Center) provide their own extension and training. Agricultural cooperatives are also engaged in the provision of extension services. Extension related to loan and microcredit programs is provided by lending institutions—mainly the PBDAC and the Social Fund for Development—and their intermediaries (organizations administering the credit programs). Furthermore, many integrated rural development programs provide income-generation activities for women.

The private sector is assuming a bigger role in training and extension to build the productive skills of workers and the managerial skills of its managers and supervisors. For instance, new

private companies and associations—such as Pioneer, a maize association—promote and market their hybrid seeds to farmers. The government and the private sector have developed demonstration fields to test new crop varieties and apply technological innovations so that farmers can be shown the results of such applications. Agricultural cooperatives, which are no longer involved in provision of farm inputs, provide useful information to the farmers on new crop varieties and other agricultural technologies. National and international NGOs have also expanded their roles in providing agricultural extension and training.

These extension and training services are provided to women farmers and graduates both in the Old and the New Lands, with a recognition of the different farming conditions as well as the educational levels and training needs of women in these distinct areas.

Table 16 provides a summary of extension and training provided to Egyptian women by a select number of organizations, especially MALR and donor-funded projects.

### **General Observation on Women's Access to Extension and Training**

- Women's roles in agriculture are acknowledged and supported by MALR, as indicated by the inclusion of women's development projects in the National Development Plan for Agriculture in Egypt for the 1990s.
- The Policy Coordinating Unit on Women and Agriculture was created to ensure attention to women's concerns in all MALR programs. It is managed by a senior woman horticultural specialist and adviser to the Minister.
- A good deal of research is being carried out by researchers in the Policy Coordinating Unit on Women and Agriculture, various research institutes under the Agricultural Research Center (ARC), and colleges of agriculture at Egyptian universities. Several studies have dealt with the division of labor in agriculture and women's extension needs to reduce waste while harvesting various crops.

Women in the New Lands, especially in the Mubarak Project for the Settlement of the Graduates, receive more training than women in the Old Lands. This is because most of them have no previous experience in farming and because new land farming requires more modern skills and techniques.

By contrast, less attention is given to women's farming needs in the Old Lands. For instance, none of the women farmers visited by the gender team in the Old Lands had ever received an extension officer or had attended a training course. Women and men in the village of Brigat in Beheira felt that extension officers had little important to say and rarely had the answers to farmers' questions. The women land owners interviewed in Luxor had never received any training or been visited by an extension officer. Most stated that they would be happy to receive such visits. It must be noted, however, that the Governorate of Luxor has two women extension officers. One specializes in rat and mouse control in the household but not in the fields. She provides training to women only in cooperatives, extension centers, health clinics, and schools. She was originally trained by GTZ on how to train women in rat control. The other female extension officer gives four training sessions a month in the health centers, cooperatives, and schools and spends six days on home visits.

**Table 16: Examples of Extension and Training for Women Farmers and Their Trainers**

| Project/Program (funding agency)   | Location  | Type of Training  | Target Group  | Duration and # of Trainees   | Comments and Recommendations  |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Rural Development Program/MALR</b><br><br>(MALR, Central Administration of Extension)       | About 150 training centers in the governorates of Kalyubia, Gharbia, Kafr El-Sheikh, Fayoum, Beheira, Menya, New Valley, Dakahlia, and Sharkia. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutting and sewing; knitting and crochet</li> <li>• Handicrafts: leather crafts, painting on silk, glass, basket, decorative items</li> <li>• Food processing: making tomato sauce; drying and freezing vegetables; mushroom growing; raising silkworms</li> </ul> | Women farmers, and graduate women                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 days for sewing (30 women in Sharkia)</li> <li>• 4 days for mushroom production (20 women in Noubariya)</li> <li>• 6 days for food processing (30 women in Kalyubia, Cairo, and Fayoum)</li> <li>• 12 days for leather goods (12 women in Beheira)</li> <li>• Silkworms (10 women)</li> <li>• Training of women agricultural engineers (10 women)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy focus on traditional activities, knitting, sewing, and handicrafts.</li> <li>• Quality issues of food processing activities.</li> <li>• Lack of marketing information.</li> <li>• Limited mobility of urban-based extension agents.</li> <li>• Need to maintain balance between traditional and non-traditional activities.</li> <li>• Pay greater attention to quality control issues.</li> <li>• Link women producers with marketing outlets.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Integrated Beheira Rural Development Project: Women's Development Program</b><br><br>(MALR) | Beheira Governorate   | Sewing and knitting; food processing; dairy   | Women; men's programs are separate.                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10,500 women in 50 villages</li> <li>• 288 training courses in sewing and knitting</li> <li>• 2,083 sewing machines distributed to women; 47 knitting machines</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional focus on sewing and knitting,</li> <li>• Indirect extension for women. trickle down information from men trainees to female household members.</li> <li>• May initiate parallel extension to women in the subjects provided to men such as fisheries, small animal production, and manufacturing of untraditional fodder to increase productivity and incomes.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>New Lands Agricultural Service Project: Women's Division</b><br><br>(IFAD)                  | Beheira and   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptive bee keeping</li> <li>• Flower and vegetable Seedling production</li> <li>• Needlework and handicrafts</li> <li>• Small livestock care</li> </ul>  | Women farmers and graduates; men's activities are separate. | No specific data received on number of trainees  | No information was received on extension focus areas.   |

| Project/Program (funding agency)   | Location   | Type of Training   | Target Group  | Duration and # of Trainees                                     | Comments and Recommendations   |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Productive Activities for Women Farmers in the New Lands<br><br>(African Development Bank)               | Kom Ombo, Aswan Governorate; North of Beheira; Alexandria; Dakahlia; North Sinai | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poultry</li> <li>• Honey bee keeping</li> <li>• Carpets</li> <li>• Textiles and leather products</li> <li>• Ready-made garments</li> <li>• Cultural and educational activities</li> </ul>   | Women graduates and wives of the graduates                              | No data received   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally high quality products .</li> <li>• Assistance with marketing.</li> <li>• Empowerment through association membership.</li> <li>• Training in women's rights important.</li> </ul>  |
| Alexandria Association for Home Economics<br><br>(USAID through the NCNW's Capacity Development of NGOs) | Alexandria and Beheira   | Loans and related training in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bakery operating</li> <li>• Pickling</li> <li>• Trade in fertilizers</li> <li>• Food processing</li> <li>• Legal rights awareness</li> </ul>   | Women graduates and wives in the New Lands in Bangar El-Sukkar, Beheira | No data received   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of training seems to be good.</li> <li>• Credit provided to women for family enterprises.</li> <li>• High level of enthusiasm among association members.</li> <li>• Need to make women aware of importance of formal business ownership.</li> </ul> |
| World Food Program<br><br>(World Food Program)   | Bangar El-Sukkar in Beheira, some other governorates                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training in crop patterns and dry lands irrigation</li> <li>• Demonstration farms for new crops varieties, fertilizer, and pesticide use</li> <li>• Small project management: accounting, numeracy, and functional literacy</li> <li>• Consciousness raising about women's rights and obligations as members of cooperatives and communities</li> <li>• Sewing machines provided</li> </ul> | Women graduates and wives of graduates                                  | No specific data received                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addresses the real needs of women for farming in the New Lands.</li> <li>• Introduced ministerial decree guaranteeing women's rights in land distribution schemes, 20% of land distributed to spouse to be registered in wife's name.</li> </ul>            |
| Center for the Development of Desert Lands, American University, Cairo                                   | Menoufia   | Training in desert land farming and productive activities such as adaptive bee keeping   | Men and women   | 6 weeks residential training, 1,400 trained including 30 women | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the women who received the training are urban women with relatively large plots of land.</li> </ul>   |

| Project/Program (funding agency)   | Location   | Type of Training  | Target Group  | Duration and # of Trainees   | Comments and Recommendations  |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| AgReform Project<br>(USAID)  | Fayoum, Giza; Assiut; Beni Suef; Menya, Souhag                   | Food processing; poultry, ducks, pigeons, and turkey; livestock (sheep, goats, buffaloes and cows); crops (broad beans, sorghum, maize); demonstration field visits | Men and women approximately 20% female                                | 50,000, including 1,128 women  |   |
| Agricultural Technology and Utilization<br>(USAID and CARE/USA)                                | Dakahlia, Sharkia, Gharbia, Menoufia, Noubariya, Giza, and Menya | Extension related to horticulture provided to men and women, focus on six essential crops including grapes, strawberries, cantaloupes, etc.                         | Women and men in 42 villages in 12 districts, covering 25,877 feddans | Farming and harvesting extension related to horticulture including grapes, strawberries, mangoes, and melons               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field demonstration on going during farming season.</li> <li>Gender specialist conducted a study on women's roles in table grapes, another one is being carried out relating to strawberries, concerted effort made to address gender issues in farm management and extension.</li> <li>Played key role in facilitating women's participation in the Horticulture Export Improvement Association.</li> </ul>   |
| Agriculture Led Export Business<br>(USAID)   | To be determined   | Needs assessment for training was under way during this study   | Women and men working in export business                              | Information not yet available  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project has hired gender advisor to coordinate efforts to address gender issues and women's concerns in training.</li> </ul>   |
| Cotton Sector Promotion Project and Integrated Pest Management Project, CSPP and IPMP<br>(GTZ) | Dakahlia and Sharkia   | Participatory cotton-related extension through farmers' learning groups   | Men and women farmers   | Six separate women's farmer's groups were operating during this study; each group meets once a week during the crop season | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing participatory extension during cotton planting and harvesting.</li> <li>Extension based on farmers' actual needs.</li> <li>Quality training provided to facilitators.</li> <li>CSPP was in the process of implementing recommendations from two systematic studies of women's roles in cotton sector and their extension needs,</li> <li>Hired a gender specialist to ensure gender integration and satisfying the extension and training needs of women farmers,</li> <li>Ongoing monitoring and evaluation.</li> </ul> |

| Project/Program<br>(funding agency)  | Location                                  | Type of Training   | Target Group  | Duration and # of<br>Trainees   | Comments and Recommendations  |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|
| Central<br>Administration for<br>Training<br><br>(MALR)  | Mostly Cairo<br>based                     | Training of government<br>employees, including<br>extension agents | Men and women<br>employees of the<br>MALR   | Duration varies depending<br>on the type of training<br>provided; data on number<br>of employees could not be<br>obtained | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training plan developed annually by the central administration; implementation begins once the plan is approved.</li> <li>• Centrally designed and implemented.</li> <li>• Evaluation (on-the-spot) done by participants,</li> <li>• No information available on the impact of the training on the trainees.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Credit Related Extension/Training</b>   |   |  |   |   |   |
| PBDAC<br><br>(Social Fund for<br>Development)  | Most<br>governorates                      | Training related to loans;<br>training for loan promoters          | Men and women<br>potential loan<br>recipients   | 20,380 men and 4,168<br>women (17%) during<br>1995/96-1997/98 (average<br>of 1,500 women per year)                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite the large numbers of trainees, less than 500 women received loans from the PBDAC between 1991 and 1998.</li> <li>• No information was available on difference in loan size between women and men or the types of projects that women use the loans for.</li> <li>• Important to keep information on size of loans to women compared with men.</li> <li>• Identify reasons for low numbers of women receiving loans compared to those who were reached by extension.</li> </ul> |
| Social Fund for<br>Development<br><br>(Egyptian<br>government and<br>donors including<br>the World Bank and<br>European Union) | Governorates<br>throughout the<br>country | Skills development for formal<br>or self-employment                | Men and women<br>in the following<br>categories:<br>new graduates;<br>unemployed<br>youth; workers<br>displaced by<br>privatization;<br>female-headed<br>households |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFD's Gender Unit follows a policy of mainstreaming gender in all programs, but fewer women than men receive training. Those women who are trained receive training in traditional areas.</li> </ul>   |

- The Central Administration for Training in MALR conducts training courses, in collaboration with universities and research institutes, to upgrade the skills of MALR employees, including extension agents.
- There is no legal or regulatory restriction to women's access to extension, training, or new technology.
- Women's access to extension and training in Egypt has increased considerably over the past 10 years.
- The range of extension services for women has expanded such income-generating activities as food processing, drying and freezing of vegetables, silkworm raising, bee-keeping, mushroom growing and packaging, poultry and livestock care, and leatherwork.
- Many other agencies in the Egyptian government have increased their support for productive activities for women in rural areas.

Despite the progress, major issues remain—some relate to the research and extension system as a whole, while others are specific to women.

### **General Issues of Research, Training, and Extension**

Like all large bureaucracies in Egypt, MALR is hindered by a lack of resources and poor motivation among employees, largely because of low salaries, poor working conditions, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems. Interviewees identified the following problems that manifest themselves in the extension and training system:

- Lack of a coherent policy for extension and training;
- Duplication and lack of coordination among the various organizations engaged in research and extension;
- Weak linkages among research, extension, and training;
- Top-down theoretical training of extension agents and farmers without adequate practical application; and
- Inadequate access to market information and resources.

