NUS EVALUATION PROJECT PHASE TWO

DISTRICT DECISION MAKING

AND

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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DECISION MAKING AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

1. Introduction

This report focuses on the social and political context of NUS subprojects - on local decision making, community involvement, and social impact. It is one of three reports prepared under Phase Two of the Neighborhood Urban Services Evaluation Project. The other reports cover:

(a) Subproject Contract Management and Maintenance

(b) Case Studies in Community-Rooted PVOs

There is an important complementarity among the reports and some readers may wish to examine all three.

The goal of the NUS project is to increase the capacity of local urban government to carry out activities in response to local needs for better urban services. Through the repeated completion of NUS subprojects, Egyptian officials should gain confidence in the abilities of district units to perform important tasks. The result should be a certain devolution of responsibilities and matching financial resources to local levels of an increasingly more competent urban administration. In order to assertain the nature of the project's impact in this regard, it is necessary for us to document the structures and processes of local government as they relate to NUS type activities.

The ultimate test of a project is how it benefits the people. We examine through case studies the on-going activities and community context of six completed district subprojects in order to identify the social parameters of NUS success and problems. In this regard, our case studies indicate that NUS is very successful. The needs being met are real and pressing. Whatever minor faults one might find with any subproject are outweighed many times over by the effective provision of appropriate services to large numbers of grateful beneficiaries.

2. Methods - Case Studies Within Case Studies

Cairo and Alexandria are large and complicated cities and we cannot pretend to perform a comprehensive study of urban administration in a short time, nor would this be an appropriate task for an evaluation team. Because our aim is to understand how things work in Egyptian local government-changing processes and an evolving system-we use a case study method which aims at a deeper knowledge of a few places rather than a surface survey of all areas and units. Such case studies add to and complement the data from the TA contractor's records and special surveys.

We completed case studies within case studies. First we chose two districts - Helwan and Shoubra - as case studies of urban decision making and administration. Through interviews, site visits, workshops, and background material, we learned as much as we could about how local government works in these two districts. Also, the evaluation teams for PVOs and Contract Management and Maintenance worked in these same districts. The data of the three studies, taken together provides a broad picture of NUS activities, and public and private Egyptian activities in the two districts. (Two teams also worked in a district in Alexandria; that material is incorporated into the report on Subproject Contract Management and Maintenance.)

Within the two Cairo districts we selected six NUS subprojects as the main focus of investigation. These subprojects represent the areas of education, health, youth, and utilities. In all cases they are completed subprojects now in use, allowing us to observe them in the full social context. This puts one obvious bias in the selection in that the weakest subprojects are those that fail to be completed. It also means that we are looking at earlier subprojects. For these subproject cases, we focused on the history of the decision, the involvement of users in design and planning, the neighborhood context of the subproject, and the operational experience of the facility once completed. The details of contracting and construction are touched upon here, but are mainly left for the report on those topics.

3. District Government - A Federation of Semi-Autonomous Units

Districts, Governorates, and Central Ministries

One of the purposes of the NUS Project is to strengthen public institutions. Evaluating whether this has occurred requires an

understanding of how the government operates. Project documents frequently refer to "local government" and to the NUS Project's broad policy goal of decentralization. "Local government" refers to governorates and to districts, the lowest of the three levels of government. At the outset, the NUS Project focused on building capacity at the district level. It allots a certain amount of money to each district for the construction of small and medium sized subprojects to be chosen by the district. The districts decide how to spend the money (within NUS guidelines), and then implement the decision. Technical assistance is offered throughout the process by the TA contractor. Increasingly AID Project Management and the TA contractor are stressing the need to work also at the higher levels of government, where much of the authority rests for strengthening the districts.

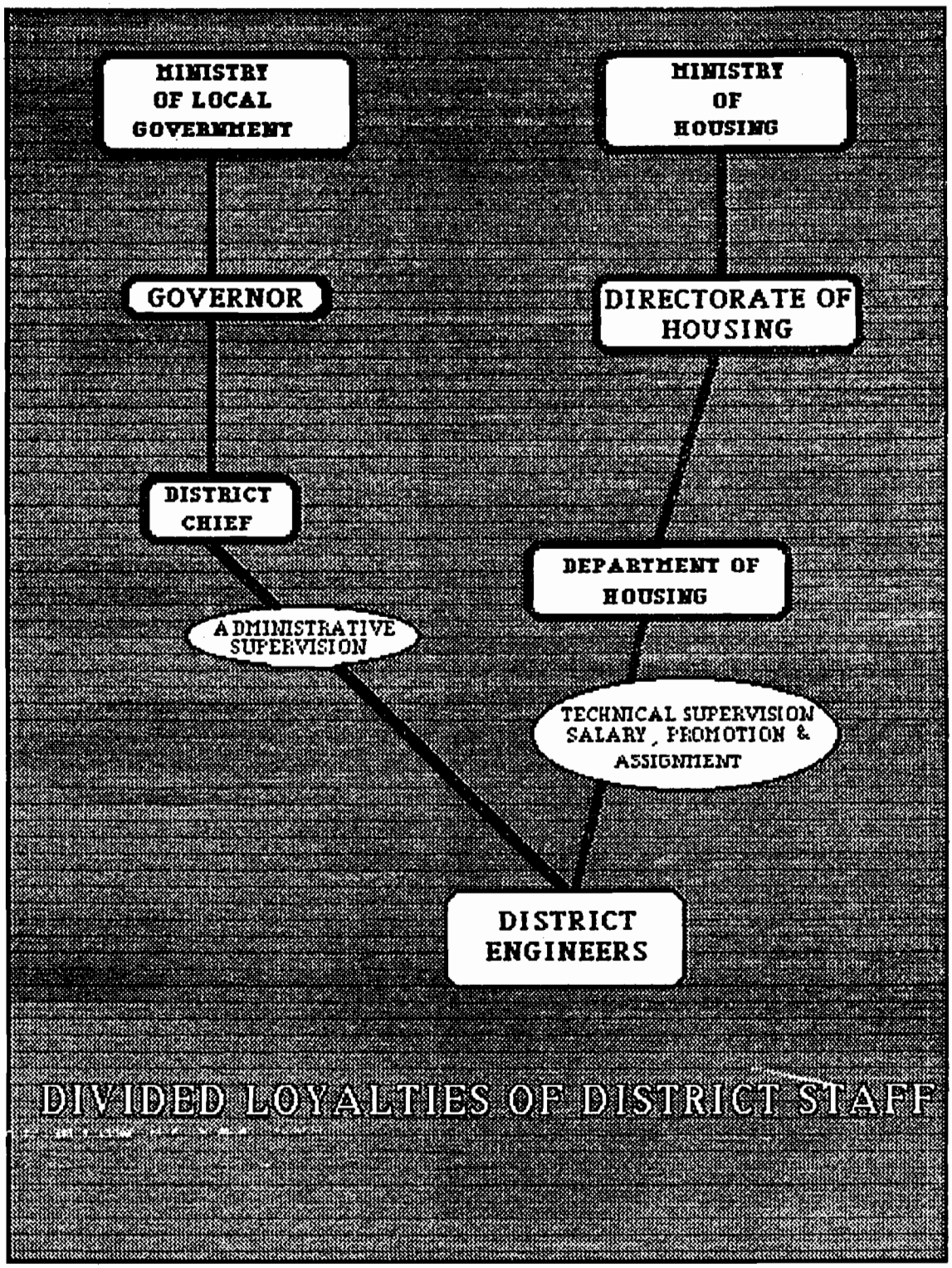
In the past decade, the national government has passed legislation to strengthen the governorates and to some extent the districts. Regarding districts,these laws are stated largely as enabling legislation, granting the Governor the discretion to bestow or reserve authority to the districts.

