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**PROJECT FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
IN ARAB RURAL AREAS:  
THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT**

**REPORT OF THE FINAL EVALUATION MISSION  
FOR THE PROJECT**

**26 to 28 November 1996**

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The present report is issued as submitted by the concerned division; the views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Secretariat.

The approach used in preparing this report draws on the publications for evaluating technical assistance projects in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and on the general guidelines used by the Turin Centre of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The format of the report and the issues discussed follow the "Report on the Project Evaluation Mission" (E/ESCWA/SD/1996/3) and the Project Document on Local Community Development in Arab Rural Areas signed by the Syrian Government, as well as follow-up reports of the executing agency and various field reports.

### **Project data**

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Project number: RAB/94/V01

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Contribution of the executing agency: US\$45,000 (in kind)

Co-executing agency: United Nations Volunteers (UNV)

Contribution of the co-executing agency: US\$95,000 (in kind)

Government agency: Organization for Reconstruction and Development of Egyptian Villages (ORDEV)

Contribution of the government agency: US\$25,000 (in kind)

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Duration of the Project: Two years

Date for beginning implementation of the Project: July 1994

Date of final evaluation mission: 26-28 November 1996

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<sup>1</sup> The great length of these annexes, especially the follow-up reports and the field survey, made it impractical to include them with the present report. However, the interested reader can request these annexes from the Project administration at ESCWA. The bulk of the material in the annexes is available only in Arabic, but excerpts have been translated into English.

## 1. Introduction

In support of the role that local community development plays in achieving integrated rural development as one of the principal strategic aims of economic and social development in the Arab Republic of Egypt, and in the light of the importance of the objective of self-reliance, which makes it possible to benefit from the available material, financial and human resources and to utilize them in the development and advancement of the rural areas and in narrowing the gap between the rural areas and the cities, within the strategic objectives of economic and social development in Egypt, the Project for Local Community Development in Arab Rural Areas offered an experimental model for applying a grass-roots approach to mobilizing resources, making decisions and implementing plans. The Project also provided a mechanism, based on the needs of local communities, to coordinate among various government bodies involved in the rural sector, such as the ministries of Local Administration (the Organization for Reconstruction and Development of Egyptian Villages), Culture, Health, Social Affairs and others.

The present evaluation is made pursuant to the Project document, section II, on the Project's approach, para. 2 (p. 7), which states, "An assessment of the project is carried out towards the end of the two-year period in order to benefit from the experience and generalize it in case of success." Likewise, section V, para. G, item 2 (p. 12) of the same document states, "In the light of the . . . report [on evaluating village conditions after project implementation] and the recommendations of the National Committee and other field reports, the Supervisory Committee shall carry out a final appraisal of the project." The document signed with AGFUND, in section four, para. 2, states, "AGFUND may participate in field supervision and in reviewing the Project and the evaluation processes which ESCWA organizes, subject to prior notification and government approval." In addition, the agreement signed with United Nations Volunteers states in para. 5 entitled 'Institutional framework' that "the [Supervisory] Committee will follow and appraise progress and undertake a continuous review of and make recommendations for areas to scale up and replicate experiences gained."

It should be emphasized first that the main purpose of the final evaluation is to help in expanding the scope of the Project and generalizing its developmental model. Thus, this evaluation process is considered another link in the follow-up field reports on Project activities. Second, the final appraisal aims at consolidating the entirety of referential guidelines to direct the work and meet the needs associated with expanding the Project and generalizing its developmental approach, whether from an administrative aspect or from a technical or implementational aspect. These approaches, or guidelines, amount to practically tested conclusions on how to achieve grass-roots participation and on ways of developing it at the local level and likewise can serve as indicators of the development of the awareness and capabilities of different segments and organizations within the local community that are concerned with the Project method and approach. This is in addition to evaluating the efficiency of the administrative and organizational mechanism in facing the problems and burdens of implementing the various Project activities and the extent to which these activities respond to the actual needs of local community development.

In this regard, the recommendations and proposals of the final evaluation mission will guide the work of the Project administration, whether in expanding the scope of the present Project or in implementing similar projects in the future.

It is expected that these proposals will deal with how the Project can contribute to the creation of new institutions or the identification of already-existing institutions that would ensure the follow-up and refinement of the Project's developmental approach, after the end of the administrative, technical and material support that has been extended to it. This is particularly so since the Egyptian Government pledged in the Project document ". . . to adopt an approach to rural development which secures [the Project's] continuity and expansion on the basis of financial and technical self-support."

The evaluation mission for Egypt was composed of the following members:

Mr. Ibrahim Muharram, President of the Organization for Reconstruction and Development of Egyptian Villages, and President of the National (Steering) Committee

Mr. Ahmad Aziz, Under-secretary, Director General of Public Administration for Training and Research, and national coordinator of the Project

Mr. Isma'il Shanab, Chief of the Local Unit for the Village of Baleeda, and member of the National (Steering) Committee

Mr. Zuheir Mahyou, director of the Project administration, AGFUND

Mr. Frank Krause, Programme Officer, United Nations Volunteers, Egypt

Mr. Ahmad Ba'alabki, Professor of Rural Development at the Lebanese University, external consultant representing the funding agency of the Project

Mrs. Amina Adam, First Social Affairs Officer, Women and Development Unit, Social Development Issues and Policies Division, ESCWA

Mr. Walid Hilal, First Social Affairs Officer, Human Development Section, Social Development Issues and Policies Division, ESCWA

The work of the evaluation mission to Egypt began 26 to 28 November 1996. Representatives of AGFUND and of United Nations Volunteers, as well as the external consultant, were provided with a summary of the achievements of the Project and copies of the periodic follow-up reports in addition to the field survey, the work plan and the annual report of achievements (these materials and reports were also made available to the representatives of the official bodies concerned).

Details of the materials and reports which were distributed to the members of the evaluation mission can be found in annexes 1 through 10.

It should be noted that the observations and recommendations of the evaluation mission which appear in the present report are selected and abridged; only the most important are included here, owing to the multiplicity of Project activities and to the time limitations for following up on the results and outcomes of the activities.

Finally, the evaluation mission expresses its appreciation for the hospitality extended to it by the authorities in Egypt and also expresses its gratitude and thanks for the assistance given by the technical staff of the Project and the members of the Local Project Committee and of the National (Steering) Committee and by the national coordinator and all those working in the Organization for Reconstruction and Development of Egyptian Villages (ORDEV). The mission would also like to take advantage of this opportunity to voice its appreciation and thanks for the cooperation of the families of Izbet El-Hageen El-Sharqiya, the Project site, represented in its official and people's committees, which rendered all desired help. Finally, the mission expresses its appreciation and thanks for the fruitful cooperation which it enjoyed with UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

## **2. Observations and recommendations**

### **2.1 Project design and approach**

The Project was based on the principle of grass-roots participation, which was a basic instrument in its approach and orientation, and was also based on organizing this participation, as a vital objective. In this regard, the Project, in the phases previously implemented, played an important role as an intermediary in organizing local community initiatives and mobilizing self-capabilities to prepare for the achievement of grass-roots participation. The intermediary role played by the Project was particularly important, considering the lack of NGOs at the Project site, as well as the local community's inability to organize itself from within. The success of the Project's intermediation was based on an understanding of the reality of the local community, through a preliminary survey, which the Project document considered a vital entry point for taking on this intermediary role in a realistic fashion.

What makes this Project distinctively pioneering is the fact that it is aimed at the entire local community and also that it has made a prompt attempt to deal with the resources available in the community. Although the Project started out with local leadership, committee members and the like, this was gradually expanded to include trainees, participants in training and extension courses, and the beneficiaries of the various Project activities.

The Project made a serious effort to enable the local community to depend on itself in various fields, and the Project administration worked in the context of the recommendations of the previous evaluation mission to consolidate the position of the local committees and prepare them to assume a leading role in the sustainability and further development of the Project.

The organizational framework within which the committees were to play out their pioneering role was to come as the result of efforts to strengthen grass-roots participation in accordance with the anticipated fruitful cooperation and mutual interchange between the government authorities and the people of the local community at the Project site and in the neighbouring rural areas.

In this regard, the evaluation mission recommends that the government bodies support the efforts of the Local Developmental Association in view of its being the institutional framework able to organize the initiatives of the local community as well as to organize the community's needs and coordinate its efforts under the appropriate official direction.

### **2.2 Objectives and achievements**

The objectives of the Project are numerous and diverse, yet at the same time interlaced, making them a coherent, integrated package. The general developmental objectives to whose realization the Project is striving to contribute are as follows: identifying the positive and negative factors in the rural development experience; encouraging and developing grass-roots participation in the development process; confronting the problem of poverty in rural areas through economic diversification and raising agricultural productivity; preparing and developing the human resources necessary for rural development; encouraging investment in agriculture and rural activities; and developing the production skills of women.

The Project document lists the direct, or short-term, developmental objectives as follows: studying the opportunities and possibilities for diversifying the rural economy and increasing income levels; supporting local initiatives and mobilizing the rural population to engage in activities that would enable them to meet their needs and improve their standard of living and their quality of life; developing rural cooperation and supporting local developmental associations; creating a revolving fund to support income-

generating activities and increased agricultural productivity; and holding activities for training and rural extension services to improve agricultural productivity, to develop local skills and to promote the status and role of rural women.

It is important, of course, to formulate general developmental objectives before project implementation, in the light of factual information on the strategy of the country where the project is sited. The fact that this information was not available to the Project planners gave the Project work plan, which was set immediately after the field survey, an even greater importance in the expected contribution of the Project activities to achieving general developmental objectives (an issue which will be dealt with below in this report). This observation applies as well to the direct developmental objectives of the Project, with some of these being an obvious mix of direct objectives and general developmental objectives. Besides this, there is an overlapping and mixing of concepts at the level of drawing up policy, coordinating efforts, administrative follow-up of the Project's progress, and evaluation related to lessons learned for future action.