## Gender Issues in Extension and Training of Women Farmers

- Women's access to extension, training, and technology transfer is limited.
- It is difficult to obtain gender-disaggregated data. The information on participants, mainly their names, is often collected but not analyzed from a gender perspective.
- A heavy emphasis is placed on traditional income-generating activities not related to women's farming roles and with limited potential for increasing women's productivity, income, or contributions to the agricultural economy. This emphasis helps perpetuate and reinforce gender inequalities and women's concentration in low-status and unskilled jobs in the formal agricultural sector or in informal seasonal labor.
- The focus on handicrafts and sewing is not based on women's actual needs and opinions about ways to improve their productivity and income. For instance, more than 50 percent of the 2,000 women surveyed for a Policy Coordinating Unit on Women and Agriculture/World Bank study in four governorates stated that raising and selling birds and animals is the best and easiest way to increase women's income. As Table 17 shows only 17 percent thought that sewing and selling clothes is a good way to increase female income. Similarly, according to research findings presented at a conference on "Agricultural Extension and the Challenges of Agricultural Development in the Arab World," sponsored by the College of Agriculture at Cairo University, women in the New Valley selected raising poultry and turkey as the best activity to raise the income of women farmers, followed by raising small livestock. Less than one-third of the women mentioned sewing, knitting, and basket making as activities to raise the income of farm women (Sultan and Ibrahim, 1998).

**Table 17: Women's Opinions about the Best and Easiest Ways to Increase Female Income in Four Governorates**

| <b>Ways to Increase Income</b> | <b>Beheira</b> | <b>Qalubia</b> | <b>Fayoum</b> | <b>Souhag</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Raise and sell more birds      | 164            | 111            | 121           | 155           | 551          |
| Raise and sell animals         | 147            | 68             | 94            | 161           | 473          |
| Sew and sell clothes           | 112            | 114            | 60            | 61            | 347          |
| Open a store                   | 32             | 63             | 17            | 31            | 143          |
| Sell more goods in market      | 25             | 13             | 23            | 3             | 64           |
| Grow and sell more crops       | 25             | 7              | 7             | 15            | 54           |
| Don't know                     | 139            | 72             | 42            | 87            | 340          |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>661</b>     | <b>449</b>     | <b>368</b>    | <b>522</b>    | <b>2,000</b> |

Source: Based on data in Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, Policy Coordinating Unit on Women and Agriculture/World Bank Survey, 1995/96. In Richard S. Adams, "The Status of Women in Rural Egypt, March 12, 1997."

- There are many unmet needs for extension and training for women. For instance, the APRP study team identified a serious need for extension and training to improve the hygienic conditions in dairy production.

- There has been a lack of systematic evaluation of the impact of income-generating activities on rural women, their families, and communities.
- Little crop-related training is provided to women farmers. This is partly because of the lack of female subject matter specialists and because extension agents do not fully understand women's actual roles in agriculture.
- Quality control is a problem in most of the income-generating activities, both traditional and nontraditional.
- Marketing information is seriously inadequate to satisfy the needs of farmers and small agribusiness owners, especially women.
- Donor-supported extension and training have generally been more effective in addressing gender issues and women's concerns than publicly provided extension and training. This is because donors have more resources and are better able to provide quality training, good salaries, and beneficial working conditions for extension workers. However, sustainability is a major concern in all donor-funded projects.

### **Training of Female Extension Agents**

Not much information is available about the pre- and in-service training of extension agents. All the extension agents (often referred to as engineers) we talked with, and the others working for MALR, are graduates of colleges of agriculture, although not necessarily with an extension or subject matter specialty. As Table 19 shows, there are no female subject matter specialists, and about 50 percent of the female extension agents have a background in home economics. The in-service training provided to the female extension agents has its own problems, including the following:

- Lack of systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the training. We were told that women extension agents receive too much training in group facilitation, which does not seem to have been effective.
- Qualitative problems with training content, methodology, and length often render training ineffective. According to a study conducted by Hunnein and El-Hawari, extension agents reported that they have received extensive training, but they still felt they lacked the skills and tools they need to deal with women farmers. Female extension workers have attended numerous training sessions on such areas as plant production, animal husbandry, nutrition, marketing of agricultural products, credit and loans, and social and political participation. Many had participated in home visits (86 percent of the respondents), taken extension courses (80 percent), attended meetings and training sessions, and received pamphlets. Yet many were not satisfied with the training they received. Some felt that the length of the training, from 1 to 15 days, was inadequate and that the training methodology did not satisfy their needs.

- To increase women's participation in extension and training, more well-trained female extension agents are needed. For instance, in GTZ's Cotton Sector Promotion Program, 440 of the 1,283 participants at meetings on the toxicity of chemicals were women. More women participated because female extension workers informed them that their information needs are not limited to specific topics but extend to technical aspects related to plant health. The project responded to the demand by recruiting more female trainers and by extending the training subjects (Ganter and Zeid, 1997).
- The timing and location of training are also important. According to the two women training coordinators with MALR, women's participation in in-country training provided by the USAID-funded Training for Development Project has been relatively equal to men's because the training (which is equally available to women and men) is a welcome change from office work, especially when it is held in the ministry or a nearby location during work hours (from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.).<sup>27</sup>

### **ACCESS OF WOMEN FARMERS TO EQUIPMENT AND APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY**

One of the most important functions of extension is to inform women and men about new technologies—such as new seed varieties and hybrids, new farming methods, new techniques of raising and caring for livestock, and new machinery and tools—that could increase their productivity and raise their income. Women's limited access to extension and training hinders their access to new technologies, equipment, and tools. Women's farm productivity will continue to be low as long as they do not have adequate access to new technologies and tools.

There are three gender issues here:

#### **Lack of Gender-Disaggregated Data**

The team found very little information on women's access to technology and their ownership of machinery and tools in Egypt. Many of the surveys did not include information on women's ownership of farm machinery or access to technology.

#### **Access**

Women often lack the funds or collateral to get credit to purchase machinery and tools; some machinery introduced to rural women, such as tomato juicers, are too expensive to be owned by one person. Group lending may help solve this problem. Women need to be informed about possibilities of forming productive associations to purchase and operate machinery as a group.

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<sup>27</sup> This observation applies to training generally since few spots in the Training for Development Project are allocated to extension workers.

## Appropriateness of Technology and Tools

Various women in development projects still provide Egyptian women farmers and other rural women with machinery and tools—such as sewing and knitting machines—which are of little help in the work they do in farming or animal husbandry. We were told that women themselves ask for sewing and crochet machines. This is because they lack information about other tools that may be available to them. Often, modern technology and machinery is provided to men, who hold non-farm jobs and subsequently leave the responsibility to their wives, thus increasing their burden. We witnessed several examples of this situation. In one home in Beheira, where we saw rabbit batteries and early weaning of calves, technology and training were given to the man, an extension agent, even though his wife did most of the work.

### Silkworms Take Over a Family's Home

We visited a home in Gharbia where silkworms provided under a development project had hatched and grown and had taken over all three rooms in the house. The wives of the men in the family spent most of their waking time feeding and cleaning up after the worms. The five wives were reluctant to talk about their burden, but the mother-in-law complained bitterly about the heavy burden placed on the family by the introduction of this failed technology and money-losing business. Not enough training was provided and no assistance was given by the project to help the farmers market the silk cocoons.

The types of appropriate machinery that have been introduced to women farmers in Egypt include butter separators, tomato juicers, beehives, rabbit batteries, silkworm seeds and silk threading machines, and bakery equipment. Such machinery should be made available to more women. Women may also need micro rice mills, direct seeding equipment, transplanters, and threshing machines. They can also benefit greatly from such new technologies as the early weaning of calves, which is currently available to men whereas women do almost 80 percent of the care of small livestock. Technologies of this sort, of course, must be accompanied by the right training.

## CONSTRAINTS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN EXTENSION AND TRAINING

### Institutional Constraints

The way in which extension services are now offered is a major constraint to improving the quality of extension and training generally. MALR is committed to reforming the system and has been exploring various strategies and approaches for achieving this reform.

All MALR officials interviewed for this study, on both the extension and research sides, mentioned the lack of coordination and conflicting interests as problems for extension generally. Four distinct problems were emphasized: (1) lack of a coherent policy for extension and research, (2) competition and conflict, (3) lack of coordination, and (4) limited use of research findings in the development and delivery of extension services.

### **Limited Financial Resources**

All of our informants emphasized that limited financial resources are a great problem that applies equally to women and men. Low salaries, inadequate incentives, and lack of transportation facilities were the most commonly cited constraints on the provision of quality extension services to farmers and especially to women, who are not a priority for the provision of extension and training. Interviews with MALR officials confirm that lack of resources is a major problem and that more funding is needed to support research, training, and extension. When resources are available, such as in the case of donor-funded projects, women and men are willing and eager to participate because of higher pay and better working conditions.

### **Absence of Gender Issues and Women's Concerns in Policy Dialogues**

Gender issues and women's concerns are absent from the policy dialogue on extension and training. For instance, two major studies of extension and training sponsored by the APRP/RDI Unit and MALR did not mention women or gender issues in extension. At the eight regional stakeholders' conferences held in connection with Phases I and II of this study, women participated in only one conference, in Fayoum, where only three of the 44 participants were women.

### **Gender Role Stereotypes and the Different Treatment of Women and Men**

Gender role stereotypes limit the types of extension provided to women and their effectiveness in meeting women's technical needs. Visits to villages in the Old and New Lands during Phases I and II of this gender study indicate that most extension services provided to women are based on narrow gender role stereotypes that perceive women in terms of their domestic rather than productive functions. Hence, the focus is mostly on traditional activities such as sewing, knitting, and handicrafts, with inadequate attention paid to farm production, livestock, and microenterprises. Proponents of this focus assume that men perform most of the farm work while women engage in domestic activities or help their husbands only occasionally.

The commonly held belief that all women have men to take care of them and from whom they can acquire extension information limits women's access to production-related extension and training. This stereotype affects all rural women, especially female heads of households. It results in the notion of "indirect extension," widespread among many project managers who believe that extension provided to men usually trickles down to their wives. Without direct extension and training, women often miss information needed to increase their productivity and income, and to help them satisfy their families' basic socio-economic needs.

Most of the extension and training programs for women are based on a welfare rather than a development perspective. They treat women as passive recipient of support rather than as economic and productive agents in the agricultural sector.

Moreover, women's activities are treated as add-ons to existing projects—as a separate women in development component—rather than being incorporated in the design and implementation of mainstream programs. Although some of those interviewed for this study believed that this is an effective way of addressing women's needs, others argued that having a women in development component is the main reason for the marginalization of women's extension and training, not to mention its traditional and domestic orientation.

Having a separate women in development component is justified as a way to show respect for local cultural norms and to ensure some attention to women's activities. However, many projects unintentionally tend to isolate women in traditional areas and thus limit the effectiveness of the extension and training in increasing women's productivity in the work they actually perform in agriculture and agribusiness.

### **High Rates of Female Illiteracy in Rural Areas**

As the World Bank report on agriculture in Egypt noted, the high rate of illiteracy in rural areas presents difficulties in ensuring the rapid adoption of new technologies and improved cultural practices. This is especially true in the case of Egypt, where 65 percent of women in rural areas are illiterate, compared to 35 percent of men. This affects women's access to extension, training, and technology in several ways:

- Female illiteracy limits women's ability to benefit from most formal extension and training program and necessitates the development of special methods and training materials suitable for illiterate farmers. Lack of such material has been a constraint as indicated by a study of female extension agents who stated that the lack of audio-visual material suitable for illiterate women is a constraint (Hunnein and El-Hawari, 1998). Illiterate women benefit more from farm- or home-based demonstration activities, and from messages disseminated through television and radio, which are available in 85 percent of Egyptian village homes.
- Female illiteracy contributes to the persistence of unhealthy practices such as washing clothes and pots in irrigation canals, a practice that subjects women and their families to parasitic disease. Illiteracy is also a major constraint on the adoption of environmentally sound practices related to water use and waste disposal.

### **Limited Mobility and Time Constraints**

Limited mobility is a constraint for both women farmers and extension agents. Women's family and community responsibilities limit their flexibility about time and place and, hence, their participation in extension and training. This requires sensitivity in timing and locating

extension services and necessitates that transportation be provided when necessary. Oftentimes, the timing of the extension and training does not accommodate women farmer's other responsibilities, and the location is not easily accessible. The same is true for extension agents. In a study of the constraints faced by female extension agents, they mentioned limited mobility, lack of transportation, and conflicts between women extension workers' availability (mornings) and women farmers' availability (afternoons) (Hunnein and El-Hawari, 1998).

Mobility is a major constraint for female extension agents. Because of their family responsibilities, they often cannot travel to villages to provide extension and training services to women farmers. Transportation is a major problem for women. Male extension agents often travel on motorcycles and can move easily to locations not accessible by cars. Women extension agents do not have this freedom or mobility.

Problems with mobility may be solved by (1) recruiting village-based female extension agents to work in their own communities and (2) providing adequate transportation and incentives to encourage urban-based extension agents to travel to and from work in the villages.