Officials vary in their commitment to, and understanding of, this decentralization policy. The extent of the district's influence and the amount of discretion they have in administering programs is not clear. Furthermore, the differing understandings and to some extent the ambiguity of the law in specifying the authority and responsibility of districts, make it difficult for them to assert and expand their authority. Thus the NUS project is working in an ambiguous area where there has been little clarification of which roles can be best done at each level.

The District government is comprised of three groups of officials: (a) district administrative officials, (b) service departments, and (c) the Popular Council.

District Administrative Officials

Five officials are direct district officials who are members of the Ministry of Local Government: the District Chief, Secretary-General, Public Relations, Planning and Follow-up, and the Director of Finance (although he also represents the central ministry of finance as a controller). One of the above (usually the Director of Planning and Follow-up) is designated NUS Coordinator.



DIVIDED LOYALTIES OF DISTRICT STAFF

Service Departments in the Districts

A second group is comprised of the representatives of each of the national level service ministries who chair departments (edarat, manatek) at the District level. (There is some confusion of English terms here. Ministerial bodies at the governorate level are called mudireyat, translated here as directorates; at the district level they are called edarat or manatek, translated here as departments. Sometimes a third term, keta'at is used referring to both of these bodies in general.) Personnel in these service departments have a divided allegiance; they are administratively under the district chief, but professionally under their ministry (department, directorate). Their salaries come from the ministry rather than the district and they retain a strong link to their own directorates and ministries. There are nine such departments: Education, Health, Youth, Labor, Social Affairs, Supply, Al Azhar Educational Institutes, Housing, and Police.

These Chairmen, together with the District Chief and Secretary General, form an Executive Council which is supposed to meet weekly. The Executive Council plays a coordinating and prioritizing role among the departments and it serves as an information clearing house. Since most of the funding for District level projects prior to the NUS Project, came through ministries, there were clear limits to the decision making powers of the Executive Council. Coordination with the water, sewer, roads and electricity organizations also occurs in the Executive Council Meetings. These organizations, although not regular members of the EC, attend meetings when matters involving them are discussed.

Popular Council

Third, there is a council of local residents, variously called the "local council", "people's council", or "Popular Council", which is a counterpart to the Executive Council. This contrast between Popular Council and administrative officials is repeated at the governorate level as well.

While they are commonly referred to as an "elected" or "people's" council, these terms are misleading. In reality, the council members are local residents who have political clout with the central party. A slate of councillors is nominated by the party and an election is held at which the turnout is very small. The effectiveness of this Popular

Council varies greatly from district to district, according the effectiveness and energy of the members. The size of the council also varies. There are 16 members in Helwan and 24 in Shoubra. They are organized into 12 different committees: (Education, Labor, Welfare, Housing, Supplies, Health, Communication and Transportation, Budget, Agriculture and Irrigation, Supervision, Youth, and Tourism/Women.) Most of their activity is done through this committee structure; for example, the PC's Educational Committee might invite someone from the Directorate of Education and the District Department of Planning and Follow-Up to meet with them to discuss a local school issue. When they reach a decision it then goes to the total Council for its approval, usually a formality.

There is in most districts a strong tension between the popular council and the executive council members. The executive council members argue that PC members are not well educated and lack the knowledge and skills to make rational decisions about what is and is not urgently needed. As administrators they perceive themselves representing the long history of Egyptian government, and as such to possess the qualification and expertise to govern wisely. On their part, Popular Council members argue that they know the needs of the people and should have a much stronger voice in local decisions.

Some administrators suggest that PC members pocket project funds and kickbacks from contractors for their election campaigns. Another referred to them as "political climbers" who could not be trusted with allocating money. Several officials referred to the pressure that PC officials exert to have projects built in their area, or to use contractors whom they know. One described a case when a PC member pressured the Contracts Office to award a contract to someone who turned out to be a fruit vendor.

Our discussions with officials underscore the adversary relations between the two groups. The NUS Project is the first program in which both councils must work together, and in many districts one can document an increasingly satisfactory relationship between the two councils largely as a result of the cumulative NUS experience. The Popular Council must approve the selection list of subprojects. Popular Council members are particularly concerned with certain types of subprojects. In our case studies, street lighting and services to informal neighborhoods emerge as areas of effective Popular Council action.