An examination of the Project's accomplishments is enough to provide the observer with the conviction that all objectives have been met. The evaluation mission saw that, concerning general developmental objectives, the Project had made an effective contribution in trying out and testing the developmental approach which was adopted in dealing with these objectives. This is clear in the dealings of ORDEV with the Project, in the former's capacity as one of the main forces behind the testing out and implementation of the National Programme for Integrated Rural Development (Shurouq).

The mechanism for coordination which the Project employed could be replicated, in view of its being in harmony with the Project's pioneering nature, and the Project scope can be expanded in the future to include other rural areas. In spite of the vital role that various government bodies would have to play to develop this mechanism further and in spite of the great efforts that would be required in order to expand the scope of work, the positive returns achieved so far are ample justification for attempting to meet the challenges that would have to be faced in such an undertaking.

The above observations apply as well to the direct objectives of the Project, including the objective of creating a revolving loan fund to support increased agricultural production and income-generating activities. The evaluation mission recognized the practical necessity of delaying the implementation of measures related to establishing this fund and what these measures would involve in terms of preparing the capabilities of the local community and in training staff to manage the fund activities, not to mention what would have to be done to subject the appropriate development institutions and associations to the fund's policies.

Finally, the evaluation mission believes that an increase in inputs, including external aid, remains essential to meeting the objectives of raising household income, promoting higher agricultural production and improving the quality of life of the rural community. Such inputs derive their importance from the vital role they have to play in transforming the Project site into a centre ready to develop further its experience and transfer it into a broader context.

Therefore, the evaluation mission recommends that the Government, via the concerned ministerial body, allocate more resources and make a formal request for aid to be allocated to development programmes, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as a way of attracting external assistance from funding bodies.



## **2.3 Performance and implementation**

This part of the report focuses on selected areas for realizing the objectives and activities of the Project which are pivotal in nature and which have a considerable effect on the course of performance and implementation.

### **2.3.1 Study of the Project site**

The approach which the field survey utilized, as well as the technical tools used in implementing the operations of the Project, had an effective impact on appraising the performance of the Project in its intermediary role and understanding the changes that occurred at the site immediately following the implementation of Project activities. The survey was designed in the light of the preliminary information available and the field knowledge acquired at the Project site

Thus, the positive results of the field survey of the Project site were not limited only to an understanding of the variables in that particular site as shown in the detailed report prepared by the field-work team responsible for conducting the survey. In addition, the survey served as a basis for learning about how the Project performed in its intermediary role in organizing and mobilizing local resources and in realizing a developmental approach based on grass-roots participation. This was made possible by the contribution that the survey made in terms of identifying the obstacles to local development as well as the benefits of coordinating with the different governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with the local community development approach and whose areas of interest overlap with the Project activities. The survey called for joining efforts to achieve integration between the priorities in needs as set by the local community and their more general framework as represented in government policies.

One particularly useful aspect of the field survey with regard to evaluating the performance of the Project was its follow-up of the Project work plan, which included the local community's own identification of its needs and formulation of methods and activities to meet those needs. This work plan, after its adoption by the National (Steering) Committee of the Project, was considered to be a pragmatic instrument of implementation and a reference for performance evaluation with an emphasis on the views and opinions of the beneficiaries.

In implementation of the recommendation of the previous evaluation mission, the Project administration also worked on documenting the methodology of both the preliminary survey and the subsequent survey, as well as the field observations that came up as the Project was carried out, to serve as references in replicating the experiment or expanding the scope of its implementation.

### **2.3.2 Mobilizing the local community**

The basic approach of the Project for Local Community Development involved grass-roots participation of the local rural community, including all its segments. This approach was established by mobilizing the capabilities and resources available locally to develop cooperation and collective self-reliance as a means of local development.

All the work done to achieve the best possible level of mobilization was absolutely essential to the Project in its continuing efforts to form a base that would be capable of identifying needs and making decisions related to the planning, implementation and administration of developmental activities to meet these needs at the local level, including the establishment of institutions that would ensure the realization of the principle of grass-roots participation.

This work is linked with completing the implementation of the previous evaluation mission's recommendation concerning the importance of firmly establishing mobilization and working to expand it to the greatest extent possible. At a time when the final evaluation mission is viewing with full appreciation the fruitful efforts undertaken by the local community in mobilizing its self-forces to respond to basic needs, which included projects for village infrastructure, it reaffirms its interest in the establishment of the institutional framework (the Local Developmental Association) as a context for carrying out initiatives and voluntary efforts aiming at achieving grass-roots participation. Likewise, the mission fully acknowledges the importance of activating the concept of voluntary work and transferring the benefit of adopting it to a more comprehensive level, for expanding the framework of the Project or generalizing its development approach.

### **2.3.3 Training and extension**

Human resources in the local community underwent a great deal of development and improvement, given that they were considered the key factor in the Project's success in realizing its objectives. Human resources acquired noticeable experience and skills through training programmes, study series, and extension and training courses which covered specific areas of production as well as social fields (health, child-rearing, etc.) and which went to the core of improving the quality of life.

In line with the Project approach, the training included activities relevant to the needs of the local community; these activities were ongoing, so as to provide the concerned segments with the knowledge, skills, capability or concepts required to carry out a given activity or attain a specified objective. This activity also included the documentation of the materials and subject matter of training courses and programmes so that it could be used again later on to prepare comprehensive, prototypic packages for training, within a training manual which the executing agency was to prepare.

## **2.4 Efficiency**

Efficiency is appraised in the light of the outcomes of the Project in comparison with the costs associated with producing these outcomes. The outcomes of the Project for Local Community Development demonstrate that the efficiency in the administration of the numerous activities went beyond the Project's success as an intermediary—which is something offered by any number of technical assistance projects—to play a central role in the local development process at the Project site. For example, success in training the local community and in mobilizing its forces for participation in the Project activities led to an expansion in the Project's work plan to include activities not mentioned by the Project document or among its inputs, for example, the infrastructure projects.

The outcomes also show that the Project was able to motivate an increased government contribution in terms both of inputs provided and the Government's commitment to the different activities, with the Project administration being able to play a pioneering role in coordinating between the bodies and departments concerned with local community development and other bodies concerned with issues and policies of development at the national level.

Therefore, the evaluation mission believes that the overall effect of implementing the Project, despite the difficulties in measuring its effect in absolute economic terms, was highly beneficial in relation to what was spent on it, meaning that the criterion for being considered efficient was fully met.

## **2.5 Feasibility of the Project**

The feasibility of the Project derives from its effort to solve the problems associated with rural development and from the contribution it is making to the development of the policies, plans and programmes of such development to increase its effectiveness and improve the efficiency with which it is carried out and brought to reality, for the best balance between economic growth and social growth.

This applies to the Project activities, which covered all the main dimensions of rural development, and which gave all due consideration to the local community and to what was gleaned from the field survey of the Project site. Economic growth is related to the efforts of these activities to develop and diversify production, especially production in the agricultural sector, since it is the foundation of the resources of local development. The Project activities paid particular attention to the human element and to refining people's capabilities and mobilizing their energies to take part in planning and implementation; the activities were also concerned with improving the factors having an effect on the special characteristics of the human element, such as health, education, employment, migration, increasing growth rates and so forth. In relation to the social dimension having to do with the equitable distribution of wealth, these activities dealt with a number of areas aimed at reducing poverty, narrowing the differences between urban and rural services and improving standards of living. Besides this, there is the mechanism for implementing these activities, which laid out a method for reforming the bodies which tend to favour urban areas at the expense of rural areas. This was done in the light of the advantages to be realized from mobilizing human resources as well as developing them and allowing them to take part in designing activities, as a means of furthering local development and as a starting point for completing the central projects of development. Finally, the activities of the Project took into account environmental considerations as well as the importance of raising awareness about conserving nature and not damaging natural resources.

Therefore the benefit of the intermediation provided by the Project to mobilize and develop local capabilities continued throughout the various stages of implementation and aimed at achieving collective self-reliance as a means of Project sustainability and of further refinement and development of the Project. In accordance with this, the role of the local committees, or the institutions set up to administer local community affairs based on the Project outputs (income-generating activities, women's participation, the development of handicrafts and cottage industries, following up on infrastructure projects, employing the gains achieved from training and extension activities and working to develop these further via locally acquired skills, etc.), requires support from government bodies to consolidate the position of these committees or institutions and to support their negotiating capabilities and the administrative skills they need in order to organize participation and coordinate efforts.

## **2.6 Sustainability and replicability**

The factor of sustainability in this project is relevant to most of its outputs and achievements, which were dependent on the adopted set-up or on the referential method in work and behaviour. For example, the procedures of the revolving loan fund, which were designed through the Project (which also looked into the matter of how these would be applied), were carefully subjected to the concept of sustainability, meaning here the fund's chances of surviving or continuing once the Project's administrative and technical support came to an end.

The factor of sustainability also applies to the Project outputs or achievements related to the establishment of local institutions similar to the Local Project Committee, and is also related to enhancing the self-capabilities of the local community in terms of personnel trained and ready for leadership work in the different areas of agricultural production, livestock-breeding, income-generating activities, establishing

care centres, and encouraging the participation of women.

The working methods which were utilized—particularly in the activities for mobilizing the local community, training and extension, promoting the status of women and developing their participation, health and hygiene, income-generation, funding activities related to public services and infrastructure, etc.—seem to be appropriate in terms of replicability.