### Limited Numbers and Knowledge

Data presented in Table 18 show a major imbalance in the number of male and female extension agents. Only about 3 percent of extension agents are females. This is one of the most serious constraints on providing and improving extension and training for rural women. Not only are women extension agents few in numbers, but most of them are concentrated in Cairo and the central offices in the governorates. Furthermore, about half of all female extension agents specialize in home economics and lack agricultural training (see Table 19).

|   |
|---|
| <p>Extension is a male institution for an agricultural sector that has been abandoned by males.</p> |
|---|

Table 18: Male and Female Extension Engineers, by Governorate

| Governorate    | Male   | Female | Total  | Percent Female |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|
| Alexandria     | 157    | 64     | 221    | 29.0           |
| Beheira        | 2,410  | 16     | 2,426  | 0.7            |
| Kafr El-Sheikh | 1586   | 152    | 1,738  | 8.8            |
| Gharbia        | 2,214  | 93     | 2,307  | 4.0            |
| Menoufia       | 1,760  | 19     | 1,779  | 1.1            |
| Sharkia        | 2,136  | 36     | 2,172  | 1.7            |
| Dakahlia       | 2,252  | 60     | 2,312  | 2.6            |
| Kalyubia       | 590    | 30     | 620    | 4.8            |
| Damietta       | 517    | 4      | 521    | 0.8            |
| Ismailia       | 342    | 31     | 373    | 8.3            |
| Port Said      | 17     | 8      | 25     | 32.0           |
| Suez           | 13     | 5      | 17     | 29.4           |
| South Sinai    | 54     | 6      | 60     | 10.0           |
| North Sinai    | 11     | 1      | 12     | 8.3            |
| Matrouh        | 17     | 0      | 17     | 0              |
| Cairo          | 16     | 80     | 96     | 83.3           |
| Giza           | 423    | 24     | 447    | 5.4            |
| Beni Suef      | 1,354  | 13     | 1,367  | 1.0            |
| Fayoum         | 1,018  | 37     | 1,055  | 3.5            |
| Menya          | 1,678  | 56     | 1,734  | 3.2            |
| Assiut         | 1,843  | 27     | 1,870  | 1.4            |
| Souhag         | 1,836  | 0      | 1,836  | 0              |
| Qena           | 1,056  | 10     | 1,066  | 0.9            |
| Aswan          | 279    | 1      | 280    | 0.4            |
| Red Sea        | 13     | 3      | 16     | 18.8           |
| New Valley     | 93     | 4      | 97     | 4.1            |
| Total          | 23,685 | 780    | 24,465 | 3.2            |

Sources: Agricultural Extension Research Institute, personal contact

Although all extension agents are graduates of colleges of agriculture, only a few specialize in agriculture extension. Most were hired under the old system that guaranteed government employment to all graduates. However, MALR placed the graduates irrespective of the relevance of their specialty to the job for which they were hired. Consequently, graduates, both women and men, often ended up in jobs in which they have no interest and for which they have no skills. The freeze on hiring graduates, in effect for more than 10 years, has resulted in stagnation. The private sector is now providing limited employment opportunities to a few graduates with appropriate marketable skills.

**Table 19: Extension Staff of the Central Administration for Extension, MALR, by Position and Gender**

| Extension Post                         | Total         | Male          | Female       | % Female   |
|--|---------------|---------------|--------------|------------|
| Cotton                                 | 9,380         | 9,380         | 0            | 0          |
| Seeds                                  | 6,068         | 6,061         | 7            | 0.1        |
| Agricultural Extension Agent           | 4,029         | 3,950         | 79           | 2.0        |
| Horticulture                           | 2,185         | 2,159         | 26           | 1.2        |
| Livestock                              | 1,519         | 1,483         | 36           | 2.4        |
| Legume                                 | 1,124         | 1,116         | 8            | 0.7        |
| Home Economics                         | 959           | 231           | 728          | 75.9       |
| Central Administration in MALR, Cairo  | 347           | 110           | 237          | 68.3       |
| Central Administration in Governorates | 270           | 153           | 117          | 43.3       |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>25,881</b> | <b>24,643</b> | <b>1,238</b> | <b>4.8</b> |

Source: Central Administration for Extension, MALR, 1993, as cited in J. Weideman, 1994.

## POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

The problems of women's access to extension, training, and technology are embedded in the extension system in Egypt. Although this system was effective during the centralized socialist era, it has not kept pace with the changes in agriculture and the transition to a market-oriented economy. The system as a whole has been the subject of intense discussion and is undergoing major changes, including an increasing role for the private sector. Female access to extension and training, and the constraints facing it, cannot be solved in isolation from the key issues of extension mentioned earlier in this chapter. To resolve these issues and improve the quality and delivery of extension and training in general and to women in particular, the following policy and programmatic interventions are proposed. They are based on our extensive discussions with stakeholders in the field and at the stakeholders' workshop organized by APRP/RDI on May 19, 1999.

These recommendations are made with a recognition of the commitment of MALR to improving the quality and delivery of research and extension in general, and to the measures already undertaken by MALR in this regard.

### Policy Reform Measures that MALR Could Undertake

#### *Develop a Gender-Sensitive National Extension Policy*

There is a need for a national extension policy and strategy incorporating gender issues and women's concerns. It is not enough to have a section in the policy statement on women in agriculture without mention of women's concerns and gender issues elsewhere in the policy. The MALR is in a leadership position to develop this policy, in collaboration with gender experts from the ministry itself, mainly the Policy Coordinating Unit on Women and Agriculture; the Agricultural Research Center member research institutions; extension and training experts; and representatives of colleges of agriculture; and other ministries. Proper

coordination must be maintained with work being done by the donors on women in agriculture in Egypt, especially the Policy Coordinating Unit on Women and Agriculture's project activities supported by the Netherlands Embassy under a new agreement with MALR.

### *Develop a Supplementary Policy on Extension and Training for Women*

In addition to the overall gender-sensitive policy on extension and training, MALR could develop and issue a supplementary policy and action plan for extension and training for women that includes the following:

- The general objectives and guidelines for extension for women;
- Staffing needs including qualifications of the extension agents, both male and female, and how these needs are to be met;
- A staff development plan that clearly outlines the training strategy for female and male extension agents;
- An action plan for implementation of the policy on extension and training for women;
- A well-developed monitoring and evaluation plan; and
- Adequate budgetary allocations to ensure successful implementation and sustainability of developmental impact.

Policy implementation should take into account the different needs of agriculture and resources in each region of the country, including the Old and New Lands, and the educational level of the target populations. It should utilize research findings on the different roles performed by women and men in agriculture in the various governorates.

### **Specific Actions to Operationalize and Implement the Policy**

#### *Collect Gender-Disaggregated Data*

- It is very important that MALR require the collection of gender-disaggregated data on women's participation in all extension and training programs.
- It is equally important that MALR require periodic evaluation reports of all projects for women and their results. It may require external evaluation by specialists, with possible support from USAID, the World Bank, and other interested donors.

### *Require Gender-Awareness Training*

It is recommended that MALR require all extension agents, both male and female, and the staff and managers of women's productive activities to participate in gender-awareness training, to be outlined later in this section.

### *Increase the Number of Village-Based Female Extension Agents*

It is recommended that MALR develop a plan to increase the number of village-based female extension agents and a timeframe for implementation. Proposed actions to accomplish this are highlighted later in this section.

## **Programmatic Actions to Increase Women's Access to Extension and Training**

### *Provide Gender Awareness Training to All Extension Agents and Administrators*

The ARDP team's analysis has indicated that gender role stereotypes and lack of awareness about women's productive roles in agriculture and the constraints that face them compromise women's access to extension and training and limit their effectiveness and sustainability.

In addition to generic gender training, all extension agents and administrators, both men and women, should receive training focused on the following areas:

- Women's productive roles in agriculture;
- Constraints facing women in accessing resources including land, credit, tools and technology, and extension and training;
- Women's needs for new technology; and
- Case studies of successful extension models for women in Egypt and other developing countries.

Male extension workers also need to be taught strategies for reaching and working with women farmers and microentrepreneurs.

To mainstream gender in extension and training, it is recommended that MALR require that women are allowed equal access to all extension and training programs provided by the ministry and its contractors. Separate extension and training facilities could be provided if needed in recognition of the different roles of women and men in agriculture, and out of respect for cultural traditions.

Women, especially those who head households, must receive direct extension and training to suit their productive roles.

Technical assistance could be provided to integrate gender in extension and training in one governorate. The Beheira Integrated Rural Development Project may be a good model for this integration. The reason for focusing on Beheira is that the project works in 51 villages and has a wide range of activities that can be opened up for women. This will need high level support from MALR project management. This activity may be undertaken as a collaborative effort between USAID and the Beheira Integrated Rural Development Project, with overall coordination by the Policy Coordinating Unit on Women in Agriculture. This can be a pilot activity that may later be replicated in other projects or governorates. It should be monitored carefully to collect data on how providing parallel training to women and men can actually lead to improved income and productivity in the agricultural sector in Beheira.

#### *Develop Gender-Appropriate Extension Material and Messages*

- Develop gender-sensitive extension and training materials suited for farmers and trainees of different educational levels and living in different locales—for example, the Old and New Lands.
- Use various media to disseminate extension information to women and men, especially those who are illiterate.

#### *Use Existing Research Findings in Designing Extension and Training Programs for Women Farmers*

The research produced by the Policy Coordinating Unit on Women and Agriculture (Mansour [1994], and World Bank surveys [1978-1997])—as well as numerous studies by researchers at various ARC research institutes, universities, and private firms—reveals many aspects that have a special impact on extension and training:

- Women perform numerous tasks in agriculture, planting, harvesting, pest control, storage and care of poultry and livestock, and marketing of agricultural outputs and poultry. Their roles vary from one crop to another and from one season to another. Their extension needs and provision of services should be based on the differentiated roles of women and men in agriculture.
- Research also shows that women's extension and training needs are much more diverse than men's. In addition to extension and training related to farming, dairy, and livestock, women need literacy and health education, as well as training in environmental issues, numeracy, management training, and business development.
- Particularly relevant is the research on women's roles in agriculture of various crops and in animal and dairy production, as well as women's extension needs to reduce waste at

harvest and postharvest time. Relevant also is the research (cited earlier in this chapter) on women's opinions of activities they need to increase their productivity and income.

Designing and implementing extension and training based on the actual roles and needs of women should increase the effectiveness of these services in meeting the needs of women and increase their agricultural productivity and income. These gains, in turn, can lead to significant improvements in all development indicators, such as family income; education, nutrition, and health of children; food security; and poverty alleviation.

Extension efforts will fail, however, if the technologies offered to women are inappropriate or if they do not address the constraints and opportunities women face.

### *Increase the Number of Village-Based Female Extension Agents*

Given the fact that the government is no longer employing new graduates, MALR needs to develop a plan for training and re-training its current female employees and deploying them in agricultural extension work. To accomplish this, the following measures could be undertaken:

- MALR could require all female extension agents to spend at least 50 percent of their working time in actual village work. Employee pay incentives could be linked to the number of days spent in the field and the quality of work provided as judged by supervisors and the farmers served. MALR will provide adequate transportation and supervised housing facilities for women extension agents.
- Use current temporary contract employees in MALR to work in extension, after providing them with appropriate training. Women with basic training in agriculture and related areas are abundant in MALR and may be mobilized to work in extension. Examples are the female contract employees working in forestation as part of a program to solve the problem of graduate unemployment. Hundreds of these women are currently working on contract in their villages. A training program to prepare these women as extension agents could double the number of extension agents in the governorates at relatively little additional cost.

### *Training of Women and Men Extension Agents (Training of Trainers)*

It is recommended that a strategy for training of existing extension, rural development, and home economics workers be developed. Men must be included in the training because they outnumber women extension agents and many of them will continue to work with women farmers and microentrepreneurs. This training should include but not be limited to the following:

## Content

- Women's roles in agriculture including livestock, poultry, and food processing;
- Constraints on women's participation in extension and training;
- Proper methods of recruiting and working with women farmers;
- Appropriate technologies for women and proper or useful ways of increasing women's access to new technology;
- Appropriate training material to use with rural women; and
- Special needs of rural women for credit, marketing information and support services.

## Recommended Methodologies

- Design training so that it is participatory and demand driven; and
- Include both theoretical training as well as hands-on experience and observation tours to production centers, demonstration fields, etc.

## Training Material

- Develop appropriate, gender-sensitive training material, including audio-visual aids; and
- Include agricultural training messages with training in literacy, environment, health, and family planning.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

- Develop an evaluation and monitoring plan of all training activities.

There is no dearth of training in Egypt. Little is known, however, about the effectiveness and impact of training on recipients and their clientele. The APRP team interviewed researchers from the Extension Research Institute who indicated that a good deal of training is provided in facilitation skills and group dynamics, but not much technical information is being provided to extension agents.