District Funds

Except for NUS most projects are funded from ministry budgets and proceed according to ministry rather than district priorities. In this situation, priority setting and coordination among the different parties at the district level is crucial, but district officials have few organizational resources with which to bring this about.

The district has two sources of its own funds. One is the Local Development Services Fund, an allocation of approximately LE 100,000 given annually by the governorates to each district for service projects. The district determines how to spend this money. Usually it goes towards relatively small reconstruction projects. Helwan District, for example, recently used its LDS funds to build a Post Office, three public water taps, and to pave some roads. The second source of independent income is the Industrial Service Fund. Industries are supposed to give a portion of their profits, ten to fifteen percent, to the District to provide services. In Helwan at least, over the past three years, a good number of companies have stopped payments, and since the law is very vague, the District has thus far been unable to force them to pay. Helwan District officials have held several meetings with local industries but nothing has changed. The companies claim they intend to use the money for their own workers. They would be willing to have it used for housing, but cannot be sure the District would use it for this purpose. Many districts, lacking industrial development, have no such second source.

4. Decision Making in an Evolving Governmental System

From the previous section, it should be clear that decision making in such a divided system is not simple. Every subproject requires the cooperation and approval of several semi-autonomous units of government: district administration, popular council, respective service ministry (department and directorate), housing department and directorate (engineering), and utility authorities. Decision making at the local level is largely a process of continual lateral negotiations. Furthermore each local department must get clearance from above for its part of the deal.

This complexity is not merely an imposition of bureaucratic mentality, but a rational product of the nature of the subprojects. For instance it is quite appropriate that a school be approved by the

ministry of education, that it have water hook-up for WCs, that the engineers of the housing department supervise construction, that local interest groups be involved, etc. An important purpose of NUS is to help local administrators find more effective ways of carrying out these negotiations. Much of the effective TA work consists of persuading district officials to do these negotiations as much as possible before they embark on actual construction.

The selection and implementation of subprojects is therefor a result of a good deal of jockeying and horse trading among interested parties. In the districts we visited, the process usually begins with the Executive Council. The various service departments such as education, youth, health, social affairs propose subprojects in their fields and a list is put together. The list must be approved by the popular council and usually includes subprojects known to interest them. The result of these negotiations is projects that effectively reflect the real needs of the community. Perhaps it is partly because the needs are so desparate and obvious, but few NUS projects fail in terms of misguided project selection. The priorities of the people and those of local officials are in considerable synchronism.

The area where projects could benefit from more consultation is in the design stage. Many NUS projects suffer to some degree or another from the failure of the designers to take into account the opinions of the future users of the facility. The extreme case of this would be some of the market subprojects which vendors refuse to use. Here there is a difference in the priorities between government and users. Some members of government see market structures as a means of controlling and regulating vendors. Others feel that it is neither modern nor sanitary to have vendors crowd the thoroughfares. The result is an enclosed market structure separate from the pedestrian traffic. Vendors know they need to be where the people are naturally in order to sell certain types of wares. And so some market subprojects have lain idle and are now being converted to other positive uses. For other types of projects, lack of user consultation has not had such a negative effect. The TA contractor has been stressing the importance of user consultation in project planning and districts such as East Alexandria are finally including it and getting improved results. But basically, the idea of consulting users (teachers and parents for schools, doctors, nurses, and patients for clinics, vendors for markets) remains unacceptable or unecessary in the eyes of most officials and engineers.

5. Districts Can Do the Job - With Technical Assistance

Because of Egypt's long history of centralized authority, there were many who felt that district level government would not be able to carry out effective programs at the magnitude of NUS. The project has clearly demonstrated to date that the district has the human and organizational resources, however imperfect, to accomplish such programs. The sheer numbers of completed subprojects under NUS testifies to this capacity. Given resources and some backup technical assistance the districts have accomplished much.

The district's experiences with NUS construction, training, and technical assistance is for all practical purposes less than two years and it would be unrealistic to expect district capabilities to be significantly transformed in this period. It is difficult to demonstrate conclusively that the districts' capacity has increased under NUS so far, other than as a result of more money to carry out more projects. However, NUS is a very ambitious project which increases the district investment funds and numbers of construction activities by more than five fold without augmenting the numbers of district personnel or the facilities at their disposal. The general success at carrying out so many subprojects is a testimony to the previously untapped resources of local level administration.

There is some evidence that districts are not only carrying out five times the operations they used to perform, but are beginning to perform better. Two examples from our case studies in Helwan speak to this improvement. For both the Kafr El Elw school and the Ben El Ezbeteen school subprojects, one can compare them with pre-NUS efforts by the district. In 1979, the district, in response to the demands of the people in Kafr El Elw, earmarked LE 42,000 (at 1979 prices) from the Industrial Services Fund for the project. A two room school was built on the site, but it was never used. The ministry of education felt it was not worth their while to staff a school so small and inadequate. The building was gradually vandalized and came to symbolize a failed attempt to solve a local problem. Under NUS, the district returned to the school and designed an addition of four classroom, a renovation of the original two, a renovation of the original WC, and a wall to keep out future vandals - all for LE 35,000 (including LE 5000 for the water hook up). This time they got their signals straight with the department of Education (directorate and ministry) and the school is fully staffed and operating at bulging capacity. Clearly, the

district under NUS accomplished far more for less resources than on their earlier attempt. The newer building is more cost effective and the district successfully negotiated with both the ministry of education and the water authority.