Therefore, the evaluation stresses the importance of continuing work in accordance with these methods and strengthening the results stemming from them, especially those related to creating trained capacities and executive capabilities that can continue the developmental efforts. The mission also emphasizes the importance of linking these outcomes with the programmes, policies and plans related to rural development, as a framework for coordinating the continuation of developmental efforts with the institutions involved in carrying out these policies and programmes at both the local and more general levels. In this regard, the Local Developmental Association, of whose establishment the Local Committee was the nucleus, is the appropriate institutional framework to serve as a link between the sustainability of the Project and the enlargement of its scope.

### **3. General approach**

While the methodological orientation of the Project for Local Community Development is based on mobilizing the available local resources and capabilities and on engendering self-reliance, the vital objective in the phase of work subsequent to the Project implementation will involve ensuring the sustainability of this methodological orientation and ensuring its replication. The work procedures—which were tried and tested in the execution of the Project activities and in the mechanisms utilized in establishing the framework for local efforts and coordinating their integration with the aspirations of rural development—were closely related to the concepts on which the National Programme for Integrated Rural Development (Shurouq) was based. This means that the sustainability and replicability of the Project's approach can only be ensured within the context of this national programme.

The preceding assumes even greater importance owing to the policy of economic liberation that Egypt embarked upon in 1984. This policy involved an unfolding process of successive measures that in 1992 culminated in the adopting of a free market system. This approach, in turn, entailed the adoption of economic reform and restructuring programmes, which has led to a substantial reduction in the various types of support provided by the State, whether through the administrative bodies or through the vital sectors receiving this support in the context of rural development. In other words, consolidating the sustainability of the Project approach and expanding the scope of its experimentation with grass-roots participation and self-reliance will become more and more important in facing up to the challenges posed by economic liberation. Economic and political changes have a direct effect on the social reality of rural areas, with this effect extending to the practical fields of activity in development projects, including the project being evaluated here. Infrastructure services, consumer commodity subsidies, the purchasing of production outputs, the absorption of new members of the labour force, the integration of marginalized segments of the population, and the provision of material and in kind assistance are examples of the areas in which the official bodies were providing support and attention before the adoption of the free market system. Local development projects thus become even more important in poor rural areas that were not benefiting from the gains and returns on central development plans even before the economy was freed, and likewise, the methodology for implementing them and the mechanisms utilized to consolidate efforts in meeting the diverse needs of the development process acquire a practical credibility by providing the resources that grass-roots participation can attract, starting with official and non-official assistance.

#### 4. Institutional framework

The nature of the Project for Local Community Development in Arab Rural Areas is distinguished from other projects of technical assistance or developmental aid by the broad-scope approach that is required by local community development with regard to long-term operations and what these include in the way of activities to provide resources, develop capabilities, establish a framework for local efforts and support these with official and international efforts. In the light of this, any observations must take into account the institutional framework that attaches to the Project and any recommendations must be made in the context of this aspect.

For the most part, the Project comes under the official aegis of the Ministry of Local Administration, with the role of this government body in implementing the Project being supported by ORDEV. It should be mentioned here that the National Programme for Integrated Rural Development is considered one of the main achievements of ORDEV.

In discussing the institutional framework, it is relevant to mention the Local Development Fund, which belongs to ORDEV. A new work strategy for the Fund was formulated in the light of the National Programme for Integrated Rural Development (Shurouq); this strategy aims at activating the Fund by making loans available for a wider scope of purposes, facilitating the loan procedures, reducing the costs associated with them and setting developmental standards for the awarding of loans, besides encouraging individuals (especially youth and women), NGOs and private-sector institutions to take advantage of such loans.

It has become obvious over the course of implementing the Project that the strategy of the Local Development Fund and the institutional framework for the lending procedures are in accord with the general approach of the revolving loan fund which was set up by the Project administration in the context of the work plan aiming at income-generation. However, the essential issue remains how to ensure the link between these procedures and the strategic objectives of the National Programme, and at the local level this means technical follow-up of the loan recipient's activity or project and administrative follow-up to ensure that the loan recipient is able to pay the instalments as they become due. This follow-up is a necessary link for developing and sustaining income-generating activities within the framework of the remaining activities aimed at improving the standard of living of the people in the local community. Therefore, the Project made every effort to qualify the Local Committee to play a fundamental role in shouldering responsibility for the task of following up the loan recipient's project and offering any technical or non-technical assistance that may be required. This Committee, as the institutional framework, is part of the organizational set-up of the various local links on which the National Programme for Integrated Rural Development (Shurouq) depends.

Despite the Project's limited resources, it was able to play an intermediary role in testing out the National Programme for Integrated Rural Development (Shurouq) and was also able to provide an incentive for government participation (beginning with ORDEV and going on to the Local Unit to which the Project is attached administratively). Considering the many different levels of the institutional system involved in local community development and the overlap in authority and jurisdiction with regard to the activities and outputs proposed by the Project, the roles of these different levels in providing support to the Project and in keeping abreast of the testing out of the developmental approach set forward were integrated. Examples of the coordination of the levels of work within the existing institutional framework would include the set-up of the National (Steering) Committee, the contributions of the local bodies, the effective participation of ORDEV, and the bringing in of new membership in the Local Committee and its role in establishing a foundation for grass-roots participation.

Finally, one point that should be noted in the light of the preceding is that the National Programme started up almost immediately after the beginning of the Project implementation. It is self-evident that the sustainability of the Project as well as the possibility of expanding its scope is linked to the institutional framework of the National Programme (Shurouq), as this will give the Project the profile it needs to attract support and assistance as an experimental starting point for a national programme with the same level of coherence and comprehensiveness. Therefore, the evaluation mission notes the importance of carrying out the recommendation in the previous evaluation report which called for incorporating the revolving loan fund into the Local Development Fund, which ORDEV was using to fund income-generating projects. In this way, the institutional framework of the Fund would complement the goals and concepts of the National Programme with regard to local development and at the same time would fit in with the approach of the Project being evaluated here.

## **5. Project administration**

It is well-known that project administration plays an important role in the success of any project and in its ability to achieve its stated objectives. However, the administration of projects serving as an intermediary for local community development—as is the case with the project being evaluated here—takes on even more importance since these projects must utilize a multidisciplinary, multifaceted approach to take responsibility for diverse activities and overlapping objectives that reflect the diversity of the many issues of local community development on the one hand and the impact that the various factors have on each other on the other hand. This is particularly true since such administration is concerned with organizing interventions (both local and international) at a number of levels, just as it is concerned with coordinating such interventions, beginning with the Project site and linking it administratively with the governorate level, and also with the government bodies and ministries at the national level, on up to the programmes of international bodies. The sphere of administration, in a pioneering project of the type being appraised here, includes relations of cooperation among these various levels and other external and local parties concerned with the programmes and policies within the approach proposed by the Project.

The Project document formally distributed the levels and tasks of the administrative set-up in accordance with a model concept in which it was assumed the relationships among the Supervisory Committee, the National Committee and the Local Committee would spontaneously emerge. However, this set-up put various burdens on the Project's technical staff and on the Project's executing agency, in that it gave only a general reference for following up on implementation according to the activity or prerequisites for work or the inputs of the various parties. Considering the approach of the Project, or what is known technically as the project strategy, it was quite obvious that this document did not clearly specify an administrative system for how the Project was to utilize grass-roots participation, in the sense of how to transfer the proposed benefits directly to the beneficiaries as the Project was implemented. The importance of clarifying how to transfer benefits is even more pronounced from the technical and administrative aspects, if a distinction is made between the direct beneficiaries (at the level of the Project site) and the target beneficiaries (at the level of the proposed generalization of the Project approach and its administrative methods). This shortcoming is reflected in a number of issues that the Project administration encountered in field implementation. These issues include, but are by no means limited to, the following points: the absence of a specified mechanism for the work of the executing agency and for that of the government agency coordinating the Project implementation; the lack of a stated policy for financial expenditure; the fact that the feasibility of using field voluntarism in implementing all the activities was never satisfactorily clarified; the absence of a link between the commitments of the government agency and the outputs of the Project, even at the level of the commitment to the principle of grass-roots participation, which was only vaguely expressed in comparison with its true meaning in institution-building; and the fact that the participating parties were not satisfied with the administrative roles defined by the Project document with

regard to the scope of their participation in implementation, a matter that led to the gradual withdrawal of UNDP in Egypt.

Nevertheless, the evaluation mission believes that the Project administration was able in the light of the field implementation, to crystalize a mechanism for work that would facilitate the various components of the Project's success, especially since the mission did not note any implementational problems or pending administrative discrepancies in any of its various-level meetings (with technical staff, government officials, the Local Committee, beneficiaries, etc.).

The most important points that should be noted in the context of the Project administration can be summarized as follows: (a) focusing on the basic issues in achieving Project objectives, even in urgent matters (such as raising the level of per capita income via loans) which were not taken into account by the Project administration when it was identifying its technical and administrative requirements (training and the policy of the revolving fund); (b) good planning owing to the realistic framework and multidisciplinary approach the work plan adopted to achieve the stated objectives and attract resources; (c) effective organizational measures to strengthen participation and consolidate institutional relations, such as committees, workshops, identifying organizations to provide financial and technical support, etc.; (d) developing the capabilities of the technical staff, committee members and institutional staff (those working in the Project), as well as developing the capabilities of the participating institutions and organizations (transferring the experience gained by the Project to official levels, the forming by ESCWA of a high-level committee to follow up on implementation, etc.); (e) good performance in providing inputs (including administrative and technical support, except for complications in the process of employing the field workers) and in implementing the activities and outputs within a specified time-frame; (f) strengthening the components of self-reliance and developing the principle of collective participation through various levels of procedures to encourage collective work, following up on the objectives of general benefit, urging constructive participation, providing motivation for initiatives involving productive work and creating the prerequisites of self-confidence; and (g) setting up thorough investigations via a clear evaluation process (including field reports and various research literature), preliminary evaluation, preliminary surveys, and comparative data, all of which was set up by the field-work team as a comprehensive reporting on the outcomes of Project implementation.