### A Success Story

The Development Media Support Center in Dekernis, Dakahlia Governorate, has excellent facilities for training and extension. The center, which started in 1992, has a rural women's development section and a training section that provides training of trainers. It has a technical production department that produces audio-visual materials, including videotapes, photography, and printed training material. It also has a research, evaluation, and monitoring department.

The center develops agricultural extension services, offers training of trainers for agricultural extension agents, and provides training for rural women "to maximize their role in development." The center offered 24 training-of-trainers courses for extension agents between July 1997 and June 1998. Women accounted for 40 percent of the trainees in these courses.

The center also provides an integrated package of extension services, including population and cultural activities, dairy processing, and food processing. Female extension workers at the rural women's development center train women in traditional activities such as crochet, dairy production, and caring of fruit trees.

*Provide Technical Assistance and Support Services*

- Improve the quality of existing marketable income-generating activities and products;
- Provide marketing information for agricultural and microenterprise products (may start by identifying products for which there is a demand and market);
- Provide information on credit and saving, and link women with existing credit institutions; and
- Encourage women farmers and microentrepreneurs to form producers associations to advocate for their rights; pool their resources to acquire loans, machinery, and tools; and help with marketing.

*Encourage Collaborative Efforts with Colleges of Agriculture in Research, Extension, and Training*

The 14 colleges of agriculture in Egypt are an excellent resource and can make significant contributions to enhancing the quality and effectiveness of extension and training for women, through human resource development, research, teaching, and community service.

- These colleges produce about 4,000 graduates annually, most of whom have completed summer training in agriculture or agribusiness before graduation. Given the limited opportunities for employment for these graduates, their main option is to acquire skills for work in the private sector or self-employment. This is where employment growth is expected to be in the coming years.
- All colleges of agriculture have a community service department that can play a key role in provision of extension services to women and men. Our interview with Dr. Mostafa Seddik Ali, Vice President of the College of Agriculture at Menoufia University and consultant for the RDI Unit, indicates that community service centers play key roles in communities.
- In their agriculture research, these colleges may be encouraged to pay special attention to the technologies needed by women's farmers.
- These colleges play an important role in the dissemination of research findings. During our stay in Egypt, two conferences were held in Egypt dealing with issues of the impact of privatization on agriculture in Egypt—one at the American University in Cairo and another at the University of Assiut.
- Universities play an important role in research and dissemination. Examples of research on rural women are found in all colleges of agriculture in Egypt. The College of Agriculture at Cairo University held a major conference on the future of extension in

Egypt and the Arab world, where several research papers on women's extension were presented and recommendations were made to improve extension and training for women.

- The American University in Cairo supports numerous studies on women in agriculture, and its Center for the Development of Desert Lands is an important training institution that provides free and fee-charging training programs for women and men.

### *Incorporate Agricultural Extension Messages in Existing Literacy and Health Programs for Rural Women*

Because of women's many roles, it is often necessary to integrate agricultural extension with literacy and health education available in almost all Egyptian villages. This would require collaboration with the agencies providing these services to pool resources and to reach as many rural women as possible.

Successful models of university involvement in training include the work of the Alexandria Home Economics Association at the University of Alexandria, and the Project on Productive Activities for Women Farmers in the New Lands managed by Dr. Mariam Moustafa.

Developing agricultural extension messages to be incorporated in the curricula of primary, secondary, and vocational schools in the villages would ensure that the graduates of these schools have some basic knowledge and interest in agriculture.

### *Encourage a More Active Role of the Private Sector in Agricultural Extension and Training*

The private sector is assuming a growing role in extension and training in Egypt. Many interviewees argued that women would pay for extension and training that produces results. Some interviewees proposed charging fees for service on profitable agricultural plots; some of these fees could be used for a fund to provide incentives to the extension agents.

The private sector could provide the following services to women:

- Access to and training in agriculture and modern technology, including computer training for educated women who may want to work in the service sector;
- Apprenticeship opportunities; and
- Training opportunities and temporary employment to women with vocational and college degrees, a growing target group for extension and training in rural areas.

It must be noted, however, that because poor women may not be able to afford paying for private extension, the government must continue provision of free public extension and training for those who cannot pay for service. The government should pay special attention to quality control to ensure good quality and effectiveness of public and private extension.

### *Provide Gender Awareness Training and Capacity Building to Grassroots NGOs*

NGOs have played an important role in providing training for grassroots women. They may need training, capacity building, and support to increase the quality and effectiveness of their training.

## **PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID**

USAID is committed to addressing gender concerns in agriculture. The APRP gender study, Phases I and II, had the support of the USAID/Egypt Agriculture Team, the Gender Adviser, and the Mission Deputy Director, all of whom met with the team and participated in the stakeholders' workshop.

### **Integrate Gender and Women's Concerns in All USAID Agriculture-Based Projects**

Addressing gender issues and women's concerns throughout the whole agricultural portfolio of USAID would enhance project success and contribute to agricultural growth with equity in Egypt. This approach should contribute to the success of USAID's strategy for Egypt, which promotes sustainable socioeconomic development and a shift from *aid* to *trade*.

### **Increase Attention to Training of Extension Agents and Project Managers in the Training for Development II Plan**

According to the current plan, only six slots are allocated for extension training—"Extension Models and Approaches" (15 days)—out of 1,372 individuals to be trained from MALR.<sup>28</sup>

#### **Excellent Resources Are Available for Implementation**

MALR has excellent resources that may be mobilized for enhancing women's access to extension, training, and technology. At the top of the list are the prominent women leaders in top management positions at MALR. There are also hundreds of talented and committed women in all parts of the ministry, excellent research and training facilities, demonstration labs, and extension centers in the various governorates and villages.

MALR's resources are complemented by those of other ministries working in rural development, environment, and health and education. There are also the various NGOs working for women's empowerment. All the donors have committed themselves to improving women's productive and economic capabilities helping them benefit from development activities.

Above all are the knowledge, resourcefulness, and hard work of the women farmers themselves. With proper training and access to resources, rural Egyptian women would become a major force of change and empowerment for themselves, their families, communities, and the wider society.

<sup>28</sup> DT II Training Plan, Fiscal Year 1998-2000.

An additional 60 persons will be trained in management skills and 80 in presentation skills. We suggest that greater attention be given to in-country and overseas training for extension agents and project managers. This training may include gender awareness training of the type mentioned earlier in this chapter.

### **Provide Mechanisms and Support to Help Rural Women Form Union or Trade Associations**

Union or trade associations would help women obtain the services they need, advocate for their rights, and support them in the activities they are actually engaged in. These organizations could provide management training and other services necessary for improving women's productivity and income. Examples of such groups may be found in Egypt and in other developing countries, Arab and non-Arab. In Egypt, the Project for Productive Activities for Women Farmers in the New Lands established agricultural cooperatives for food security in Aswan in 1993 and in Beheira in 1997. These cooperatives help women farmers and microentrepreneurs with production and marketing activities.

Another highly successful example is found in India, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA). SEWA was established in 1972 in Ahmedabad in the State of Gujarat as a trade union of self-employed women. Using strategies drawn from the labor movement, cooperatives, and the women's movement, it has been one of the most successful grassroots NGOs in India and worldwide. It helps rural women enter the mainstream by (1) strengthening their economic enterprises and (2) advocating for their economic and political rights. It has set up a SEWA Bank to facilitate women's borrowing and saving, and a SEWA Academy, which provides leadership and skills training to its members. It also provides literacy, education, health care, and research and communications through publications of journals and videos. This is a truly grassroots organization started by a few elite women, which has now shifted its leadership to women microentrepreneurs with little or no education.

SEWA's success is based on recognizing the fundamental importance of poor women's economic roles. "The SEWA model is grounded in the premise that women, like men, need incomes to support themselves and their families. Therefore, SEWA works with women to improve and increase the returns from their ongoing enterprises. Rather than introducing them to new and unfamiliar income generating activities, it provides assistance that makes good economic sense: capital, support for organizing cooperatives, to increase women's bargaining power, marketing assistance, and specialized skills training. SEWA also supports women in advocacy, leadership and training. It serves as an intermediary on behalf of women at the policy level, providing access to legal and other resources to address the broader policy issues that affect women's economic and social advancement and their well-being" (Mehra, 1997, p. 148).

We recommend that USAID provide, under Training for Development II or another mechanism, opportunities for some Egyptian rural women to visit India to learn about the SEWA model and to develop possible collaborative activities with SEWA. Opportunities may also be provided for some members of SEWA to visit rural women in Egypt and advise them on efforts that may be used to adapt the SEWA model to Egypt.

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## CHAPTER FIVE WOMEN AND ASSOCIATIONS

In the last few years, increased attention has been focused on private associations in Egypt and other developing countries as an effective means of mobilizing people for social and economic changes in their countries. This stems from two important factors. The first is Egypt's transition towards a free market economy. The second factor is the declining role of the state in the agricultural economy, with the concomitant removal of subsidies on most commodities as part of this economic and structural reform. These factors increase the importance of the NGO sector in helping the poor cope with the initial effects of the transition toward a free market economy.

The nongovernmental sector's work is particularly important in the service, humanitarian, and philanthropic fields. This sector supports the civilian community in contending with the negative effects of the country's economic reform policies. Although the importance of this sector has increased, few political and sociological studies have been made on this sector and little data exist.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Phase II study in this area were to:

- Assess the level and pattern of women's participation in associations, especially those dealing with farming, agribusiness, and trade;
- Identify the constraints to women's participation in associations and assess whether they are policy, regulatory, or customary constraints;
- Make policy recommendations, if needed, to reduce the constraints limiting women's participation in associations;
- Recommend implementation or technical assistance activities that help create an enabling environment for women's effective participation in associations that have the greatest impact on the largest number of rural women and their communities;
- Identify specific activities that USAID, MALR, the Ministry of Trade and Supply, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and other ministries can undertake to increase the level and pattern of women's participation in associations that meet the productive needs of women, their families, and communities; and
- Identify types of technical assistance that USAID and its partners may provide to enhance women's participation in these associations.

## METHODOLOGY

For this portion of the study, the methodology used included the following:

- An initial survey, based on available data, of associations dealing with agriculture, agribusiness, and trade in Egypt and selection of the appropriate ones on which to focus;
- Classification of the associations in appropriate categories for review and analysis;
- Meetings with APRP staff members who deal with association development to seek their advice on identifying appropriate associations and contact people;
- Interviews with managers of the selected associations to identify the level and pattern of women's participation in them;
- Interviews with managers of donor projects dealing with associations; and
- Site visits and rapid appraisal to areas in Lower and Upper Egypt to identify constraints to women's participation in the identified associations and the kind of assistance that women need to increase both their participation in associations and their productivity in agriculture and agribusiness.

## DEFINING AND CLASSIFYING ORGANIZATIONS

### Nongovernmental Organizations

Several difficulties are apparent when attempting to define and classify organizations. Public societies, public organizations, syndicates, nongovernmental societies or organizations, private voluntary organizations, and associations are all terms used in Egypt and essentially refer to the same thing (Kandil, 1994). What are known as national societies in Egypt are recognized by different names in other parts of the world. All of these organizations have social, economic, political, and cultural aspects. The most widespread of these labels is the NGO.

In Egypt, nongovernmental organizations play important roles in improving the social and economic conditions of the rural and urban poor. The term "organizations" may be applied to bodies such as societies, syndicates, and associations whose membership consists of males and female as well as women's associations, sports clubs, youth centers, community development associations, private voluntary organizations (PVOs), and nonprofit organizations. These organizations, particularly women's organizations, may differ in their structure or management methods, but they all have essentially similar goals.

The different types of groups involved in NGO activities in Egypt may be classified as shown in Table 20.

**Table 20: Groups Working within NGOs**

| Group              | Range (%) |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Religion (Islamic) | 9-53      |
| Religion (Coptic)  | 0-13      |
| Minorities         | 0-3.3     |
| Businessmen        | 0-3.9     |
| Graduates          | 0-2.4     |
| Professional       | 0-4.6     |
| Businesswomen      | 0-0.001   |

Source: Kandil: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 1994

The range of NGOs in Egypt extends from large national organizations with international affiliations (for example, the Egyptian Red Crescent) to small associations formed in towns or villages to provide small-scale services to their inhabitants.

The two major distinguishing features of PVOs are that they are private and voluntary. This is in contrast to certain NGOs, such as professional syndicates, whose membership is mandated by law. Egypt's PVOs are generally dominated by men.

There are some restrictions resulting from Law 32 governing NGOs that imposes excessive regulations hampering their activities. There are also problems with the application of the law by officials responsible for its application. That law was modified in May 1999, but many of the restrictions still prevail.

Table 21 lists major sources of funding for PVOs.