The Ben El Ezbeteen school is another example of an improved capacity. There too the district built a school building in 1979. This building ran into problems of flooding due to sulphur springs, and the district has subsequently tried and failed to divert the water. The new school building under NUS funding is built up on piles so as to be above any flooding. If, in the future, the water is successfully diverted, the space under the new building will be appropriate for conversion to classroom or recreation use. The NUS building, with similar resources, benefits from better planning, design, and negotiation. Both of these schools still have problems and could have been done much better. (See the site Observations of these subprojects in the District Contract Management and Maintenance Report.) But in the concrete comparison with their predecessors, they come out far ahead.

Districts have been able to complete an unprecedented number of service facility constructions and complete some of them better than previously, but how much of this success results directly from the intervention of the American TA contractor? At what point and with what changes in the allocation of GOE resources could the districts operate with comparable accomplishment without the outside assistance? In all four of the study districts, we examined the role of the technical assistance. There is little doubt that it has been crucial to the accomplishments so far. One reason for this is the drastic shortage of engineers in Egypt and especially at the district level of government. Wilbur Smith's small core of engineers is an important supervisory element in the process. Without the Wilbur Smith engineers checking and guiding the work of the districts the number and types of errors would increase, and the number and types of appropriate and creative design and monitoring solutions would decrease. If Technical Assistance is withdrawn, this engineering backup must be replaced in some way. In other respects, the momentum of NUS could continue unassisted in strong districts provided that the districts were allocated a greater share of GOE responsibilities and matching resources. There are strong districts and weak districts. In our case studies we present an example of how a strong district has made use of the technical assistance and of how the nature of the assistance link has evolved over a short time, matching the increased capability of the district.

The following sections of this report present the case studies. It is our intention in these studies to emphasize the opinions and attitudes of the people interviewed rather than put forth our own opinions and conclusions.

6. Two School Subprojects in Helwan

Arab Kafr El Elw School

Neighborhood Context. Helwan is a rapidly growing industrial area in the southern outskirts of Cairo. The southeastern edge, where the Arab Kafr El Elw school is located, is virtual desert dotted by belching factories and low lying informal residential areas. Only a few of the main streets are paved, and dirt roads wind around spreading cemeteries, and factory dumping areas. In this crowded squatter community, land is still cheap and some residents are gradually buying the land on which they live and building more permanent housing. They are working class people and frequently both parents are employed in nearby factories while they raise four or more children. The area is poor in public services in general, and schools in particular. The nearest school was three kilometers away, posing severe transportation and safety problems for the commuting children. By the mid 1970s there was considerable pressure in the community to build a local school.

Decision. A leader in the neighborhood and in the local branch of the National Party was particularly active in bringing the problem to the attention of the government. He had already been instrumental in bringing water and then electricity to the area, and he now turned his attention to education. He approached the Chairman of the Popular Council, who in turn went to the district Department of Education. Short of funds, the latter proposed that the district build a school on some unrestricted land under the district's jurisdiction. The community leader was involved in selecting the land for the school, and insuring that the area was large enough to accommodate an inevitable growth in the population. In the meantime, squatters began moving onto the land and the leader worked hard to get an authorization permit for the land, even contributing some of his own money. The district removed some squatters' homes and the area was officially available for the school.

The district then submitted a proposal to the Industrial Services Fund which agreed to spend LE 42,000 to build a foundation, two

classrooms, and plumbing for one WC. Two engineers, one from the district and one from the directorate of education, studied the location and contracted the job. Normally, once a district constructs a school, it is turned over to the Education Ministry. In this case the ministry felt that it could not spare the resources to place a full staff in such a small facility and it was left empty, gradually vandalized and rendered useless. The building stood as a depressing monument to the government's inability or unwillingness to meet the needs of its poorest people.

In the meantime, the population continued to grow, and the lives of three children were lost due to accidents while commuting to school. Community leaders again approached the People's Council. Its Chairman had heard about the NUS funds and suggested that the Council request funds to complete the school. The process was long and cumbersome. First the PC proposed rebuilding the school, then it was discussed by the Directorate of Education at the Governorate level, the Planning and Follow Up Committee at the District level, was sent to the EC and then back to the PC, and eventually back to the Education Ministry. The final decision was to renovate the two existing classrooms, add two stories on top of these with two classrooms on each floor, redo the WC, add a small unit for the guard and build a security wall. The District engineer estimated that the cost would be LE 30,600. After this process the proposal was submitted by the District to the NUS project and eventually was approved for funding. The actual cost and contribution of NUS was for LE 35,000 the difference primarily due to the need to add a connection to the public water supply.

Implementation and Completion. The District engineer provided the design and supervised the construction, but it is not clear whether he had access to standard plans prepared by The Ministry of Education or not. The latter has plans which follow certain standards including office space, rooms for teachers, and hallways, as well as classrooms and WC. According to one report the original plans for Arab Kafr El Elw called for office space, but it was not included because the cost was too high. Another person felt the Education planner had been lax in reviewing the engineer's plans; he in turn said that he had never seen them, and that the Ministry of Education only designs schools which originate within the Ministry. Most who were interviewed stressed that the overriding constraint was the decision to renovate and add to the existing structure rather than to plan a new one.

When the Ministry of Education was notified that the school was completed, it responded that it still lacked funds to furnish the school. The District therefore requested additional NUS money for desks and blackboards. Out of LE 50,000 of NUS funds allotted for furnishing schools throughout Helwan, Arab Kafr El ELw school was given enough to purchase 80 desks, each one seating three children. The Ministry then furnished a headmistress and teachers and opened the school for a pleased population.

Current Operation. The first impression in visiting the school is of large and orderly groups of children meeting outdoors on the playground or tightly filling classrooms that are otherwise bare. A high cement wall surrounds a large open area, isolating the school from the community, with grilled openings where children from the neighborhood congregate and peer in. The school first opened in October 1983 with two shifts of children in grades one through six. The demand has continued to grow with the result that in October 1984 the school added a third shift. There are approximately 250 children on each shift, with about 40-45 children in each of the six classrooms. (Prior to the additional shift there had been about 65 children in each class, above Ministry standards.) The signs for the future are ominous since there are 190 children in the first grade alone, about one-fourth of the total enrollment. With attendance limits set by the Ministry there is still a waiting list for more children. Parents are particularly eager to have their children attend school nearby, to have them all in the same school and on the same shift.