At the government level, encouraging signs appeared as an outcome of the joint action and the growing interest in being a part of the administration of the Project activities, beginning with the staff officially seconded to work at the Project site, the support committees whose membership was distributed among various government institutions, and the national coordinator of the Project, as well as the Chief of the Local Unit, and going on to the President and members of the Local People's Council and other ministries and organizations involved in the establishment of the Steering Committee. The government counterpart was working seriously on participating in the Project administration in cooperation and coordination with the technical staff and the international executing agency, and likewise the technical staff was working closely with the Local Project Committee. It should be noted that the participation of this committee in the administrative affairs was based on a decision by the Chief of the Local Unit setting its membership and mission. In this context, the Committee took responsibility for managing the various resources donated and the local contributions for infrastructure and other activities, similar to the management of Project resources by the technical staff. This management was carried out in accordance with the internal organization of the Committee and its acquired expertise, including coordinating with the governmental bodies.

Therefore, the evaluation mission has positive comments on the extent of official concern shown (at all levels) for constructive contribution and for the Government's determination to strengthen the capabilities needed for participating in the Project administration, to achieve an ideal success and ensure the prerequisites

of the replicability of the experiment or the enlargement of its scope. The mission also notes the importance of the solid links among the various levels of the Project administration, which are distinguished by a close awareness of what is happening and by the harmony of the responsibilities that were distributed in accordance with a work mechanism that promises to motivate for the better. Perhaps the broadening of the scope of cooperation with the various local-level forces and the participation of the Project administration in coordinating the activities of the work plan with the various bodies and departments within the Governorate and at the national and international levels are real indicators of achieving this promise for the better.

Thus, what is mentioned above is not limited to the local and national levels, but goes beyond, to the international level in the Project administration. The disparity which attracts attention at this level is the reliance of the executing agency (ESCWA), from a theoretical aspect, on the literature and methodologies of United Nations Volunteers, whereby the technical staff (the volunteers for field work through international employment in United Nations Volunteers) served as the central link in the field administration of the Project. Over time and in the light of the actual needs, a useful mechanism was established for the administrative and technical support which was made available by the executing agency through its active supervision of the Project administrative and its follow-up of the Project's implementation. This helped consolidate the administrative and technical authority whose importance became clear later on and led to the coordinating of this follow-up with the headquarters of United Nations Volunteers. It also contributed to clarifying the advantage of utilizing "field voluntarism" in such projects since they are of great importance in developing local communities and since they also have a central role to play in activating resources and mobilizing capabilities. This use of volunteers was particularly beneficial in the administration of the project being discussed here, since the problems of field work become far more complicated the higher the level required to solve them, whereas at a lower level (including the technical staff working in the field), all the components of a straightforward solution can easily be brought into play. The main reason for this is the close proximity of the administratively lower level to a true understanding of what is happening in the field and this level's acquired skills and field expertise, which can be used to find a better solution.

## **6. Project activities**

### **6.1 General observations**

The evaluation mission is fully aware that during implementation, the objectives of the Project and the activities associated with it enjoyed the same level of enthusiasm that was apparent during the design phase. The mission also recognizes the congruence of the Project activities with the needs of the beneficiaries in the local community and at the same time sees that these activities contributed, on a small scale, to implementing the Government's priorities for local development. The following are brief comments on the external factors that impinged on the continuing importance of the Project objectives, once the Project had passed through the earlier implementation phases: the start-up of ORDEV's implementation of the National Programme for Integrated Rural Development (Shurouq); the absence of NGOs at the Project site or in the immediately surrounding area, and the difficulty this posed in mobilizing resources and developing capabilities; and the radical transformation in the direction of a market economy and the accompanying reduction in government support for basic services, besides the effect of the reduced government role in the marketing of commodities produced by income-generating activities. There is no doubt that the existence of these factors (or being aware of them) at the time of Project design would certainly have led to a stronger and more detailed focus in the Project document on the objectives related to such factors.

In the same context, the evaluation mission notes that the credibility of the Project design was established during implementation. In spite of certain gaps in defining the mechanisms of the administration of the different activities and in spite of ambiguities in the income-generation plan, as well as other issues



mentioned in the report of the previous evaluation mission (such as adjusting the inputs specified in the Project document), in general the Project activities and outputs resulted in the achievement of the main objectives of the Project.

At first glance, it appears that the overlapping of the Project activities and the interlinking of the various measures used to implement them, as well as the need to develop and enlarge their scope, would lead to confusion and ambiguity, especially considering the very limited inputs made available to the activities described in the Project document (as, for example, in the case of the activities related to infrastructure). However, a closer examination of these activities and the progress made in field implementation shows that they responded to essential needs in the efforts of the Project to achieve the desired outputs. Perhaps the only exception here is related to the third short-term objective mentioned in the Project document: "To develop rural cooperation through establishing or supporting local development associations such as cooperatives and other non-governmental organizations." In spite of the difficulty in implementing the activities related to achieving this objective, and the lack of the needed technical, administrative and financial inputs to meet the various needs associated with implementing it, the preparatory steps that were achieved in this regard met with promising results. Therefore, strengthening the cooperation with the various unions (the Farmers Association, the Central Agricultural Cooperative Federation, etc.) as well as consolidating the relation with them, using the Local Unit as a local base, are necessary starting points for action during the phase to expand the scope of the Project. The central axis of this work will be the Local Developmental Association established by the Project through the Local Project Committee, the success of whose work will depend on obtaining support for its pioneering role (formerly assumed by the Project's technical staff) and on refining its skills in basic administration and negotiation.

In the following, the evaluation mission discusses the activities mentioned in the Project document, focusing on those which have particularly affected the outcomes of the Project and on related recommendations for guiding the work to be done during the phase of expanding or replicating the Project.

## **6.2 Selection and appointment of the technical staff of the Project**

Through UNDP, the organization United Nations Volunteers took charge of selecting the members of the technical staff of the Project<sup>2</sup> and of appointing them after consultation with the executing agency (ESCWA) and with the approval of the official government authorities. A number of administrative obstacles were faced in the process of appointment and in other issues related to administrative support, among them the following: the resignation of field worker Mr. Walid Hammad; the lack of provision of accommodations for the field workers; the delay in providing means of transportation to the field team (and when a vehicle was finally provided, it was extremely expensive and in very poor condition); the delay—despite the approval for such matters by UNV headquarters—in paying the necessary compensation to the field team, such as housing, transportation and fuel allowances, which all affected the performance of the technical staff and required among other things searching for alternative means of transportation; and the lack of a full complement of field team members, which had to be compensated for through the support of the government body responsible for implementing the Project, which made available a work team to help the technical staff in carrying out some of the Project activities.

The technical staff of the Project, through the experience they acquired by means of the technical and administrative follow-up of the executing agency, in addition to the rich experience and dynamism that motivated them, played an important role in all the activities mentioned in the Project document. From conducting the field survey, discussing its results and preparing the draft report on the survey, to mobilizing

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<sup>2</sup> The names of the technical staff appear in annex 4 of this report.

the local community, working on implementing training and extension programmes, formulating the Project's work plan, following up on the execution of this plan, participating in evaluating the phases already completed in a field report on this subject, helping in the administration of loans and in setting up the revolving fund, and on to conducting the subsequent survey of the Project site and analysing the achievements in reports and field studies, the technical staff in carrying out their mission demonstrated a responsibility that bore good fruit in supporting the role of the Local Project Committee and preparing the government staff working in the Project, and in other issues whose success depended on good negotiating skills, an ability to maintain good working relations with individuals and the leadership of the local community, and an ability to stay on good terms with the government bodies concerned with the Project and to keep them interested in participating in the Project activities.

Therefore, the evaluation mission believes that the advantage of employing the principle of "voluntarism for field work" was not limited to the role the technical staff played in activating and mobilizing local development resources, but included as well the great savings that the principle of voluntarism made possible in comparison with the costs associated with hiring international specialists. This is in addition to what this principle offers the local community in terms of applied experience related to field skills that are in touch with the conditions to be found at the Project site and with the requirements of work that focuses on the grass-roots level.

At the same time that the evaluation mission notes that the members of the technical staff were able to implement, in large measure, its recommendation on transferring skills to the staff's local counterparts (the ORDEV staff who were made available to work on the Project, and the members of the Local Committee, as well as others in a position of leadership), it views appreciatively the responsiveness of United Nations Volunteers to its recommendation in the previous report to extend the period of work of this staff beyond the original two-year contracts. The mission also recommends another extension for the same staff, to enable them to carry out the expansion of the Project and to allow them to consolidate firmly the gains realized so far at the Project site itself.

### **6.3 Forming the Steering Committee of the Project**

The central composition of the Steering Committee of the Project was in harmony with its pioneering nature, which called for a membership drawn from the concerned bodies and departments in the country and for their participation in the success of the Project's experiment with the objective of generalizing the developmental pattern it employed. The Steering Committee of the Project was formed in accordance with ORDEV decision No. 88 of 1994. Its membership and mission comprised the Supervisory Committee and the National Committee.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the Project document was set as the authority for organizing the relations of the committees and the mechanism through which they would carry out their work.