**Table 21: Major Sources of PVO Funding**

|                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Returns from activities | 37% |
| Government aid          | 20% |
| Donations               | 18% |
| Foreign aid             | 12% |
| Church                  | 8%  |
| Registration fees       | 5%  |

Source: Ibn Khaldoun Center for Development Studies, 1993

## WHY GENDER MATTERS IN ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

Participation in associations provides excellent opportunities for access to information, networking, and participation in decision making. During Phase I of the APRP gender assessment, the literature review and field visits indicated that rural women's participation in associations is extremely limited. This is true of cooperatives, water user associations, farmers groups, businesswomen's associations, and civil society organizations in general. Various factors account for women's limited participation in associations. For instance, membership in cooperatives is limited to landowners, and since fewer women than men own land, few are eligible for membership. Furthermore, women who participate in associations

often have limited opportunities to participate in decision making that affects their productive activities and their general welfare.

## **WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ASSOCIATIONS IN RURAL EGYPT**

### **Women's Organizations**

Egypt has a large number of women's NGOs. A list of women's organizations compiled by the Policy Coordinating Unit on Women in Agriculture indicates that 164 women's organizations are working in Egypt. Most are located in Cairo, but many organizations are functioning in all other governorates, some more than others. Women's associations account for one out of nine of the total number of NGOs.

Egyptian women's participation in associations dates back to the early 19th century, when women formed welfare associations to serve the needy members of society. The Maaref Society, the first Egyptian PVO, was founded in 1868. It did mostly voluntary work to help the needy members of society.

Egyptian women continue to be active in associations of various kinds, including mixed associations of men and women as well as women's associations. Women are members of political, social, and other associations.

Despite the long history of Egyptian women's participation in associations both as members and decision makers, women's membership in associations in Egypt remains quite limited, especially in rural areas. In 1997, the Policy Coordinating Unit on Women in Agriculture conducted a World Bank-funded survey of 2,000 households in four governorates. The survey revealed that the participation of women in NGO activities is extremely limited in the four governorates, ranging from none in Beheria, 0.6 percent in Souhag, 1.1 percent in Kalyubia, and 14 percent in Fayoum (Mansour, undated).

Most women's associations have branches in governorates or in regions away from their headquarters. The managerial framework in these branch offices is similar to that found in the mother institutions. The majority of these organizations are voluntary and thus are funded by member subscriptions, individual donations, or subsidies from the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA).

Most women's organizations concern themselves with the welfare of the family and the liberation of women by helping them acquire knowledge and skills that enable them to generate income and raise their families' standards of living. Some organizations aim at making women better housewives, teaching cooking skills and childcare, while also teaching skills for generating income (examples of such organizations are the Alexandria Association for Home Economics and the Green Land Women's Society in the New Lands in Nobariya).

Women's organizations work in the following areas: care for family and children; environmental services; cultural and training services; education services; social services; scientific and religious services; and care for the sick. Eighteen societies are headed by women.

All of these issues are of world interest today, as are the policies and programs whose aims are to grant women equality with men in all aspects of life. But women are still far from realizing this equality, even though they are important and effective contributors in agricultural areas (for example, farming, livestock and poultry raising, and food processing). The percentage of women's contributions in these various fields varies from 50 to 90 percent depending on the type of activity. Despite their major contribution, women are far from realizing equality with men in employment opportunities.

Women's organizations are among the institutions most capable of directing women's activities, understanding their conditions, and aiding women in expressing their aspirations which will lead to enhancing their role in sustainable economic and agricultural development. Furthermore, women's organizations, and other associations, can help women develop skills to improve production and enhance the social and economic conditions of their families, communities and wider society.

### **Women's Participation in Business Associations**

Women recently began to participate in business associations in Egypt. It is not known to what extent women are represented in the major businessmen's associations in Egypt. Some examples follow.

#### *The Alexandria Business Association*

The Alexandria Business Association (formerly the Alexandria Businessmen's Association) has five women members in its general assembly but none on its Board of Directors. This association manages the USAID-funded Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Project that provides business loans to men and women. About 20 percent of the beneficiaries of this project are women engaged in a variety of small enterprises including carpet making, leather goods, garment making, and embroidery. The quality of the products is quite high. The association has tried to encourage greater participation of women in its training activities for business owners, but participation remains low mainly because of the timing and the reluctance of women to attend mixed meetings with men.

#### *Horticultural Export Improvement Association*

The Horticultural Export Improvement Association (HEIA) was created with USAID support under the Agricultural Utilization and Technology Transfer Project (ATUT). Registered with MOSA in 1995, HEIA was created to guarantee access to modern production technologies

and postharvest handling practices, and to connect the industry to market information that will allow it to reach its production, quality, and marketing goals. HEIA's Board of Directors consists of nine members: eight men and one woman. Full membership is 91, 3 of whom are women. Among the council members, six are women. (There are more women in the council because membership is open to non-association members and the fees are much lower.)

HEIA provides assistance to its members in the following areas:

- Commodity support programs;
- Manager and employee training;
- Quality control awareness;
- Technical and marketing information;
- Development of advocacy capability;
- Establishment of links to transportation; and
- Linkage of Egyptian suppliers to overseas buyers.

HEIA membership favors businesspeople and landowners who can afford to pay the LE6,500 entrance fee and the LE1,800 annual membership fee. HEIA members must also pay royalties on land they own. Members owning 25 feddans or less pay LE25 per feddan annually. Members owning more than 25 feddans pay LE50 per feddan per year. Women landowners, who usually own small landholdings, either do not qualify for membership or cannot afford the membership fee. Some of them join as members of the HEIA Council, as mentioned above.

### *Egyptian Businesswomen's Association*

Over the past few years, Egyptian women have formed their own business associations. There is now the Egyptian Businesswomen's Association headed by Mrs. Yumna El-Shereedy, owner of Gerber Food Egypt. The association was founded in 1998, and registered with MOSA in August 1998. It has 135 members and has Board of Directors consisting of 11 women. Its objectives are to:

- Help businesswomen with information for business development and marketing;
- Raise the efficiency and skills of businesswomen and help improve the quality of their products;
- Encourage women to establish small enterprises;
- Encourage programs that protect the environment and raise environmental awareness among businesswomen; and
- Start efforts to create a nucleus for a common Arab market.

The Egyptian Businesswomen's Association is a member of the Arab Businesswomen's Union, which belongs to the Arab League. This union helps promote the interests of Arab businesswomen, mostly large business owners. It is also a member of the Afro-Arab Association of Business Men and Ladies, which has an office in Giza, Egypt. The purpose of Afro-Arab Association of Business Men and Ladies is to promote trade between African and Arab countries. It is an excellent source of networking and information sharing among the members to promote trade, helping with financial resources to exporters and importers, facilitating transportation, and opening export markets for Egypt and other Arab countries in Africa. The association was formed in June 30, 1999. These businesswomen are very active in promoting the interests of women business owners and helping them network.

## **CONSTRAINTS ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ASSOCIATIONS**

### **General Constraints Facing Associations**

Several constraints confront the associations and NGOs working in Egypt. Some of these constraints are general and face all types of organizations. Other problems are confronted only by certain organizations. These constraints affect the activities and the work of the associations, thus limiting the services they offer to the community. Difficulties experienced by nongovernmental associations may be external or internal.

Most leaders of women's associations require specialized training in fields related to managing rural development projects (that is, among women and the technical directors of productive projects). Most women's organizations confine their activities to health and social welfare but pay little attention to rural development in general. Their health, education, and welfare work has generally been effective in serving the needs of rural women. Yet these associates need to give greater attention to women's economic and productive activities. They need technical and financial assistance to enable them to serve the productive needs of rural women. They also need an understanding of how knowledge may be transmitted and disseminated effectively.

Women's organizations face other constraints as well. Limited financial resources hamper the effectiveness of women's organizations and prevent them from increasing and diversifying projects that would increase the productivity and employment opportunities for women in rural areas. Most women's organizations also tend to concentrate in large cities and have difficulty reaching women. This leads to some neglect of rural and agricultural development issues. Another constraint that all NGOs in Egypt face is the excessive control by MOSA. MOSA staff assigned to manage the organizations introduce bureaucratic procedures that often hinder the effectiveness of the organizations.

## **Structural and Management Problems**

Some specific structural and management problems affect women's organizations. The following factors adversely affect women's organizations:

- Staff in the organizations do not work full time.
- MOSA is, at times, too intrusive in women's organizations.
- The high turnover in leadership of these organizations hinders the development of leaders who can transform the organizations into centers of democratic practices and self-management.

## **Internal Constraints Facing Women's Organizations**

Several factors contribute to internal difficulties in women's organizations:

- Low representation of women in marketing and services in the economy as a whole and in the agricultural economy in particular;
- Insufficient coordination among the activities in the rural areas where women work;
- Absence of infrastructure in many rural areas;
- Bad health conditions for some rural women;
- Lack of control over production because men control marketing as well as the income generated from the work of women;
- Insufficient awareness, particularly among men, of the role played by women's organizations; and
- Customs and traditions limiting women's decision making, free movement, and the chances that their voices will be heard in their communities.

## **External Constraints**

### *Institutional Constraints*

Women's organizations experience excessive interference from MOSA, which leads to overly bureaucratic practices, particularly when dealing with donors, and hinders work towards sustainable development. In addition, government policy towards voluntary women's organizations is not clear despite the presence of MOSA. This lack of clarity leads

to inefficiency because no general direction is given by the state that would provide coordination and encouragement in developing these voluntary sectors.

### *Legal Constraints*

The following legal problems exist for women's organizations:

- Some limits and features in voluntary sector organizations are not clear. For example, some organizations are official while others are not, and it is difficult to distinguish between them.
- Organizations that produce commodities find it difficult to compete under a free market economy and open-door importation.

### **Social Constraints**

Social problems present great obstacles for women's organizations in Egypt. The status of women is linked strongly to tradition, which views women in a negative light and is not convinced that women are able to perform certain work. Moreover, policy makers and donors are generally prejudiced against women. This affects the activities of women in many organizations. Recently, however, these attitudes are changing and special attention is now being focused on women's projects and the welfare of women.

### **Environmental Constraints**

Environmental problems that face the majority of nongovernmental organizations working in rural areas are drought, drainage, desertification, water supply, diseases, malnutrition, and sanitary habits. These problems affect women in rural areas and have an effect on their enrollment in women's organizations.

### **Miscellaneous External Constraints**

Other external difficulties affecting women's organizations are as follows:

- Lack of focus on sustainability of activities;
- Insufficient strategic planning;
- Inadequate means for social mobilization; and

- Insufficient interest in aspects of development, especially in rural areas, and in problems related to marketing.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND EFFECTIVENESS IN ASSOCIATIONS**

The following are some suggestions for solving problems facing women's organizations in Egypt.

### **Training and Capacity Building**

- Training organization staff for work in rural development project formulation and the use of modern technology.
- Train employees in the field of extension and voluntary collective work.
- Hold seminars and workshops, and facilitate attendance of women's organizations at international congresses and meetings, so that women can discuss their activities and gain experience from different countries.
- Provide training for leaders on methods of drawing support from local and foreign donors to implement their programs.
- Encourage organizations to open training centers focusing on administration, bookkeeping, accounting, marketing, and basic literacy.

### **Funding**

- Establish investment projects to assist in providing permanent funding for the organization.
- Ensure that feasibility studies are undertaken before investment in projects to lessen risky investments.
- Use training centers as centers for marketing produce.

### **Organizations**

- Provide permanent premises for organizations.
- Provide means of transportation.

- Determine specific areas of work according to the type of organization.
- Use available resources to develop work in organizations.
- Identify problems inherent in the organization, evaluate them, and follow up on them to suggest solutions.

### **Administration**

- Develop a structure and administration for the organization.
- Employ top-notch leaders to manage the organizations.

### **Legal**

- Facilitate registration of the organization with MOSA.

### **Marketing**

- Exempt the organizations' production from taxes and customs.
- Ensure quality control of produce.
- Provide raw material at low prices to lower production costs.
- Establish permanent exhibitions to facilitate marketing.
- Encourage the establishment of nongovernmental unions for specific crops.

## **NGO SUCCESS STORIES**

Despite the many constraints and difficulties that nongovernmental organizations face, there are some success stories.

### **Green Land Ladies Society**

The Green Lands Ladies Society was founded in El-Hammam in Beheira and registered with MOSA in 1997. The members are 30 women university graduates who are settlers in the New Lands in Beheira (both recipients of lands and wives of graduates). Its Board of

Directors consists of five women. Its purpose is to help women with productive activities in Bangar El-Sukkar. It helps women with productive projects market their products. The quality of their products are reputedly very high and are being sold once a week in Alexandria and some small towns.

### **Alexandria Association for Home Economics**

The Alexandria Association for Home Economics was founded in 1991 and is registered with MOSA. It has 150 members including residents from the Bangar El-Sukkar region, in the El-Hammam district. Its Board of Directors consists of seven members, all faculty members of the University of Alexandria. The association aims to help with productive activities for women in the New Lands. It provides training in home economics skills to unemployed university graduates, and it recently received funding to provide loans for women to undertake productive projects. The team visited five such projects, all managed by wife-husband teams. The projects visited included a bakery, a fertilizer shop, and a pickling activity.

### **Community Development Society, Ogaybat, Aswan**

Registered in Aswan Governorate, Abou El-Reesh Village, on July 24, 1980, this society works in community development. Its members number 78 (57 men and 21 women). The Board of Directors consists of eight men and one woman.