After all the years of discussion, planning the initial building, dealing with vandalism, and then a second round of plans and discussion, the actual construction of a viable school through the NUS project is a signal accomplishment. And while the designers were able to benefit from using the original foundation, it is noteworthy that NUS funds provided a much more adequate building for considerably less money than was spent on the original school. As of October 1984 there is still no water due to problems in connecting the school to the District water system, but a trench for a water pipe is being dug, and pipes have been delivered.

While emphasizing their gratitude for this accomplishment, community members and staff pointed to several problem areas which they feel indicate a failure on the part of the designers to consult with either the community or the staff about their priorities and needs.

When parents were asked about the school, a few complained about the lack of water, but all agreed that the real problem was the lack of space. Six crowded classrooms on three shifts are far from adequate for those attend, to say nothing of those who have not been able to transfer to the school. Parents added that the plan was at fault in calling for a substantial 8 to 10 foot concrete wall around the perimeter of the area. They felt the same resources would have been much better spent on a more adequate building. The same community leader who had been so pivotal in starting the school said that such problems are inevitable unless local people are included in designing and maintaining a project.

The three headmistresses (one for each shift) and the teaching staff have a somewhat different perspective. They feel greatly handicapped by having only a tiny office and storage space that was part of the already small WC facility. The working conditions are woefully inadequate with the headmistresses sharing one small work area and five modest metal storage cabinets for the entire school. They have attempted to deal with these problems on their own. For example they considered charging each student LE 1 to build an extra room, but were unable to raise the needed LE 1000. And some volunteers in the community put in a small closet underneath the stairs; even so storage remains a critical problem. The classrooms themselves are large enough, but the teaching staff misses the hallways in traditional school designs, and would have preferred adding the four classrooms horizontally. Unlike the parents, the teachers feel that the wall is an important investment to control non-enrolled children from entering the grounds during classes. Walls are also important in any informal area to demarcate land for public use and insure that no one builds there. One added, however, that a concrete structure was unnecessarily elaborate given the limited funds, and that a mud brick fence would have been more appropriate. The teachers also noted that many schools provide courses in industrial and agricultural arts, but there is as yet no room for these at Arab Kafr El Elw.

Conclusion. The story of the Arab Kafr El Elw School is one of successfully turning around a very depressing situation. Community efforts to build a school were referred to the District and produced a structure which could not even be used. The existence of NUS funds stimulated a second round of planning which involved community leaders, PC members, District and Education officials. The NUS approach was just being developed and apparently had only a modest influence on the design and implementation. Nevertheless it was suf-

ficient to produce an operating school at a lower cost than the original and totally inadequate building. The District and Education Department have each contributed operating funds, and the District was successful in obtaining additonal NUS funds for equipment. Some of the limitations in the plan might have been avoided if community and staff had been consulted and if local resources had been explored. In the meantime a separate AID program, the Urban Upgrading Project, is slated to add 13 more classrooms to the school. The problem is that even within AID those responsible for NUS were not aware of this in time to suggest any coordinated planning. Thus the problem that the District faces in trying to coordinate different priorities, is only compounded by the lack of coordination within the donor agency.

Ben El Ezbetain School

Background. This school presents a striking contrast to the bleakness at Arab Kafr El Elw School. It is a complex of buildings approached through an attractive courtyard, bordered by gardens planted by the students in agriculture classes. A visitor is ushered into a sitting area, surrounded by relatively ample offices. In 1960 a small one story school was built, and a three story building with nine classrooms was added in 1979, both done by the Ministry of Education. At this time the school had a similar capacity to the present facilities at Arab Kafr El Elw with the major exception that Ben El Ezzbetain school buildings were based on Ministry of Education designs and included offices for the Headmistress and teachers, a clinic, a room for a cooking class and storage space.

The major problem was water seepage from underground sulphur springs which left the ground floors flooded with water a good deal of the time. The flooding and pressure due to population growth meant that the school needed to improve and expand its facilities.

Implementation. In 1980 LE 30,000 of NUS funds were used to add a third building, two stories high. The buildings at all three stages were promoted and planned by the Department of Education. In funding this third building, the TA contractors required the designers to examine the soil conditions. This forced them to deal with the flooding problem, and produced a design which placed the building on pillars, raising it above the flooding and providing a covered area during dry periods.

Current Operation. The expansion has allowed the school to go from three shifts of three hours each, to two shifts of five hours each. This in turn allows the staff to add music, sports, home economics and to introduce agriculture and industrial engineering. Parents and teachers alike are pleased with the new construction, noting such items as the use of tiles in the WC, and they add that because the shifts are longer, students feel more of an identity with the school. They are particularly impressed with the use of the pillars to raise the building off the ground. Like the Arab Kafr El Elw School, this project began with an existing and inadequate building and for rather modest resources greatly improved it, expanding its ability to serve the community.

7. Two Nursery/Day Care Subprojects in Helwan

Helwan East Nursery

Context. The Helwan East Nursery is located within the East Helwan Youth Center. It was started in 1944 and is one of the four oldest nurseries in the city of Cairo. The Ministry for Social Affairs was responsible for creating the nursery, but later when the Ministry of Youth was created, the nursery was transferred to its authority, and the name changed to Childrens' Club. During these years the Youth Center consisted of the two room Children's Club, a sewing room and a workshop area. By the 1970's the building had seriously deteriorated and there were plans to tear it down. The center is in an old established part of Helwan and it serves the children of workers in the nearby factories that dominate Helwan.

Decision. The Director of the Youth Directorate for the District was very influential in spearheading efforts to renovate the building. As a Department Director, he sits on the District Executive Council, and in this capacity learned of the NUS program and successfully lobbied his colleagues on the EC to request funds to build the nursery. It was subsequently accepted as an NUS project and LE 21,000 NUS funds were spent to construct a two-story building.