In spite of the performance of the Steering Committee in the task of supervising the plan of the Project and following up on its implementation, coordinating its various activities, and providing the required administrative support, the size of the contribution and the degree of interest that the evaluation mission observed on the part of the local bodies at the governorate level means that when the scope of the Project expands, the Project administration should give special attention to the effective role that the Governorate plays as a vital link between the local and the national levels. This point is particularly important considering the growing trend towards strengthening the role of local administration within the future plans of the State.

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<sup>3</sup> The names of the members of the Steering Committee of the Project appear in annex 5 of this report. It should be noted that the national coordinator of the Project was replaced; the new national coordinator was Mr. Ahmad Aziz.

#### 6.4 Selecting the Project site

This activity consisted of a series of measures. In the light of the information gathered in the preliminary survey of a number of villages in Giza Governorate, several were selected for further scrutiny and field visits were made to ascertain where the conditions specified in the Project document were most suitably met. In implementing this activity, which may seem at first glance to be quite straightforward, a number of problems, or unexpected factors, arose; these had not been mentioned in the Project document, in spite of their significance with regard to the implementation of this activity. The importance of agriculture in the area of the selected site, the minimal social services at the site, a willingness to house the United Nations Volunteers, the availability of places to hold meetings and conduct training, and the existence of roads to the village were very general conditions set by the Project document regarding the National Committee's selection of a site and in theory apply to most rural sites in Egypt. In practice, the concerned parties were required to make choices and specify technical, administrative and methodological issues related to selecting a site, which wasted time and effort.

The selection of Izbet (meaning "settlement of") El-Hageen El-Sharqiya in Giza Governorate as the site for implementing the Project was made within the context of field observations of this rural settlement and surrounding settlements belonging to the villages of 'Atef, El-Hageen El-Sharqiya, Hubb El-Rumaan and Matawali 'Aqel, which are similar in terms of poverty, deprivation, hardship and poor coverage of services (health, education, communications, water, electricity, sanitation, etc.), in addition to high levels of unemployment. The evaluation mission therefore recommends that these sites comprise the lower limit of the area to be covered by the Project, which would expand in the future to include a wider area. In the event that the needed resources are made available, it would be a good idea to expand the Project to include the Local Unit, to complement the various elements of the Project's developmental approach.

#### 6.5 Conducting a survey of the Project site

Pursuant to the Project document, the technical staff, in cooperation with ORDEV employees and some of the village staff (after these had been trained) conducted a comprehensive survey of the Project site before beginning to implement the Project activities.<sup>4</sup> The survey provided basic data about the site and the local community, including the conditions of women. The survey also revealed the opinions and choices of the beneficiaries in regard to their needs, as well as their suggestions on how to meet these needs; this information was used as a guideline (after discussion and making the appropriate adjustments) in formulating the work plan. The body of data provided by the survey was used as a basis for drawing comparisons and evaluating the achievements of the Project at the end of its implementation, in accordance with the final survey of the Project site and the examination of the outcomes of the various activities.<sup>5</sup>

The preliminary survey relied on the method of research and statistical analysis, with the cooperation of the local community and the staff of ORDEV and other official and semi-official institutions in the general area of the village of 'Atef. The random survey covered 792 households, with each of these administered a questionnaire (657 in 'Atef itself and 135 in El-Hageen El-Sharqiya, the Project site). In addition to the data provided by the survey questionnaire, the analytical study of the Project site also relied on direct observation and the results of group discussions and other tools such as statistical analysis tables as well as graphs.

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<sup>4</sup> The report of the site survey and the work plan can be found in annex 6.

<sup>5</sup> The report of the post-Project survey of the site is included in annex 9.

In general, the selected site was a prototypical local community whose population depended on agricultural production and livestock breeding, with the relations among the community members being a network based on custom and tradition. Within this general picture, in spite of the fact that El-Hageen El-Sharqiya has abundant agricultural land completely surrounding it, most of the land is owned by absentee landowners, with the rest being divided into small plots not exceeding one acre, these being distributed among the farmers in the settlement. El-Hageen El-Sharqiya, which lies 500 metres from the Cairo-Asyut agricultural road, occupies the northern part of the village of 'Atef, one of the three villages belonging to the Local Unit of the village of Umm al-Baleeda, which in turn belongs to Ayyat Centre within Giza Governorate.

The field survey of the Project site brought to light a number of particularities related to the resources available and the patterns in which they were being utilized, and also revealed the special features of the local community's human resources and the extent to which social services and infrastructure are provided. In addition, the survey gave a picture of the existing system and organizations in the village. These particularities,<sup>6</sup> which had a basic effect on the nature of the Project's work plan and the methodology of implementation, fall within the context of general conclusions that can be summarized in the following points: the existence of seasonal labour in the agricultural sector and the high rate of unemployment, low per capita income and limited non-agricultural sources of income in view of the lack of diversity in production on the one hand and the low returns on non-agricultural activities when these are available on the other hand; the weakness of NGOs, so that in spite of there being a continuity in relations, in the context of family and social solidarity, the lack of private institutions is an obstacle to the cooperation needed to deal with the problems of the settlement and improve standards of living; and weakness in basic services, as well as production services, whether these are related to inputs such as credit or agricultural extension or to marketing and production.

In the plan for implementing its activities, the Project addressed the particularities that emerged in the results of the field survey. The following gives a brief glance at these particularities and how they were dealt with:

(a) The **population of the village** is 2,500, with a population pyramid having a wide base of the youngest age groups. The age group 25 years and under accounts for 71 per cent of the sample survey; the labour force of the village (including seasonal labourers) makes up 30 per cent of the total population, and is mostly drawn from the youth. The rate of illiteracy in the sample survey was 42 per cent among males and 58 per cent among females. The Project activities targeted youth, in the light of their being the central axis of the human resources available. The Project carried out a number of worthwhile activities aimed at developing the capabilities of this segment, mobilizing their capacities and refining their expertise through training, and there was a noticeable positive impact on economic activity in terms of diversifying the sources of income and providing the needed inputs of credit and expertise.

(b) Despite the results of the preliminary survey showing that **agricultural production** is the main sector, nevertheless this theoretical predominance is beset in practical terms by an intensifying pattern of abandoning agricultural work owing to the operation of a number of factors, among the most important of which are the following: the fragmentation of agricultural holdings (with the average family's holding amounting to only half an acre); the fact that two thirds of the holdings are leased and the remaining are privately held; low levels of agricultural earnings and the inability to compete in the market owing to the primitive farming methods used; the prevailing attitude toward loans, which involves a religious proscription

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<sup>6</sup> For more details on the particularities indicated in the results of the field survey before and after Project implementation, see the field survey reports included in the annexes. See also the report of the preceding evaluation mission.

against interest, added to which is the practical aspect of the burden of making repayments that are greater than the return on investment in agriculture. Thus the outputs of Project activities in this area were not as effective as those in other areas and were limited to supporting the agricultural sector with certain techniques and knowledge about fertilizers and pesticides, to orienting training and also loans towards industries depending on raw agricultural materials, and to guaranteeing certain methods for marketing agricultural outputs in order to encourage those working in agriculture. In the end, the approach of Project activities in agriculture focused on animal production related to livestock- and poultry-raising. The preliminary survey revealed that 92 per cent of families raise livestock or poultry at home, with 98 per cent of these using such production for household consumption and 26 per cent selling part of what they produce.

Therefore, **animal production**, or livestock-raising, is the main activity after farming. The efforts of the Project in dealing with the most important problems facing animal production were successful in that they brought about an improvement in methods of production to the point that production exceeded household consumption needs and became more geared to market relations that would ensure a stable income.

(c) In regard to **rural housing and infrastructure**, the data provided by the preliminary survey showed that there were 300 housing units, with most of them lacking basic facilities. Although a minimum level of public services was provided, the electricity serving Izbet did not include lighting for the public road; potable water was hand-pumped from tanks approximately two kilometres' distance from Izbet, which meant that the pumping was weak and could not cover the needs of the settlement (89 per cent of the houses were not reached), which in turn meant that the population had to resort to using canal water, leading to the spread of a number of endemic diseases. The intermediation of the Project—as is clear in the post-Project survey—brought about positive changes with regard to infrastructure. Mobilizing activities and training to respond to environmental considerations and environmental conservation issues resulted in sustained public cleanliness at the Project site, just as heightened environmental awareness resulted in the setting up of a potable water network and the consequent avoidance of using canal water. In addition, the public road was provided with lighting, and a local centre for social services was established.

(d) With regard to **education**, the preliminary survey revealed that poverty and the force of certain customs and traditions were having an adverse effect on the Government's interest in education (especially compulsory education at the primary level). Survey data showed high levels of illiteracy, which, owing to the high drop-out rates, was around 50 per cent. This situation suggests that special care for education and illiteracy eradication must be given within the context of activities related to raising income levels. As a result of activities aimed at developing the human element (raising awareness, developing self-capabilities, etc.), the Project was able to train four local staff members to take responsibility for running literacy courses, which 95 persons, males and females, successfully completed. The Project was also able to motivate the concern and interest of the local community in the issue of illiteracy eradication and in obtaining knowledge and expertise, making this issue one of the priorities of the Local Developmental Association at the Project site.

(e) With regard to **health**, the results of the preliminary survey revealed a low level of health services and a general lack of health awareness within the local community. The survey also revealed the existence of a number of illnesses and problems related to health conditions in the village, among which are the following: diseases related to livestock breeding; illnesses related to environmental problems (especially the use of polluted canal water); illnesses and diseases related to poor personal hygiene; women's illnesses; and illness stemming from poor maternal and child nutrition. The Project activities addressed the problems associated with the health situation and included training and extension courses aimed at raising awareness and influencing behaviour towards cleanliness and safeguarding the environment. This brought about noticeable improvements in public cleanliness and personal hygiene and in a more widespread compliance

with inoculation and family health campaigns and a noticeable reduction in morbidity rates, especially once the potable water network was functioning and people stopped using canal water.