The society offers loans from LE100 to LE1,500 for 24 months with an interest rate of 16 percent. It has a number of projects such as El-Orwa El-Wothka Kindergarten Project; a project to clean up and beautify El-Ogaybat; a project for a medical center; and a project for raising health awareness.

### **Coptic Anglican Association for Social Services**

Established in 1950, this association is represented in all the governorates of Egypt and offers services to all people, particularly the deprived, the poor, and the handicapped by helping them become productive citizens. Two million people have benefited from the services of this association. The association consists of four departments: education, health, agricultural development, and economic development.

The association works in all fields of development, such as family planning, nutrition, health care, sewing, agricultural, and economics. The association also focuses on income-generating agricultural projects.

## **Sharmoukh Community Development Association**

Registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs, this association's activities are in Malloway, El-Menia, Ezbet Abadir, and Sharmoukh, a village 250 kilometers south of Cairo. Its activities include a number of income-generating projects based on rural skills, technology, and expertise in keeping with the rural lifestyle. Market research preceded the start of these projects.

Other income-generating projects were selected on improved nutrition and food security. In 1984, a project for basket weaving for women and girls began with 12 women weavers and increased to 300 in 1992. The activity is a cooperative venture carried out in a non-competitive manner. Other projects implemented by this association include bread baking, goat breeding, and cattle breeding.

## **COOPERATIVES**

### **General Union for Cooperatives**

Among the most important organizations in Egypt in the agricultural field are the cooperatives. There is a General Union for Cooperatives to which the following associations are affiliated:

- The Central Agricultural Cooperative Union, headed by MALR. The Board of Directors has 109 members, one of whom is a woman. Five members are appointed.
- The Central Consumer Cooperative Union, headed by the Minister of Commerce. The Board of Directors has 33 members; one is a woman.
- The Central Housing Cooperative Union, headed by the Minister of Housing. The Board of Directors numbers 25; no women serve on the board.
- The Central Productive Cooperative Union, headed by the Minister of Rural Development. The Board of Directors consists of 20 people; one is a woman.
- The Central Cooperative Union for Aquatic Wealth. Its Board of Directors numbers 15, none of whom is a woman.
- The General Union of Cooperatives has no women on its Board of Directors.

### **The Agricultural Cooperatives**

Cooperatives were set up by the Ministry of Agriculture for specific crops or activities. A new law was promulgated and elections of new boards of directors. The Central Agricultural

Cooperative Union (CACU) was restored in 1983. CACU is the leading group comprising the following sectors:

- Credit cooperative sector
- Agrarian reform sector
- New reclaimed land sector
- Single-purpose cooperative sector

The single-purpose cooperative sector is mainly comprised of cooperatives dealing with specific crops or activities, such as potatoes, cotton, rice, oil seed, flax, and animal and fruit production.

### **Special Women's Cooperatives**

The Project for Productive Activities for Women Farmers in the New Lands initiated a number of cooperatives for women. The project has a broad range of activities. These include production units for manufacturing agricultural products; raising poultry, ducks, sheep, and honey bees; making carpets, textile and leather products; and making ready-made garments. In addition, the project includes cultural activities for women.

The Agricultural Cooperative Society for Food Security was founded in Aswan and registered in 1993 to manage the production units of the project. It is reported to be the first association of its kind in Egypt. Membership consists of the women and girls living in the region. The project continues to provide support to the association through seminars and training courses in management and skills training. It also provides individual and group loans to association members.

Another association for food security, similar to the one in Aswan, was established in Bangar El-Sukkar in July 1997. It is entrusted with managing productive units, in collaboration with the agricultural extension office.

### **Central Agricultural Cooperative Union**

The Central Agricultural Cooperative Union is composed of general multi-purpose cooperatives, general specialized cooperatives, and all of the governorates' central cooperatives. CACU's general assembly is formed from members of the Board of Directors of the cooperatives listed above and performs the following activities:

- Participates in the planning of the cooperative movement;
- Coordinates with the general agricultural cooperatives;
- Supervises cooperative training operations in agricultural cooperatives;

- Convenes the General Agricultural Cooperative Conference;
- Represents the agricultural cooperative movement abroad by joining international cooperative organizations;
- Suggests proposals for agricultural cooperative legislation; and
- Defends the interests of the agricultural cooperatives.

### **Achievements of Agricultural Cooperatives**

The Central Agricultural Cooperative Union works to enact the necessary measures to assist in updating cooperative methodology and organizing the entire cooperative movement. CACU has drafted a long-term cooperative development policy that defines specific roles for cooperatives.

#### *Cooperative Legislation and Structure*

Cooperative legislation should define the framework of cooperatives and provide suitable conditions for promoting and developing the movement, along with paving the way for active and full participation of cooperatives as constructive economic units without having to face any critical legislative problems.

CACU submitted to the authorities a new draft of a cooperative law to reorganize the cooperative structure to better suit the needs of its members and the conditions of the free market economy.

#### *Financial Measures to Deal with Privatization*

As a result of the removal of subsidies on farm inputs, cooperatives faced a tough challenge and attempted to become financially self-sufficient. Examples of these attempts are listed below:

- In 1992, the Agrarian Reform General Cooperative Society approved a contribution of LE30 for each feddan its members own.
- Most cooperative credit societies at the governorate levels raise funds from various sources.
- CACU established a fund of LE30 million to allow cooperative societies to purchase farm inputs at competitive prices and to sell them to the members who cannot afford to purchase from the private sector.

### *Marketing*

CACU is undertaking the following measures in the marketing field:

- Coordination and cooperation between producers of each main crop. It encourages the establishment of cooperative marketing societies in order to regulate the supply of produce and to realize the balance between supply and demand and, consequently, price stability;
- Encourage production of high-quality crops that are able to compete in foreign markets;
- Study marketing procedures and information on local and foreign markets; and
- Coordinate activities among cooperative societies at all levels to implement a cooperative marketing system.

### *Impacts on Women*

Women are minimally affected by these challenges and opportunities. Few women are members of cooperatives because membership is open only to landowners.

## **CONSTRAINTS OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES**

Problems with agricultural cooperatives are summarized in the following points:

- Suitable financial resources are unavailable.
- Most cooperative societies cannot establish adequate funds because of their previous reliance on subsidized loans from PBDAC.
- Interest rates on loans have increased sharply.
- Most fertilizers are sold by private traders.
- Heavy taxes exist on imported fertilizers.
- Exporting a portion of the available fertilizers affects availability and increases fertilizer prices.
- Funds for marketing members' produce do not exist.
- There are few grading stations and cold-storage facilities.

- Cotton gins, rice mills, and the like are monopolized by the public sector, which reduces the marketing activities and services of cooperatives.
- There are insufficient marketing statistics and information about local and foreign markets.
- There are not enough well-trained staff to contend with export problems.
- The present cooperative law needs to be revised to better suit the new political and economic trends.
- Cooperatives are forbidden to form corporations.
- CACU's limited responsibilities and the absence of branches in the governorates weaken the link with cooperative societies.

### CONCLUSION

From the above examples of successful NGOs, it is evident that great effort is being made, particularly for women. However, further effort is necessary to put women on an equal footing with men and to promote their contribution to development. Despite the disproportionately low number of women's societies, they exist all over Egypt, although the majority are situated in Cairo.

The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics Report in 1993 showed that the societies that work in family planning and family care have the highest representation of women (that is, 44 percent of its members are women and 42 percent of the Board of Directors are women). Women account for 30 percent of membership of societies handling the care of children and motherhood, with 38 percent on the Board of Directors being women. Philanthropic societies and those caring for the elderly and for prisoners have women as 27 percent of the members. Women make up 13 percent of their boards of directors. In the cultural, scientific, and religious societies, women do not exceed 14 percent of the membership, and they represent 8 percent of the Boards of Directors.

Societies that deal in more than one activity show a discrepancy between women's memberships and their representation on boards of directors. Although membership in these societies is 45 percent women, only 17 percent of the Boards of Directors are women. Women in these societies are limited to certain marginal roles. Moreover, they do not take part in establishing the societies. Despite these facts, women hold the majority membership in the Coptic societies and, to a lesser degree, in the Islamic societies.

The activities of women's societies differ from one society to the next, depending on the age of the society, its technical and administrative structures, and its relationships with donors.

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**ANNEX A**

**PROPOSED BENCHMARK: WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT,  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND INCOME IN  
THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY**

## Benchmark Statement

*The GOE/MALR will adopt policies to encourage the creation and success of women-owned and managed agribusinesses, employment for women, increased income for women and access to resources and information for women in agriculture in Egypt (This is a 2-year benchmark. Please note that detailed measures are in the verification indicators.)*

## Background

Successful agricultural enterprise in Egypt—from farming through trading, handling and exporting fresh and processed agricultural products—depends on women. The higher the value of the product, the more women participate in on-farm production and add value to the product throughout the handling and marketing chain. In Egypt today, laws and regulations protect women and afford them equal rights. But in practice, the productivity of women and their employment and income opportunities in the agricultural economy lag those of men. To ensure women equal opportunity for success as farmers, agribusiness managers and owners, employees and entrepreneurs, the government can carry out some basic reforms that will have an immediate impact.

One particularly critical area for improvement is the allocation of new lands to women. Wives of graduates (the Mubarak Project) or landless families who receive land from the GOE are entitled to 20 percent (1 feddan) in their own names. Married female graduates or married landless women are not allowed to apply for newly developed lands. The proportion of new land plots allocated to women remains very low. Improving women's access to land ownership and management should go far to promote improved access to credit and give women a voice in the councils that allocate water.

Another critical area of concern is women's limited access to technology, training and extension. There are too few village-based female extension agents and insufficient awareness among many male extension agents about women's roles in agriculture and their special needs and concerns. Improved access to information, technology, extension and training would women improve productivity on their land and increase women's income from, and employment in, agriculture and agribusiness.

**Previous work on this benchmark area:** The MALR has shown a long-standing commitment to promote participation of women in Egyptian agriculture. The Ministry has had an office of coordination for women in agriculture for several years; the Minister himself has encouraged a long series of donor-funded projects that promote women in agriculture. USAID also has a long and distinguished history of promoting women's access to resources and opportunities in Egypt. USAID has pioneered women's studies in many fields in Egypt.

In 1998, APRP undertook a study of Women's Employment, Incomes and Participation in the agricultural economy in Egypt. This study team reviewed the literature on women in Egypt, especially in agriculture; visited many ongoing projects; and consulted with donors,

government officials, private business people and academics. They identified five main areas worthy of further study: women in agribusiness, women and land, women and technology transfer, women and privatization and women and associations. In 1999, a second team looked in depth at these five areas. This benchmark stems from their research findings and from the discussions held at a stakeholder workshop in Cairo in May 1999.

**Discussions or participation to date with government or private sector partners:** The APRP Women in Agriculture Study Teams met with a very wide range of stakeholders similar to those included in the 1998 study mentioned above. They spoke with farmers, with graduates, with extension agents and researchers, then presented recommendations at a workshop in Cairo on 19 May 1999. The 95 workshop participants from the public, private, donor and NGO sectors discussed the team's recommendations and came up with many of their own. While one cannot speak of full consensus on an issue such as women in agriculture, the groups reached general agreement on the highest priority reforms. These are presented in the report on the study.

### **Policy Issues And Reform**

The APRP program to improve women's access to incomes, employment and participation in the agricultural economy does not aim to establish new bureaucracies nor to launch new technical assistance projects. Rather, APRP seeks to improve the policy environment in which women work in agriculture and agribusiness, so that their progress can become self-sustaining and permanent.

Our exit strategy is thus to establish a policy environment that promotes women as productive agents and provides added opportunities for them to

- Gain employment and income from agriculture and agribusiness;
- Start and succeed with new business ventures; and
- Participate in governance and policy dialogue to protect their interests and those of their trade or industry.

As we work toward this end, APRP will continue to provide technical assistance to GOE entities and to private associations and groups as needed to ensure their ability to participate in public/private policy dialogue and to take advantage of opportunities for employment and new business ventures.

### **Expected Effects**

This benchmark should have a dramatic effect on understanding the role of women in agriculture and agribusiness. Women's access to land should improve, as well as their access to information about new technology, credit and business services. These improvements

should lead to increased productivity; employment of and by women; and increased investments and improved incomes/security for women, their employers and their employees.