Implementation. The Director worked with an engineer from the Youth Directorate to design a new two-story building. The plan clearly reflects a concern for quality - both in the building and in the amenities it includes. The first floor has two classrooms; the second floor includes a large office, a sitting room, a storage facility with

a refrigerator, a stove, two beds and kitchen utensils, and finally one large empty room. The Director also requested a list of supplies including new desks, the refrigerator, a color TV, visual aids, and kitchen supplies, and was able to tap LE 7000 from the District's Local Services Fund to buy a portion of this equipment.

Current Operation. The number of children attending the school has been reduced from 160 to 110 reflecting the Director's view that it is better to limit the number of children and strengthen the program. The demand greatly exceeds this number, and 150 additional applications have been received. The Director is very proud that he has four well qualified teachers, but regrets not having more desks and other supplies. In order to obtain these he is in the process of increasing the nursery school fees from LE 2 to LE 5 a month.

Twenty three mothers attended a special meeting to share their perceptions,and made it clear that while they are very pleased with the new facility, particularly its cleanliness, their priorities are very different from those of the Director. They differed even to the point of disagreeing on the hours when it is open. According to the Director the hours have been expanded so that the nursery operates from 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM, whereas the mothers insist that the nursery is only open from 8 AM until noon. They are pleased with the desks and blackboards because they want their children to learn to write and count, even at the nursery school level, but they would like more toys. Their major difference with the Director was over numbers and money. They want the school organized so that more children can attend, even if this means larger classrooms. One way to accommodate more children would be to continue to use female university graduates to volunteer as teachers' aides as a way to fulfill their obligation to perform one-year of community service. The mothers felt strongly that they would not be able to pay the proposed additional LE 3 a month, and if aides were used, assumed this would not be necessary.

After this open discussion had continued for about an hour the Director joined the group and in a very authoritarian manner stated his standards and intentions, showing little or no regard for the views of the parents. He will hire only professional teachers, and does not want community volunteers. He also wants the resources to serve at least one light meal to overcome possible malnutrition problems, to provide such amenities as a color TV, and to continue the twice weekly services of a doctor. The mothers clearly felt that many of these features were unnecessary. They had been pleased with the

nursery aides who had been used in the past, and insisted that their childen were well fed at home and had their medical needs taken care of. In any event, they added, they definitely do not send their children to school to watch TV. While both the parents and Director have legitimate views of how the nursery should be organized, reflecting their different situations, the problem is that the mothers' views were not taken seriously.

Conclusion. The Ministry of Youth has encouraged the Center to NUS funds and for 1984-85 an NUS funded vocational education center will be added to the facility (and a renovation of the WCs). Plumbing, carpentry, and electrical maintenance will be taught in this new building. In the mean time the district has allocated some of its own funds to add a new room for youth activities. The present nursery and the additional facilities it has stimulated is a significan revitalization of a once pioneering government service facility that had been allowed to atrophy.

Kafr El Elw Nursery

Context. This nursery is also adjacent to and part of a Youth Center. It provides a social club for men in the afternoon, and a sewing training center run by the Ministry of Social Affairs. It is located in the same informal area as the Kafr El Elw school discussed earlier.

Decision. The former Chairman of the People's Council said that residents had been asking for a nursery, and that he went to the Youth Department chairman and suggested that he ask the district Executive Council to recommend an addition to the nursery from NUS funds. In the meantime the Director had requested money for new lockers, but the Board decided they would prefer a nursery which would allow them to use the rooms for young children in the morning and as locker rooms and a social club in the afternoon.

Implementation. The design was prepared by the NUS Coordinator. Apparently there was little or no consulation with the local Director since he was unaware of when or how it was designed. LE 14,000 were spent to construct two small buildings, containing three classrooms, an office, a kitchen and two WCs. In addition, the nursery received LE 3000 from the District's Local Service Fund for equipment.

Current Operation. The director holds a diploma in Education, and the three teachers have secondary school certificates. The LE 30 paid to

the teachers comes from a fee of LE 3 paid by each student supplemented by a grant from the Ministry of Youth.

The Center has strong links in the community, allowing it to draw on local resources and support. It raised funds through members' donations to enclose a small balcony in the nursery building for an additional classroom. Members also built a fence to enclose a small playground with their own funds. The fathers of those enrolled in the nursery must join the Youth Club, paying an initial fee of LE 1 and monthly dues of 25 pt. The Youth Club has a Board which meets irregularly, and explores funding possibilities to meet particular needs of the nursery. In contrast to the first nursery where the parents felt alienated, there is a greater sense of partnership, and the Director is genuinely interested in meeting the needs and demands of parents rather than impressing his professional colleagues from more sophisticated areas.

Conclusion. Nursery/day care is in great demand in the poor and crowed neighborhoods of Cairo and Alexandria. Many mothers work and those that do not are often too busy with infants and todlers to give the attention needed to keep slightly older children out of danger in these areas. For these reasons, parents are mainly concerned with a safe place to leave their children. Their interest in fancier amenities drops is it restricts access or raises fees. Fees are important because many families have more than one child in such programs and the fees multiply. Parents might become more interested in the nursery programs if they were aimed more directly at their needs. The NUS training course for PVOs on nursery management is a beginning. (Most nurseries are run by PVOs and not in government centers. The reader is referred to the NUS Evaluation Phase Two report on PVOs for case studies on privately run nurseries in Helwan and Shoubra.)