(f) Concerning **social services and local administration**, the preliminary survey—in addition to what it revealed about the human and economic resources available in Izbet and in its administrative scope, which extends to the village of Umm Baleeda—identified the organizations and institutions whose concern is with social services and with making accessible the various fields of administration at the local level.

One of the most useful outcomes of the Project was related to the development of human resources, especially from the aspects of strengthening relationships of cooperation, developing the prerequisites for self-reliance, and advancing the status of women. After intensifying the activities to raise awareness about beliefs and customs that were reflecting negatively on these aspects, including especially the status of women, the Project undertook a broad series of training and extension activities to strengthen the self-capabilities of the various segments of the local community and to enlist their participation in productive activity. In the end, these segments benefited from all Project activities without exception, beginning with the training activities, going on to illiteracy eradication and arriving in the end at economic participation. In the income-generating activities carried out through the revolving fund, women took part as small entrepreneurs, benefiting from their projects to the same extent as males. This was in addition to what the Project achieved in terms of coordinating the various levels of local administration in defining needs and following up on the tasks needed to meet them and in expanding responsibilities so as to serve the purposes of local development in a cost-effective fashion.

## 6.6 Forming the Local Project Committee

The members of the Local Project Committee<sup>7</sup> were appointed from the families of the Project site and they included two women members to oversee activities related to the promotion of the status of women and to ensure that the prerequisites for advancing women's productive role and their role as mothers were met.

It should be noted that an internal system was formulated for the work of the Local Project Committee, to delegate tasks and authority. This was adjusted to further consolidate the role of the Local Committee in the light of the continuous training it received, which enabled it to contribute in an ever-increasing fashion to strengthening the objectives of the Project and its activities after it participated in formulating the Project work plan. The evaluation mission recognizes the overriding importance of the work of administering the Project in the preceding phase, in implementation of its recommendation on having the technical staff train the Local Committee in negotiating skills, on strengthening its leadership role, on consolidating the tie of solidarity among its members and on creating a competitive spirit that would bring about better performance. The mission also acknowledges the advantage of forming the Local Developmental Association, for which the Local Committee served as the founding body, with this Association being considered the appropriate institutional framework to cement the relations among the families of the settlement with the aim of employing their acquired capabilities in continuing the Project activities, especially the activity related to taking responsibility for going on with the Project once the support being extended to it ceases, as well as for future work aimed at expanding its scope.

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<sup>7</sup> The names of the members of the Local Project Committee appear in annex 7 of this report.

## **6.7 Mobilizing the local rural community**

In addition to what the present report discussed separately with regard to this activity, mobilization is also discussed in the section on observations and recommendations. Some of the observations remain essential for understanding the various inputs that are included in the field of mobilization as a basic foundation that remains important as long as the Project activities are going on.

Mobilizing the local community and urging its various segments to express themselves, put forward their needs, and participate in planning and carrying out procedures to meet these needs is not something that occurs automatically or spontaneously. This is particularly true in the situation we find here, where different organizations and representatives of government bodies have conditioned the community to look to them to meet its needs. Likewise, local community participation, in the sense of identifying needs and distributing responsibilities for meeting them between the various segments of the community on the one hand and the government bodies on the other hand requires that the two sides be at the level of two parties to a dialogue, or something approaching this situation. Therefore, the mobilization of the local community—as a basic starting point—has taken on even greater importance in finding practical ways and creating organizational set-ups to develop the ability of this community to express itself. This importance derives from the absence of NGOs (and what the existing NGOs suffer from in the way of structural and technical problems impinging on their performance).

However, this mobilization (and what it involves in terms of training and extension) is by no means limited to the scope of the local community or the role of NGOs, but rather it extends in many cases to the staff of the local governmental bodies and departments which were previously not in touch with the local community.

Thus, the evaluation mission views with appreciation the productive intermediation provided by the Project, which achieved remarkable success in mobilizing the capabilities of the local community and in enlisting its participation in activities aimed at meeting basic needs—and examples of various contributions and of the diversity of fields where participation was forthcoming are numerous and have been mentioned in various places. The mission also notes the coordination of the needs and capabilities of the local community (grass-roots participation) with the growing concern and the abundant capabilities provided by the governmental bodies at the official level, and this as well was multifaceted, for example, supporting the expansion of the Project scope within the Shurouq programme in addition to supporting the revolving loan fund and other activities.

Therefore, the evaluation mission—keen on seeing the mechanisms employed in mobilizing the local community continue, as well as the replication of this approach in coordinating with the official level—emphasizes that the success of the Project's intermediation in these two fields is conditional on the support of the institutional framework (the Local Developmental Association), which would ensure the continued success of the Project and at the same time ensure the consolidation of the various foundations required to extend the Project and enlarge its scope.

## **6.8 Training and extension programmes**

This activity assumed a central importance because of its impact on Project outcomes and desired objectives. Achieving the outputs was linked, whether partially or wholly, with the inputs of training and extension, which in fact were prerequisites on which the ability to meet the objectives of the Project as listed in the Project document, in most cases, depended. In line with the nature and integrated developmental approach of the Project, the scope of training was not limited to certain fields, but rather these were

developed and refined in the light of the gains achieved as well as in the light of contingent needs that arose. In addition, the advantage of transferring this training to the administrative and technical pattern employed by the Project in its local community development approach was examined, as well as what this called for in terms of transferring the expertise of the technical staff to their local counterparts and testing the possibility of enlarging the application of this pattern or approach and generalizing its implementation.

Pursuant to what was stated in the Project document, the technical staff, in coordination with the executing agency and in cooperation with the governmental bodies and local organizations, formulated and implemented the training and extension programmes required for the advancement of the local community. This activity was based on the data provided by the preliminary survey which dealt with suggested fields commensurate with the Project document and in accordance with the priorities set by the local community. The suggestion of the Project document to develop skills in various fields (such as basic management, livestock- and poultry-breeding, improving agricultural productivity, household management, family and environmental health, child care, and production activities) was implemented within the framework of the Project's direct objectives, specifically objective 5: "To provide training and rural extension services in order to improve agricultural production and acquire the skills necessary for carrying out income-generating activities," and objective 6: "To conduct training and extension activities aiming at improving the quality of rural community and particularly women." Training and extension included diverse activities, among them the following examples: a seminar on developing the skills of youth, which was attended by 30 young people; the holding of four literacy courses, in which 95 men and women took part, and which involved two stages of instruction and met with notable success in the results compared with the literacy courses at the town of Ayyat; a course on the revolving fund, with 80 trainees of both sexes; and a seminar on grass-roots participation and activating voluntary efforts, with 22 trainees from Izbet and some of the executive leadership from the Local Unit. The programme of training courses also included a number of field visits to examine similar developmental projects as well as income-generating activities. With the aim of improving the quality of life, especially as this relates to the status of women, the training and extension activities made an effort to respond to the needs of the local community, for example: a literacy course, with 30 women participating; and a seminar on developing the skills of rural women, with 35 female participants.

The technical staff and the field-work team were remarkably successful in motivating the local community to participate in such activities, especially those related to the participation of women, which at the beginning of Project implementation was met with refusal and skepticism. One measure of the success of this activity, besides the large number of participants in relation to the number of courses offered, was the fact that the local community asked for more courses of these types, and for the same courses, in greater detail. Likewise, the implementation of these programmes led to a set of positive outcomes with regard to skills and knowledge gained that could be expected to have an effect on individual behaviour and collective participation.

The evaluation mission notes the intense efforts that the Project put into the various fields of training and stresses the importance of the returns on these efforts, whether in relation to the actual beneficiaries, or in relation to their effect on the entire package of Project activities. In this context, the mission would like to add some observations related to the returns on training. In regard to the target segments of this activity, it is observed that new segments of trainees, based on the recommendation of the previous evaluation mission, received new patterns of ongoing training (for example, certifying them as trainers, developing qualifications for various vocations and crafts, following up on extension and training, marketing and income-generating activities, etc.). In spite of the expansion of the scope of routine training programmes and series, the training efforts in the area of agricultural production were not concentrated effectively, owing to the conditions prevailing in the agricultural sector, and likewise the training effort that aimed at raising the qualification of the local counterpart in the field of basic administration (especially the administration of



cooperative societies) was not tested, in view of the fact that the Local Developmental Association had just been established and that there had not been enough time to follow up and activate its administration.

It is also observed, in relation to the pioneering approach of the Project, that the training activities have gone past the point of simply selecting the élite segments, such as the local leadership, which were mentioned in the Project document as focal points to be trained in the light of the priorities in the needs of the local community. With the expansion in the scope of the training and the large increase in the number of beneficiaries, the burdens associated with these beneficiaries has become an additional drain on the Project administration, which was working very hard to link them to the mechanisms of the labour market or to the official administrative authorities.

Besides what has already been mentioned about the methods employed in the training programmes and extension courses and the possibility of transforming these into a pattern based on replicating the activity, the evaluation mission believes that the various training fields in this pioneering project were decided upon in the light of the local needs of the village community. Therefore, ensuring the sustainability and replicability of this activity depends on setting a training pattern for the various target segments and classifying it according to subject. In practical terms, a training pattern like this requires a very clear defining of the purposes of each training field as well as the preparation of time schedules and work programmes, and then the provision of suitable training materials. Despite the additional burden that this would put on the field-work team and on the Project administration, it would be an effective way of ensuring the replicability of the activity of training, especially in the light of the adaptations that took place in implementing this pattern in the field and also in the light of seeking out the opinions of the beneficiaries and following up on the results of their training.