### **Verification Indicators (to be achieved in stages by 12-2001)**

**X.1.** The MALR will publish and implement a policy that calls on all MALR agencies in Cairo and in the governorates to collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data. This will significantly improve analysts' ability to identify gender-based issues and to propose policy reforms required to resolve these issues. (12-2000)

**X.2.** The GOE will establish a policy that mandates establishment of governorate-level Business Support Services Centers with sectors specifically for women in the agricultural economy. The services offered will include, among others, market information and marketing advice; business planning; competitive market analysis; feasibility studies and support for access to credit; access to technical assistance to deal with issues in management, accounting, production, processing or marketing. These centers will lead efforts to reform the new business registration structure to make it easier, especially for small, start-up business in rural areas. (12/2001)

**ANNEX B**  
**PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS CONSULTED**

### LIST OF CONTACTS FOR CHAPTER ONE

Mahmoud Salem  
Legal Counselor for the Ministry of Public Enterprises

Fuoad Abd El Wahab  
Director, PEO

Omar El Farouk  
Social Fund for Development

Zeinab Shaheen  
Social Fund for Development

Gehan Amman Allah  
Researcher, Motherhood and Childhood Council

Hany Olama  
Managing Director, Arabia for Cotton and Ginning

Hassan Khalafallah Khalifa  
Cairo for Dying

Ismail Erman  
Training and Human Resources Specialist, Ministry of Public Enterprises

### LIST OF CONTACTS FOR CHAPTER TWO

#### USAID:

Mr. Ali Kamel, Agricultural Policy Division  
Dr. Glenn R> Rogers, Agricultural Policy Division  
Ms. Nihad Hassan, Agricultural Policy Division  
Ms. Aziza Helmy, Strategic analysis and Evaluation Division

#### APRP:

Dr. Magdy El Guendy, APRP/RDI  
Dr. Akhtar Ahmed, IFPRI/APRP  
Dr. Kenneth Swanberg, APRP/RDI  
Dr. Edgar Ariza-Nino, APRP/RDI  
Dr. Jane Gleason, APRP/RDI  
Mr. Richard Magnani, APRP/RDI  
Dr. Adel Mustafa, APRP/MVE

**Donors:**

Dr. Ronald D. Krenz, Cotton Sector Promotion Program, GTZ  
 Dr. Helmut Schon, Cotton Sector Promotion Program, GTZ  
 Dr. Jan Sheltinga, CIDA  
 Mr. Aly El Kerdany, DANIDA  
 Dr. Filippo Curtale, Development Cooperation Office, Italian Embassy  
 Ms. Fateh, FAO  
 Mr. Abd Al Aziz, IFAD/UNDP  
 Mr. Mohamed Khalifa, IFAD/UNDP

**USAID Projects:**

Ms. Cynthia Steen, AgLink, ACDI-VOCA  
 Mr. Hussein Raafat Ahme, AgLink, ACDI-VOCA  
 Mr. Mohamed Khasaty, AgLink, ACDI-VOCA  
 Dr. Sawsan El-Messiri, ATUT, Ronco  
 Mr. Harvey S. Shartaup, ATUT, Ronco  
 Dr. Ali A. El-Saied, ATUT, Agricultural Research Center  
 Dr. Dennis C. Buda, ALEB, Abt Associates

Mr. James Maxwell, ExpoLink  
 Ms. M. Jean Thomas, NCNW  
 Mr. Mahdough S. Abd El-Aziz, CARE

**Associations:**

Mr. Amr A. El Tonsy, HEIA  
 Dr. Hemdy Salem, EEPC  
 Ms. Manal Karim, EEPC  
 Mr. Raouf Hamawy, DIDA  
 Dr. Yomna El Sheridy, Business Women of Egypt 21  
 Dr. Awatif Al-Assi, Egyptian Business Women

**Private Sector—Cotton:**

Mr. Mohamed G. Marzouk, Giza Spinning and Weaving, A.S.E.  
 Ms. Yasmin Beshara, Marie Louis BTM, Bishara Group  
 Mr. Howard Yoo, DIB-Egypt Limited Liability Co.  
 Mustafa Fatour, Misr Cotton Spinning Co.  
 Abdallah Shiek, Basyotex Cotton (Spinning) Company  
 Mdm. Nawal Omran, Modern Nile Trading Company  
 Mdm. Eftikar El-Sheshiny, Fafu Trade and Industry  
 Dr. Awatef El-Aasy, Angelic Garments  
 Dr. Dahmoosh, Consultant, Nile Clothing

**Private Sector—Horticulture:**

Mr. Nasr Abdel Salam, Fargalla Group  
 Ms. Mervat El-Khatib, La Poire  
 Mr. Mostafa Diab, La Poire

Mr. Tarek Z. Tawfik, Farm Fritz  
 Mr. Yahia Mansour, Farm Fritz  
 Eng. Hamed El Shiaty, Shoura Corporation  
 Ms. Nadia Niazi Mostafa, NIMOS Farms  
 Mdm. Reham El-Din Youssef, Youssef Farm  
 Ms. Doaa Mohamed, Mabrouk Farms  
 Mr. Maher Nossier, Montana  
 Ms. Iman Kamel, Montana  
 Eng. Mohamed A. Khalil, Sonac  
 Mr. Patrick R. Mansour, Givrex  
 Mr. Helmy Abouleisch, Sekem

**Private Sector—Diary:**

Eng. Fathi Kamel, Greenland  
 Mr. Mahmoud Esmail, ENJOY  
 Eng. Suzanne A. Basilioius, Mirhom Dairy Farms  
 Eng. Sammy Tahrir, Tahrir Buffalo Farm  
 Mrs. Zenab Ahmed, Smallholder Dairy farmer  
 Mrs. Malika Kadri, Smallholder Dairy farmer

**NGOs:**

Dr. Laila Rashed Iskandar, Community and Institutional Development

**Public Sector:**

Dr. Kamla Monsour, PCUWA  
 Dr. Ahmed El Behery, MALR  
 Dr. Hassan Kheidr, PBDAC  
 Dr. Wagdy Hendy, ALCOTEXA  
 Mdm. Iglal Abou Sabe, The Port-Said Cotton Export Co., Alexandria  
 Dr. Mohame Mamdouh Awny, SEDO, Social Fund for Development  
 Mr. Raafat Abbas Shehata, SEDO, Social Fund for Development  
 Dr. Zenab Shanin, Gender Unit, Social Fund for Development  
 Mr. Morsi, Agricultural Cooperative Office, El Fayoum

**Other Women Business Owners:**

Ms. Fekria Kassem, Trader, TOPIC  
 Ms. Lucy Wadie Mohareb, Livestock Farmer

**LIST OF CONTACTS FOR CHAPTER THREE**

**APRP Staff:**

Mr. Mahmoud Nour, APRP Program Coordinator  
 Dr. Jane Gleason, Resource Economics Specialist  
 Dr. Sayed Hussein, Resource Economist  
 Dr. Muhammad Sharaf, Consultant

**USAID:**

Ms. Nihad Hassan

Ms. Aziza Helmy, Gender Officer, USAID, Cairo

**Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation:**

Dr. Kamla Mansour, Director, Policy Coordinating Unit for Women in Agriculture

Eng. Samir Shihata, Undersecretary of State for Cooperatives

Eng. Abdul Rahman Abdul Majeed Ali, Undersecretary, GARPAD

Eng. Nadia El-Sayed, GARPAD

Eng. Hussein Mohammad El-Araby, Deputy Director of the General Cooperative Society for Reclaimed Lands

Dr. Said Abd el Maksoud, Professor and Director of Agricultural Economics Research Institute

**Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources:**

Engineer Essam Barakat, General Director, Irrigation Advisory Service

**Donors:**

Mr. Steven Lawry, Representative, Middle East and North Africa, The Ford Foundation

Ms. Sharry Lapp, Program Officer, Ford Foundation

Mrs. Suzan Kamel, Executive Director of World Food Program, Project ARE 2499/3

Mrs. Magda Bakr, Senior Officer, Gender and Participation, World Food Program, Project ARE 2499/3

**Gender Specialists:**

Dr. Sawsan El-Messiri

Ms. Sumaya Ibrahim, Consultant

**Research Centers and Universities:**

Dr. Nicholas Hopkins, Professor of Anthropology, Dept. of Sociology, Anthropology, and Psychology, American University of Cairo

Dr. Mohammad Hassan Abdel Aal, Research Professor, Social Research Center, American University of Cairo

Dr. Reem Saad, Social Research Center, American University of Cairo

Dr. M. A. Sabbah, Professor of Food and Agricultural Engineering and Director of Desert Development Center, The American University of Cairo

Dr. Ragaa El-Amir, Desert Development Center, The American University of Cairo

Dr. Ezza Bindary, Associate Professor of Sociology, Cairo University

**Extension Officers and Experts:**

Mr. Ayyad Thabet Kiryakous, Luxor

Mrs. Irene Onsi

Mrs. Feryal

**PBDAC:**

Mr. Khodr  
Ms. Ilham

**Private Sector:**

Mr. Ahmed M. Abdel Aziz, Technical Manager, Alexandria Business Association

**Farmers with Large Holdings:**

Mrs. Shaheera Mehrez (farmer, New Lands)  
Mr. Khalil Nasrallah (olive plantation in the New Lands)  
Mr. Tony Frieji (olive and poultry farming in the New Lands)  
Mr. Ali Fahmy (banana plantation farmer in the Old Lands)

**Behira Governorate, Brigat Village:**

Mrs. Nadia Ahmad Mahmoud Radwan  
Saadiyah Ali El-saidi  
Subhiyyah Ali Al-Dou  
Naima Muhammad Radwan  
Sawsan Adel Hadi Hussein Radwan  
Shadia Muhammad Mustafa  
Mrs. Safia Muhammad Mustafa

**Luxor Governorate:**

Haji Fawziah (small landowner)  
Mrs. Buthaina (small land owner)  
Haji Raddayah (small land owner)  
Haji Ratiba (small landowner)

**El-Gurnah Village, West Luxor:**

Mrs. Zeina Muhammad Jaber (wife of Omda)  
Bakhtia Muhammad Sayed Khalil (landless farmer)

**Bangar El-Sukkar (Mubarak Graduate Project):**

Mrs. Nadia Singer  
Mrs. Kawthar Abdul Mawgoud  
Mrs. Safa Faris Muhammad  
Mervat Ibrahim Mouli  
Mona Ahmad Suleiman  
Sabah Jala Muhammad Atif  
Magda Muhammad Ibrahim  
Nabila Abdul Abed Al-Hakim

**Site 20:**

Faten Saeed Hasan  
Wataniyah Kutub Zahra

Atiyyat Murad Saed Murad  
Nahed Zaydan Abdul Gawad

## LIST OF CONTACTS FOR CHAPTER FOUR

### Interviewees and Institutions Visited (Partial List)

Extension, Training, and Technology Transfer

#### **APRP/RDI:**

Mr. Mahmoud Nour, Program Coordinator  
Dr. Sayed Hussein  
Dr. Ken Swanberg, Privatization and Agribusiness Specialist  
Mrs. Fatma Khattab, Privatization Specialist  
Mr. Mohamed Gomaa  
Mr. George Kondos

#### **International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI):**

Dr. Akhter U. Ahmed, Ph.D., Chief of Party, Food Security Research Project

#### **USAID/Egypt:**

Ali Kamel, COTR, APRP/RDI  
Nehad Hassa Rageh,  
Dr. Aziza Helmy, Gender Advisor,  
Amal Amin, Privatization Specialist,  
Tarek A. Shata, Export Development Division.

#### **Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation**

##### **Cairo:**

Dr. Kamla Mansour, Director, Policy Coordinating Unit on Women in Agriculture  
(PCUWA)  
Dr. Magdi El-Guindi, Agricultural Economist, Coordinator of training for the PCUWA,  
MALR  
Dr. Mohamed Shafie Sallam, Director, Agricultural Extension and Rural Development  
Research Institute  
Dr. Effat Abdel Hameed, Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Research Institute  
Dr. Laila H. El-Shinnawy, WID, Coordinator, Agricultural Extension and Rural  
Development Research Institute  
Dr. Mahmoud Mansour, Director, Agricultural Economics Research Institute  
Dr. Asma El-Bilass, Gender Specialist, Agricultural Economics Research Institute  
Atef Abdel Halim, Director General, The Egyptian International Center for Agriculture  
Dr. Said Abd -El Maksoud, Research Professor of Agro-economics

Nadia Ishaq, WID Director, Rural Development, General Administration for Extension  
Mrs. Nabila El-Tonsi, Director General, Central Administration of Training, MALR

**Focus Group Discussion with researchers from the Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Research Institute:**

Dr. Aziza Awadallah El-Sayyed, Director of Research  
Dr. Houreya Kamel El-Khateeb, Director, Women's Extension Research division  
Dr. Amal Ali El-Garhi, Researcher, Women's Extension Research division

**Gharbia Governorate:**

Mostafa Abo-Raya, Eng. Undersecretary of Gharbia, Project Manager, Potato Development and Training Center

Dr. Suhair Abdel Rahman, Director of Rural Development, General Administration for Agricultural Extension, Tanta.