8. A New Clinic in Shoubra - The El Ezzeb Health Center

Community Context. Shoubra District is one of the oldest sections of Cairo, and has long been the entrance to the city for rural migrants, largely because this is the area where the government has constructed acres and acres of public housing. In the past few decades it has been traumatized by massive public redevelopment projects as the government has razed some areas, and relocated large masses of people. Its population is said to exceed the city of Alexandria, although estimates vary. It is divided into three administrative units. The Shoubra area

is the oldest and has a number of economically mixed communities, and relatively adequate services. Sharabia and Zawia el Hamra are the most economically deprived and are large and dense urban slums. They are also severely lacking in services. There is only one hospital to serve the entire District, and there are few schools. Whereas elsewhere in the city, children start school at age 6, in Shoubra District they often do not start until age 8 because of the shortage of classrooms. The name "El Ezzeb" which designates the specific locale of the Health Center, means "small, backward area." In addition to sharing the poverty and density of the Sharabia area, El Ezzeb is sandwiched in between railroad tracks, isolating the residents and making it especially difficult for women and children to go elsewhere for services.

Selection Decision. The story of the Health Center begins with the regular planning processes within the Department of Health for the District. Over the years the Health Ministry has developed specific criteria for "good health centers." For example a basic health facility should offer preventive services, a program in environmental health, and treatment services. The Director of the Shoubra Health Department also had standards, many of which he developed during his prior experience with a World Bank funded health project. For example, World Bank standards prescribed that there should be a health facility for every 60,000 persons. The Director was aware that certain areas of Shoubra fell desperately short of these standards. The El Ezzeb area, for example, has a very high density, with about 150,000 people, while the nearest medical services were located 5 kilometers away in a very overcrowded facility. The health office in the area confined itself to vaccinations, coping with contagious disease, food and water inspection.

The next step in the history of the El Ezzeb Health Center takes us through the NUS selection process. The Department continued to play the major role, although other parties were drawn into the decision. In 1982 the NUS Coordinator asked the Director to propose some projects for NUS funding, he came up with four projects, one of them the Health Center in El Ezzeb. (This practice has since been changed. In funding years 1982/83 and 1983/84, the TA contractor asked the District to propose only as many projects as could be funded.) The Director attached a cost estimate of LE 83,000 to the latter, an amount he chose because he knew that was the limit set for NUS projets. He added that at the time he knew the project would cost more and that he would have to find the additional funds elsewhere. He was later heard to remark to the NUS Coordinator with a smile, "I fooled you on the price.

The Director showed a consummate skill in "working the system." He knew that one of the stickiest points in getting projects selected was to have available land, in a city with very little to spare. He wanted to find a way to speed up what he knew was a long process, and so found some land on his own. Then because the Housing Department has to sign off on all land, he got someone from the Department to go with him to the District and got a tentative permission to use the land.

The proposal then went to a meeting of the EC attended by the various Departmental Directors, the District Chief, and other District staff including the NUS Coordinator. The EC gave a tentative approval to the El Ezzeb Health Center. The criteria they apply include: lack of similar services, availability of land and sufficient funds, and potential for the facility to be maintained. This approval was just the beginning of a fairly long decision process. The Housing Department still had to give final approval on the land. This took four months and a series of meetings between District and Health officials. The Director of Health noted that land availability continues to be a major problem in selecting projects in crowded Shoubra, and that it would be helpful if the district had a larger role in designating land rather than having to get an official approval from the Housing Deprtment. In the past year this has begun to happen. The district says that an official order is no longer necessary for public projects, and that in such cases they have the power to approve the land.

Implementation. In the meantime the Director visited the site to begin to draw up specific plans. During his site visits he would discuss the possible Health Center with people from the community. He commented that they would not take him seriously, and refused to accept that any modern facility would ever be built in their deteriorating corner of the city. He prepared a tentative sketch of the site and went to the Health Directorate at the Governorate level. The reason for this step was a two year old order from the Governor of Cairo to the engineering unit within the Health Directorate to assume responsibility for designing all health facilities. The NUS Coordinator noted that the District Chief supported this move because he was reluctant to assume responsibility for such facilities given the lack of engineering experience at the District level, and that he did so even realizing it ran counter to the purpose of NUS to facilitate the capacity of the District government. During this phase the Director met almost daily with the engineers adding his own professional expertise as a doctor to their design skills.

After the design had been given tentative approval by these various bodies, it was sent to the Local People's Council. The Health Director played an active role in their meeting, explaining the importance of the project, and answering quetions. They gave their approval and the project was formally accepted for NUS funding.

The Health Department next put the contract out for bids and as stipulated in the NUS plans, accepted the cheapest one, LE 116,000. Work started, but then stopped when the NUS grant of LE 83,000 ran out. In the meantime the Health Department Director had been searching for other funds. He was able to get LE 10,000 transferred to the Health Center from an aborted NUS project. He next tried the Health Directorate but failed. So he went back to the District Chief who helped him get the rest of the funding to complete the Center from the Governorate Service Fund (about LE 30,000). Subsequently he also got LE 15,000 from the Governorate to purchase equipment. Construction was completed in Spring 1984 and the Center opened for business.

Current Operation. The clinic is a strikingly modern and functional neat yellow building, and even elaborate by the standards of other buildings in the area. It is referred to by the neighborhood as "the hospital," probably an indicator of the high esteem that people have for it. The sign at the entrance notes that it serves 100,000 people and that its final cost was LE 136,000. (The sign, in Arabic, lists the contribution of the GOE in large print, and the role of AID in much smaller print.)

It is heavily used; an average of 200 people come through every day, paying 10 pt a visit. Over half of these are children under 3 years old. Doctors describe the clients as very poor and ignorant of basic health care standards. Most of the staff function as general practitioners, even those with a specialty, since this is the major need in the area. The biggest health problem they confront is diarrea, for which they offer a rehydration program. The second most common problem is bronchitis or pneumonia. There is also a very active dental program and they have just added a third dentist to the staff. This program serves an average of 20 people a day, half of them students, and many of them sent from schools outside of the area. Three patients who were interviewed felt very positive about the Center. A student said that formerly he went to a mosque clinic where he paid 75 pt a visit. The other two mentioned that other facilities were far away and that it was very hazardous crossing the railroad tracks. One woman added that the pharmacy was not as well equipped as one at a hospital she had visited, but the facility itself was good.