## **6.9 Formulating an income-generation plan**

Despite the very general terms in which the formulation of an income-generation plan was described in the Project document—which was concerned only with linking the loans that would be guaranteed by the revolving fund with the income-generating activities and the institutional set-up and administrative procedures that this would involve—the data emerging from the field survey and the identified needs of the local community gave this plan broader proportions and a more comprehensive form than what was mentioned in the Project document. The field-work team, in accordance with the results of the survey, and in coordination with the Local Project Committee and with the help of the local community, set a work plan for 1995-1996 that concentrated on income-generating activities which included various economic and social fields and which dealt with some of the priorities regarding infrastructure.

Since the problems of the local community were not identified prior to the writing of the Project document, in which case the proposed activity would have been the means of solving a previously identified problem, the document left ample space for the data that the field survey would provide in identifying the obstacles to local development as well as the positive factors. The Project work plan (through its formulation and specifying of activities in accordance with time-frames and in terms of the available and the required resources, distributing the various responsibilities and contributions, etc.) acquired authoritativeness in addition to the Project document, although it did not have the same force as an officially signed document.

Therefore, this plan embodies a concept that represents the needs of the local community at the lowest and highest levels. It also served as a framework to consolidate the local efforts of the community of Izbet, and at the same time to coordinate these efforts and support the plan's implementation by the parties represented in the Steering Committee. Therefore, this locally-based plan (grass-roots base) provided a flexible scope for implementing the activities in accordance with the available and the expected resources and also for fulfilling the community's needs in accordance with the set priorities, the extent to which

participation was forthcoming, and the Project's success in attracting resources and consolidating efforts. This was especially true considering that the Project budget, or inputs, were not sufficient to cover the costs of carrying out all the activities adopted in the work plan. This put the burden of coordinating efforts and of taking the initiative to obtain the additional resources needed to support the implementation of the plan on the Project administration. The evaluation mission considered this to be the central issue, with the Local Project Committee (the Local Developmental Association), in pursuing its pioneering role, being responsible for organizing the efforts and developing the benefits of any successful initiatives to obtain resources and for strengthening the local expertise to enable them to derive the maximum benefit of these resources.

Before dealing with the fields included in the work plan, it is worth noting the attention that the plan gave to developing human resources, to refining and polishing local capabilities and to mobilizing energies at the various levels of the local community. Details of this central effort, the returns on which were distributed among the various fields of activity in the work plan, were mentioned in the section on training and extension above. The following looks briefly at the basic fields included in the Project's work plan:

(a) In the area of **agriculture and cultivated land**, and taking as the starting point the existing situation as revealed by the field survey, the work plan addressed the direct objectives of diversifying agricultural production and improving on existing agriculture through modern technologies and new varieties of improved seeds. Because of what was mentioned earlier about the growing disinclination of the local community to engage in activities related to the agricultural sector and the reasons behind this disinclination, the Project administration focused on encouraging the members of the local community by developing projects related to agricultural wealth and made income-generating projects available which were financed through loans from the revolving fund, by creating new trades which did not exist in the area before the Project was implemented, among them the following: fabricating cages and mats from date-palm by-products; harvesting and packaging dates; trading in fertilizers and seeds; and renting out irrigation machinery. These are in addition to enterprises related to agricultural training and extension.

In regard to **animal production**, the projects mentioned in the work plan aimed at improving animal-breeding and at developing productivity. This was carried out through projects linked with the agricultural sector, including the following: cultivating green fodder (which is not incompatible with random irrigation); improving the quality of compost; and introducing the fundamentals of animal-raising (training and extension courses). This was in addition to the granting of a number of loans for projects and enterprises such as poultry-raising, sheep-raising, and rabbit-raising, using the modern "closed system". The Project achieved notable success in this sector, with the productivity of these enterprises rising to the point where production surpassed the needs of household consumption and could be channelled into the market.

(b) In the field of **housing and infrastructure**, in spite of the fact that this area was not included directly in the Project document, nevertheless the achievement of the objective which related to improving the quality of life required that the plan include certain vital projects in this field and that the implementation of such projects be coordinated among different levels of the administration (from the Local Committee and village institutions, to the Governorate, on to the national level represented by ORDEV). Among the most important of these projects were the following: paving the main road; supporting the electricity network and insulating wiring; rebuilding the village bridge; connecting telephone lines and laying cables; lighting the streets of Izbet (with the local community contributing to part of this); solving the problem of potable water (12 faucets for drinking water were installed on either side of the canal, to discourage people from using the polluted canal water); the extension of the main potable water network in Izbet; support for health services; clean-up campaigns (with the contribution of the local community and with a cash contribution from the Local Unit to cover the costs of the tractor and driver to transport the waste); the setting up of a social centre for carrying out training activities as well as activities of the Local Developmental Association and literacy courses, etc. Within this field the work plan concentrated on efforts to train the Local Committee

and the different branch committees on how to negotiate and communicate with the government and other bodies, to enlist their support in providing resources for implementing these projects.

(c) With regard to **education**, the work plan included diverse activities, which were spread across several sectors that depended on the development of the education situation through illiteracy eradication programmes and ongoing courses. Four such courses were organized, with a total of 95 participants. This activity was the first of its kind in Izbet: in spite of the efforts of previous illiteracy eradication plans for Egyptian villages in general, no course had ever been organized at the Project site itself, and no one from Izbet had ever enrolled in such a course being held at 'Atef, to which Izbet belonged. Izbet thus achieved distinction in this field, occupying first place at the level of the town and Centre of Ayyat and recording a pass rate of 99 per cent, against an area average of 20 to 60 per cent. This was in addition to a number of training and extension activities which contributed to the development of the education situation and which focused for the most part on promoting the status of women in the local community, in view of their very poor educational background and the subsequent marginalization of their role.

(d) In relation to **health conditions as well as social services and local administration**, in accordance with the Project work plan, extension courses on mother and child health care were organized, as were health awareness campaigns (including the subjects of cleanliness, safeguarding the environment, avoiding the use of canal water, and fighting endemic diseases), vaccination and disease-prevention campaigns, and first aid courses. Various projects were also carried out to support social services and local administration, in the context of services to advance the status of women, as well as health and environmental services, services aimed at developing human resources through training, mobilization and eradicating illiteracy (strengthening the link with the National Organization for Eradicating Illiteracy to hold such courses, and training four staff members from the local community to take responsibility for them and to continue on with them), etc. Likewise, income-generating activities and the concomitant establishment of the revolving loan fund (including the formation of committees and various types of training) were an additional area for dealing with the problem of youth in the local community and ensuring a starting point for raising the level of income and solving the problems associated with unemployment. This aspect, that of youth, remains a vital issue in the future refinement of the work plan, which needs to expand in the direction of becoming more concerned with the institutions that deal with the issues of youth.

In addition to the essential role that the Project's work plan played in planning the local administration and testing out the approach of grass-roots participation, starting from the increasingly important position of the Local Committee and its branch committees and coordinating their work with the Consultative Committee, which dealt with all the official activities and included the organizations and associations at the local level, a number of positive indicators appeared with regard to activating the performance and the efficiency of this administration in the local community and with regard to its contribution in realizing the objectives of the Project. Among these indicators were the following: the establishment of the Local Developmental Association; establishing a centre for general activities (training, meetings, product exhibitions, etc.); the effective in-kind contribution of the local community in bringing about the establishment of this centre; the follow-up by the Local Unit and the Town Council of 'Ayyat Centre and their involvement in implementing the infrastructure activities; the training of aware leaderships, to raise the level of participation; and reducing illiteracy rates. These indicators can be considered as basic supports that will underlie the continuity of the Project's developmental approach and the expansion of its scope in the future.

Finally, it should be mentioned here that what was proposed in the work plan, in spite of its flexibility and compatibility with the approach of the Project, nevertheless had a number of gaps, in that it neglected to define outputs clearly or to programme activities according to a time-frame, with cost estimates and distribution of responsibilities, besides other technical issues. This can be attributed to the fact that the

activities listed were expressive of the viewpoint of the local community according to how it defined its capabilities and resources and the ways it believed to be appropriate for advancing its own status and improving the quality of life of its members. Although the draft of what was proposed by the work plan, which was submitted to the executing agency, was modified and added to, nevertheless even the modified plan was not adequate for the Project's development and expansion; rather it concentrated on proposals for economic enterprises aimed at income-generation. However, the implementation of the mobilization activity, and what this involved in terms of other activities, added in a spontaneous fashion to the expansion of the areas covered by the work plan, in the direction of social, health and environmental fields, as well as infrastructure and housing projects which served as vital starting points on the path to improving the quality of life. It should be kept in mind that the nature of the Project and its approach make possible a continuous updating as well as the introduction of adjustments and various additions to any of the listed activities, including the work plan, with the extent of implementation being subject to the availability of resources and the mobilization of capacities.

## **7. Environmental considerations**

Since the common denominator of the general developmental goals of the Project document has been developing the general lines of a strategy of policy on local development based on grass-roots participation, the document should have looked in detail at the environmental considerations that needed to be researched, as well as at the programmes and bodies concerned with these considerations both at the local and national levels. This is because identifying the facts of the local situation and then coordinating efforts to deal with them are two conditions essential for securing the resources and enriching the field experiment which should pave the way for articulating the general policies which must include environmental considerations, whose significance continues to increase.

Although the Project activities did not deal directly with a previously prepared design or proposed actions with regard to environmental considerations, the survey data and implementational procedures of the Project activities brought up various areas where environmental considerations should be taken into account, as they are closely integrated with the local development process.