About 15 men farmers silk/worm program participants

Female members of one household engaged in silk worm raising and silk production

**Sharkia Governorate:**

Mr. Mahmoud Selim El-Gamal, Undersecretary, MALR

Sharkia Governorate

Engineer Abu el Fetouh Abu Nabi Mohammed, Director. The Agricultural Directorate and Director General of Extension, Sharkia Governorate

Mr. Osama El-Maghawri. CSPP, Local Director (CSPP) Sharkia Governorate

Engineer Mohammed Samir Dawoud, Cotton Specialist, GTZ, Sharkia Governorate

Engineer Magdi Moris. GT2 Project Specialist CSPP

Engineer Aisha Mahmoud Kamel Abdel Moe'ti, Facilitator, Female Farmers' Learning Group and 18 women members of the Farmers' Learning Group

**Beheira Governorate:**

A.E. Sherif Bendary Mohamed, Executive Director

Beheira Integrated Rural Development Project (BRDP)

Dr. Mahmoud Yussef Moussa, Economic Consultant, BRDB

**Principal Bank for Development and Agricultural Credit (PBDAC):**

Dr. Hassan Khedr, Chairman of the Board

Mrs. Ahlam Abu-Zeid, Director of Women's Program

**Social Fund for Development:**

Mr. Omar El Farouk Amin Omar, Director General, Human Resources Development Program

**Contractors:**

Ahmed M. Abdel Aziz, Technical Manager, Alexandria Business Association, Small and Micro Enterprise Project (USAID)

Jean Thomas, Director, National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) Egypt, PVO  
Development Project (USAID)

Dr. Amr M. Taha. HRD Manager. NCNW Egypt , PVO Development Project

Harvey S. Schartup, Deputy Chief of Party, RONCO

Agricultural Technology Utilization and Transfer Project (ATUT), USAID

Dr. Sawsan El-Meseeri, Anthropologists, Gender Consultant, ATUT

Dennis C. Buda, Chief of Party, Agriculture-Led Export Business (ALEB), USAID

David R. Dyer, Team Director, Marketing Information, ALEB

Carol Adoum

Mr. Samir Sedki, Director, AgReform Project, CARE/Egypt

Gebril Mahhoub Osman, Assistant Project Manager, AgReform Project, CARE Egypt

Mark M. Dripchak. Agreform. Project Manager. CARE, Egypt

Dr. Sara Loza, President, Social Planning , Analysis and Administration Consultant (SPACS)

**Professors, Academics, Universities:**

Dr. Mohammad El-Sabahi, Center for the Development of Desert Lands, American  
University of Cairo

Dr. Ragae El-Amir, Agricultural Economist, Rice Sector Expert, Center for the Development  
of Desert Lands, American University of Cairo

Dr. Mostafa Seddek Ali, Vice president, Community Development, Menoufia University

Dr. Mohammed Hassan, Professor of Sociology, College of Agriculture, Cairo University,  
and Research Professor, Social Science Research Center, American University in Cairo

Dr. Imad El-Shafei, Professor of Agricultural Extension, College of Agriculture, Cairo  
University

Dr. Azza El-Bindari, Assistant professor of Sociology, College of Agriculture, Cairo  
University

Dr. Samia Galal Saad, Professor of Environmental Sciences, AUC

Special Advisor to the Minister of Environment (telephone interview)

Dr. Ragee Asaad, Professor/ Economist, Economic Research Forum (telephone interview)

**Private Associations:**

Ahmed Kamel, Managing Director. MISR Pioneer Seed Company

Amr M. El Tonsy, Horticultural Export Improvement Association (HEIA)

**Donors**

**German Development Agency (GTZ):**

The German Cotton Sector Promotion Program (CSPP)

Helmut Schoen, Chief of Party, Cotton Sector Promotion Program (CSPP)

Rudiger Harnisch, Agronomist/ Director of Extension, GTZ, MALR, Cairo

Dr. Gerhard Ohlde, Team Leader, GTZ PACS Egyptian-German Project for the Promotion of  
Agricultural Cooperative Services Fayoum and Beni Suef

Mona Abou-Zeid, Sociologist Economist, Impact Monitoring and Evaluation, GTZ

Elvira Ganter, Social Scientist and Gender Consultant, GTZ

**International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD):**

Abd Al Aziz A. Ibrahim, Technical Office Manager, New Lands Agricultural Services Project (EGY-IFAD/306)

**The World Bank:**

Rouchdy Saleh, Senior Natural Resources and Environs Specialist, The World Bank

**Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Regional Office:**

Fatiha Bou-Salah, Regional Women in Development Officer, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, Regional Office for the Near East

**World Food Program:**

Suzan Kamel, Executive Manager, World Food Program (WFP)

Mohammed Khalifa, Agriculture, Economist, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, New Lands Agricultural Services Project (EGY-IFAD /306)

Dr. Abd-Elwahab I. Allam, Director, Sugar Crops Research Institute

**LIST OF CONTACTS FOR CHAPTER FIVE**

Sohair Noor

Professor of Home Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, Alexandria University

Laila Kamel

Community and Institutional Development (CID)

Samir Sedki

Project Manager, CARE

Sohair Ahmed

Project Supervisor, CARE

Sohair El Saheir

Consultant, Development of Rural Women Central Agriculture Cooperative Union

Sohair Abdel Rahman

Director of Rural Development General Administration for Agricultural Extension, Tanta

Suzan Kamel

Executive Director of World Food Program, Project ARE 2499/3

Medhat Moris

Director of Integrated Agricultural Development Project, Coptic Evangelical Organization

Aziza Samir

Responsible members activities, The Business Women Association 21

Nadia Lotfi

Bangar El-Sukkar, Green Land Ladies Society

Seham Abedel Baseer

President , Green Land Ladies Society

Sabah Gelal

Deputy President, Green Land Ladies Society

Kawlher Abdel Maagood

Treasurer, Green Land Ladies Society

Nadia Senger

Secretary, Green Land Ladies Society

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**ANNEX C**

**TOTAL EMPLOYMENT GENERATED  
IN AGRIBUSINESS AS OF 1998**

**Total Employment Generated in Agribusiness  
as of 1998**

| Sub-Sector                     | Production       | Processing     |                | Total Employment |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
|                                |                  | Public Sector  | Private Sector |                  |
| Cotton <sup>1</sup>            | 274,400          | 227,729        | 286,012        | 788,141          |
| Rice <sup>2</sup>              | 231,000          | 6,600          | 14,818         | 252,418          |
| Wheat <sup>3</sup>             | 180,000          |                |                | 180,000          |
| Milling <sup>4</sup>           |                  | 14,868         | 34,798         | 49,666           |
| Confectionaries <sup>5</sup>   |                  | 11,282         | 124,937        | 136,219          |
| Horticulture <sup>6</sup>      | 1,319,379        | 10,825         | 63,500         | 1,393,704        |
| Hort. Trading <sup>7</sup>     |                  |                | 10,000         | 10,000           |
| Livestock (Dairy) <sup>8</sup> | 520,833          | 802            | 6,550          | 528,185          |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>2,525,612</b> | <b>272,106</b> | <b>540,615</b> | <b>3,338,333</b> |

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Employment in Cotton production was derived by multiplying 686,000 feddans (area that is under cotton production) by 100 adult work days (out of a 250 work day per year) required for cotton production - children labor=27 days.

<sup>2</sup>Rice production and processing (public and private) employment figures were obtained from the rice subsector map prepared by APRP.

<sup>3</sup>Wheat production figure derived by multiplying 1.5 million feddans (area under wheat production) by about 30 adult work-days (out of a 250-day work year) required for wheat production per year.

<sup>4</sup>The employment figure for private and public sector milling industry was arrived at by adding up the number of jobs calculated in APRP's Wheat Sub sector maps (Krenz, 1998, p. 23).

<sup>5</sup>The employment figures for private sector confectionary was arrived at by adding up the numbers of jobs calculated in APRP's Wheat Sub-sector maps (Krenz, 1998)—see page 32. For employment figure in public sector confectionary industry, the number was arrived at by adding up jobs based on data provided by the Office of Public Enterprise (OPE).

<sup>6</sup>Employment figure for horticulture production were obtained directly from ATUT. The figure is based on actual number of jobs created per feddan per product (jobs estimated for 15 horticultural products).

Employment figure for public sector processing arrived at by adding up jobs based on data provided by the OPE. Employment figure for the private sector processing industry was derived by taking the average number of jobs per class of firm (a total of 122 firms were divided in 9 classes) identified in the horticulture sub-sector map. The average number of jobs created by these 122 firms (which were large and medium-sized) totaled to about 23,000 jobs. Of the 122 firms, 24 were large firms (employing more than 100 employees) and 98 were medium-sized firms employing between 25 to 100 employees. The employment generated by small firms (employing an average of 3 employees) were derived from numbers based on the Social Fund for Development's (SFD) data (See Table 2.3). SFD data shows that of the 72,772 enterprises it funds, 13,591 are food industry related enterprises employing an average of 3 employees. This number was then added to the number for the large and medium sized firms to arrive at

<sup>7</sup>Krenz (1997) estimates that there are about 5,000 trading companies. The employment figure was arrived at by factoring in an average of 2 jobs per company.

<sup>8</sup>DIDA estimates that there are about 5 million head of cattle in Egypt. The average number of cattle per household at the smallholder level is 1-5 heads of cattle. This study used an average of 3 heads of cattle per household to arrive at the number of households owning cattle. The number of households were then multiplied by the number of hours household members spent on their cattle (caring and milking and processing). It is estimated that on the average each household spends about 2.5 hours (on an 8-hour day).

<sup>9</sup>Employment figure for Public sector processing arrived at by adding number of jobs based on data provided by the OPE. Employment figure for private sector processing was arrived at by estimation—DIDA estimates that there are 17 modern private processing plants, of which 5 are large (employing about 700 employees), 5 are medium (employing about 400 employees) and 7 are small (employing about 150 employees).

**ANNEX D**

**TOTAL FEMALE EMPLOYMENT GENERATED  
IN AGRIBUSINESS AS OF 1998**

**Total Female Employment Generated in Agribusiness  
as of 1998**

| Sub-Sector                     | Production | Processing    |                | Total Employment |
|--------------------------------|------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
|                                |            | Public Sector | Private Sector |                  |
| Cotton <sup>1</sup>            | 151,200    | 34,370        | 141,101        | 326,671          |
| Rice <sup>2</sup>              | 66,990     | 1,188         | 2,667          | 70,845           |
| Wheat <sup>3</sup>             | 18,000     |               |                | 18,000           |
| Milling <sup>4</sup>           |            | 2,676         | 6,264          | 8,940            |
| Confectionaries <sup>5</sup>   |            | 2,778         | 24,987         | 27,765           |
| Horticulture <sup>6</sup>      | 583,091    | 3,579         | 25,400         | 612,070          |
| Hort. Trading <sup>7</sup>     |            |               | 1,000          | 1,000            |
| Livestock (Dairy) <sup>8</sup> | 416,667    | 205           | 1,014          | 417,886          |
| Total                          | 1,235,948  | 44,796        | 202,433        | 1,483,177        |

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>Female employment estimate in cotton production derived by taking the total labor estimated in Annex C and multiplying it by the percentage of labor provided by women. Per GTZ study (Ganter, E, 1998), women provide about 55.6% of total adult labor required for cotton production.

The female employment figure for public sector processing was derived by adding up the actual number of female jobs in the sector. The number of public sector jobs was extracted from data provided by the Public Enterprise Office; For the employment number in private sector processing, the total number of employees in the spinning, weaving, and dyeing industries (in Annex C) were multiplied by 10%, since about an average of 10 percent of the workers in these industries tend to be women. RMG number was arrived at by multiplying the total Annex C RMG labor by 85%, since on the average, about 85% of all RMG employees tend to be women.

<sup>2</sup>Female employment estimate in Rice production was derived by taking the portion of the total labor (see Annex C) and multiplying it by the percentage contributed by women. Per GTZ (1998), women provide about 29% of total labor required for Rice production. For processing, the Annex C processing number was multiplied by 18%, the percentage representing female labor. OPE data show that on average, about 18% of all processing (public) labor are provided by women—we used the same average number.

<sup>3</sup>Wheat Production figure derived by multiplying Annex C figure for wheat by 10%. GTZ (1998) study estimates that about 10% of the total labor required in wheat production is contributed by women.

<sup>4</sup>Female employment figures in both public and private sector milling industries were derived by multiplying Annex C figure by 18%, an average number based on OPE data. OPE data show that on average, about 18% of all processing (public) labor are provided by women—we used the same average number.

<sup>5</sup>Female Employment in Public sector Confectionaries derived by adding up the actual number of jobs (numbers obtained from OPE). For private sector, number arrived at by multiplying Annex C figure for private sector confectionaries by 20%.

<sup>6</sup>Female employment for horticulture production obtained directly from ATUT (see Annex C). Female employment for public sector processing arrived at by adding female jobs based on data provided by OPE. Private sector processing number derived by assuming that at least 40% of the jobs are being provided by women.

<sup>7</sup>We assumed that at the very least, 10% of the total trading jobs in Annex C are being filled by women.

<sup>8</sup>Given that 80% of the labor for dairy production is being provided by women, Annex C production figure was multiplied by 80% to arrive at this figure. For Public sector processing, number pulled directly from data provided by OPE. For private sector processing figure, number derived by assuming that large and medium-sized dairy plants (being more modern) have about 10% women employees, and smaller plants have about 15% female employees. Percentages based on employment presented in Annex C.