In addition to being available to those who come to its doors, the staff of the clinic is making a very systematic effort to survey the community, and register all 100,000 residents. The Director drew on his World Bank experience to establish a system in which a map was drawn,and all the buildings were given numbers. Clerical staff from the Health Department have been going through the community compiling a record of every family, with a card for each member. The cards are color coded by age making them even more efficient to use.

Conclusion. District and Health officials were asked to reflect on the process they had gone through. One noted that because NUS funds go through the Districts they are exposed to all of the inflexibility and fear of responsibility that characterize the civil service. At this level, they emphasized two major and interrelated problems - engineering and incentives. The Housing Department used to have no engineers, and now has only a very few. As a result they are very overworked, and any work they do for NUS has to be on their own. The problem is that there are few rewards to offer them. In this particular case, an engineer from the Health Directorate did the work, but it was only because he was promised some compensation. As it turned out, the District gave the Health Director a small amount of money for all those who had worked on the Center. The engineer's share was so small that he said he would never participate again. Thus the lack of incentive funds exacerbates the existing shortage of engineers, and helps explain why Shoubra lost its last two engineers to the private sector.

9. Street Lighting Projects in Shoubra

Community Setting. The density of the population around the narrow alleys of Shoubra has to be experienced to be believed. Even in Cairo, known for its crowds of pedestrians, Shoubra stands out as one of the poorest and most crowded districts. There is also a noticeable tension in the area, due to conditions and exacerbated by a history of strife between Moslems and the large Coptic population. People are in the streets almost twenty-four hours a day, but until the NUS lighting projects many lanes, paved and unpaved, remained without public lighting.

Selection Decision. Street lighting subprojects have been a priority in Shoubra since the beginning of NUS. In 1981, 320 lights were installed, in 1982, 290 lights, in 1983, 900 lights, bringing the

total to over 1500. Most of the lights have been placed in Zawia El Hamra or Sharabia areas, the most impoverished and neglected areas of the district. There are two kinds of lights installed. Some 40 lights are on tall poles along main streets. All the rest are modest lanterns attached to the side of a building. The Popular Council has been active in the decision to install street lights and in lobbying for their exact distribution. Tension is high between the Popular Council and the lighting engineer on this issue, with the Popular Council making strong charges that the engineers fail to maintain and operate the lighting systems.

In the past year the Director of Electrical engineering was told how much money had been set aside for street lighting. He then set about formulating a proposal for specific sites and kinds of lights. He said he drew on several sources of information: (a) night visits by his technicians to neighborhoods, (b) his own knowledge of the location of power sources, (c) his recollection of the pattern of citizen complaints, (d) the influence of the Popular Council members.

He developed tentative proposals, and accompanied by the District Chief and the NUS Coordinator, he presented these proposals to the responsible committee of the Popular Council. He complains that the Popular Council is not concerned with technical feasibility, but only with having lights located in their own areas. In the end a compromise between technical and "political" factors is reached and the list is approved by the Popular Council and sent to the Executive Council.

Implementation. Once the sub projects are chosen, the electrical engineer writes up the specifications, following those of the Electrical Engineering Department. These go to the Director of Planning and Follow-Up for clearance and then to the Department of Finance to be contracted out. Bids are solicited and the engineer attends both the meeting when the bids are recorded and the second meeting when one is selected. His recommendations weigh heavily in this final choice.

The winning contractor gives them a sample of the material he will use, and it is locked away for comparison with the finished product. The Director of Electrical Engineering says that technicians are primarily hired to do maintenance work, but because the adequacy of the construction affects the maintenance they make site visits during construction. Since there is only one engineer and 8 technicians, the NUS Project has greatly increased their workload. (There used to be

two engineers, but they went into the private sector and then the present engineer was hired.) He noted that the lack of incentive pay, stating that his inability to compensate his technicians for their increased workload is his major problem. His second major problem is a lack of coordination among the Water, Sewage and Electricity Departments. He wants the district to establish a committee to coordinate their actions. The evaluation site visits confirmed this problem - most lights which were not working (perhaps 20 %) were out of order because their cables had been cut by people working on a sewage project.

Problems. It is ironic that lighting systems which on the face of it offer minimal maintenance problems (no moving parts) other than bulb replacement, and which are greatly desired by the people, present considerable operation difficulties due to user sabotage and interference. People passionately want street lighting, but equally passionately they do not want the lamp directly in front of their own house.

One problem is that the streetlamp becomes a place of congregation for students who cannot study in their crowded family apartments. The nightly group of students is an annoyance to the immediate residents who seem to sabotage the lights. A not uncommon and ingenious method is for the resident on whose wall the lamp is attached to hire and electrician to connect up a switch so the resident can turn off the lamp from within his home.

During the evaluation team's night visit to the areas, they found one entire long alley way completely dark. The electrical engineer (who had not been forewarned of this evaluation visit) dashed knowingly to the switchbox where there was a shoe peddler leaning his heavy display against it. The engineer shouted at him and heaved the display, and hundreds of pairs of shoes, into the street. Instantly, all the lights came on. It was obvious that he had had this confrontation many times before.

Conclusions. Construction of utilities is an important mandate for NUS, but a mandate that presents problems. Sewage disposal subprojects present problems because the overall system cannot handle the additional leads. (Shoubra, because of popular pressure, did many such subprojects but is now forced to discontinue them.) Water projects such as public taps and public WCs present even more serious problems of sabotage and maintenance than the lighting projects. Leaking and

backing up, they create health hazards that are intolerable to the public, even more intolerable than the lack of facilities. If they cannot have water in the house, people want it nearby, but not too near.

In spite of the difficulties, the street lighting projects are a major success in the utilities category. The great majority of the lights are on, and when they are not, the public pressure on the district electrical engineer and on the Popular Council members is intense. Like so many subprojects in the service-starved poor neighborhoods of Cairo and Alexandria, the lighting projects struggle against the problems of over use.

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