Within this general context of environmental considerations, the Project, in its approach and activities, dealt with the basic components of environment, and also helped support the requirements for and means of preserving it. In addition, other activities, such as diversifying rural production, which takes into account environmental considerations, and developing local capabilities, mobilizing the available capacities, implementing programmes for eradicating illiteracy, and promoting the status of women and expanding women's participation are basic ways of decreasing pressure on natural resources and putting an end to environmental degradation.

With regard to purely environmental considerations, there are a large number of branch projects and qualitative contributions that fall within the Project activities and the method of implementing the work plan. Improving irrigation systems, conducting soil testing to identify the ideal soil types for more productive farming, rationalizing the use of insecticides and fertilizers, and providing training and extension to the farmers, etc., are all actions related to stopping soil degradation and the depletion of agricultural land and conserving the water supply, which are basic environmental components. In addition, training and extension activities on public health and personal hygiene, and on ensuring the prerequisites of disease-prevention and inoculation, as well as working to provide potable water installations and other infrastructure projects, are important factors in environmental safety. Likewise, programmes of reproductive health and maternal and child health, and the fundamentals for treating and preventing endemic diseases, were among the concerns of training activities. Besides this, the Project motivated the local community to take the initiative in public clean-up campaigns, which would help maintain environmental safety. Continuing on in the same vein,

environmental considerations, whether these were purely or incidentally related to the environment, were a feature of the procedures of the revolving loan fund, which adopted the principle of granting loans only to those projects that do not clash with environmental considerations.

Therefore, the evaluation mission recognizes the worthwhile contribution of the Project in dealing with environmental issues, especially in regard to what it adopted in terms of training and extension activities. The mission also notes its appreciation in regard to the environmental considerations of the practical achievements in vital areas related to the future work of the local development projects and in expanding the scope of the work of the project being evaluating here. On this basis, the mission thanks the technical staff for its initiative in implementing the mission's recommendation in the previous evaluation report to prepare a comprehensive field study on the environmental situation at the Project site, especially since the Project was testing out in its day-to-day dealings practical measures aimed at guiding social behaviour—whether in particular sectors or in branch projects—towards giving due respect to environmental considerations.

## **8. Cultural and social considerations**

The principle of grass-roots participation adopted by the Project in its evaluation stemmed from social and cultural considerations, since this principle enlists human capabilities and develops cooperation and self-reliance. The application of this principle in the Project for Local Community Development included action in various human activities, including cultural and social aspects. This development aimed at improving the standard of living and providing an opportunity for accelerated growth. It became clear as a result of carrying out the Project that improving the living standard in the local community was a basic aim, a common denominator in a number of the Project's objectives and activities in utilizing capabilities, employing the available resources and developing supplementary social factors. The Project dealt with grass-roots participation as a basis for spurring growth and as a source of equitability in distributing the returns on the Project. The Project's concerns included achieving the continuity of the developmental effort through consistent action to create fully trained qualifications and encouraging abilities in administration, as well as dealing with public and local institutions to employ the available resources in the best way.

In relation to the general developmental objective of the Project document which dealt with "identify[ing] obstacles and factors contributing to the success of rural development . . .", it has become apparent that the returns of the experiments which relied on economic growth in rural areas did not result in a fair distribution of the outcomes of this growth, not to mention the setbacks of economic development, especially in rural areas where centres to attract investment are rare. This type of economic growth, which depends on the marginal returns on investment, was reflected in various social aspects, including education, medical care, housing, services, etc., making the development of such aspects unrelated in practical terms to the needs of most of the segments of the local community, which has seen broad segments of its population succumb to poverty and marginalization. In other words, the weakness in caring for human resources is one of the basic obstacles to economic growth programmes (in the traditional sense of development). Thus, in order to treat this problem, we must concentrate on social and cultural considerations and link these with material and technical aspects within a framework which encourages self-management in participating and making the cultural values bear fruit, to achieve a balanced approach between social and economic objectives and thus build foundations of harmony among the various segments of the local community.

Achieving grass-roots participation, which is simultaneously an objective and a means, implies caring for human resources. This attitude resulted in addressing the various characteristics of social groups at the Project site, including the particularities of the status of rural women. It also resulted in dealing at various levels with patterns of social behaviour and prevailing traditions and cultural values, aiming at strengthening

the positive aspects, for example, strong social links, family support, productive labour, public health, etc., and renouncing the prevailing negative aspects, for example, excessive reliance on others, fatalistic belief in the individual's powerlessness against destiny, and bias towards and discrimination against certain groups of people (especially concerning women and the disadvantaged segments of society), etc. The intermediation of the Project in dealing with the development of human resources also resulted in a growing understanding over time of the reality with regard to the divisions within the local community and the problems of uneven distribution of wealth, unemployment, illiteracy, poor social services, etc. These are all basic elements in social change, which the Project's activities dealt with, achieving positive results, as has been made clear in the report.

Thus the evaluation mission emphasizes the effectiveness of the results achieved in implementing the Project, whose activities took into account social and cultural considerations. It also emphasizes the keenness of the local and governmental bodies to carry on the efforts to deepen the results and to support the components of its continuity throughout the period of the Project's expansion or replication. In this context, the mission, in looking at the results of the field survey of the Project site, noticed that there was a percentage of educated groups, including university-level education, present at the Project site. In spite of the low percentage and its conditional presence in some cases, it was considered an important foundation both on a local level, at the Project site, and on the level of transferring the Project's experiment to a broader scope, because of the social and cultural status of this group. This also applies to the youth in general, as was mentioned before, in dealing with the issues related to them and in arranging cooperation with organizations and bodies that are involved in such issues, similar to what was carried out by the Project with regard to advancing women's status and with regard to providing an incentive for establishing the social and cultural centre. In the view of the evaluation mission, the trend of working with university students and youth is now implementable and guaranteed after firmly consolidating the Project's experiment locally and coming into possession of practical and theoretical factors, without the prevalent notion of discrimination based on group membership, which may have resulted had such an approach been adopted at the beginning of the Project's implementation.

However, transferring the concern of the Project to the previously-mentioned level was not feasible in view of the scanty resources available and the fact that allocations had already been set. In spite of the disparities in the kinds of support related to social and cultural considerations, the costs, and the economically unmeasurable outcomes, nevertheless the Project's initiation in defining starting points according to the local community's needs and priorities resulted in the participation of this community in underwriting the costs, thus establishing a model of achieving high pay-offs with low costs. What has been achieved in establishing a social centre for training and meetings in Izbet is an experiment in keeping costs down by distributing the burdens among various parties, including the local community, which also supervises the work of the centre and maintains it.

## **9. Final observations**

The evaluation mission made a number of observations concerning the implementation of the final phase of the Project. A basic factor in the success of the implementation was represented by the numerous levels and various aspects of the governmental participation. In spite of the efficiency in employing material and technical resources, the modest international intermediation which was provided by the Project would not have been able to succeed in the diverse aims of the Project in such a short time and to be able to create the self-incentives to develop these aims without the technical help and administrative facilitation of the participating governmental bodies during the administration of the Project. The evaluation mission observed also the deep concern represented in the Government's support, moral and financial, throughout its relevant administrative hierarchy, from the national to the local levels. The various patterns of governmental support implied that the orientations and approach of the Project were listed within the priorities of the national-level

programmes and strategies for local development. The evaluation mission would also like to add in this context that all the cooperation and coordination between the Project and the governmental bodies, as well as in the relations among the various parties and components of the Project, played a prominent role in the successful implementation of the Project. The following are the most important observations and were classified into general observations and other observations.

### 9.1 General observations

(a) The Project approach concentrated on the various segments of the local community with its main investment focused on motivating the participation of these segments, developing their skills and providing them with equal opportunities. Once the intermediation provided by the Project comes to an end, then the continuation of this approach will be required for various fields—social, cultural, environmental and institutional. The evaluation mission believes that these factors fall within the framework of intensified human development, which has become closely linked with the priorities and the programmes of the Government in the various fields of development. Therefore, the mission recommends providing the additional resources (through the concerned ministries and ORDEV) to consolidate the factors necessary for the continuation of the Project and for enlarging its scope to cover the basic fields mentioned above, especially as concerns the possibility of their continuing to focus on local community development. The continuation of consciousness-raising, extension and training activities, for example, is linked with providing the various components of infrastructure. Likewise, health awareness will not continue with the positive results realized so far unless it is coupled with providing potable water and a health-services centre, neither of which will continue in the future with the same positive outputs, without the existence of public sewerage. This is true despite the fact that such awareness creates incentives and pressures to establish the required infrastructure as a result of mobilizing local capabilities and ensuring self-reliance in coordinating and obtaining the required resources.

(b) The mission observes in accordance with what has been stated in the present report, that the Project has achieved considerable success in the implementation of its activities and in attaining its objectives. In regard to the sustainability of the Project's developmental approach, the mission believes that the Project has succeeded in bringing to light the characteristics of the targeted segments of the local community, identifying the activities appropriate for meeting their basic needs and implementing most of these activities. In addition, the Project revealed the facts of the social and economic realities and ways of dealing with these to reach definite answers, in the light of the field experiment, on how to organize grass-roots participation and mobilize resources within a network of various relations and different procedures. Since the international mediation (the technical staff) played an important role in organizing the mechanism of these relations and the various procedures in regard to the previously mentioned facilities and assistance, the mission therefore urges the governmental bodies to continue the effort to stabilize the local counterpart which will take up the basic responsibility for the continuation of the Project's approach, for enlarging the scope of its experiment and for maintaining the benefits achieved. At the same time, the mission emphasizes that the organizational framework for the work of the local counterpart (the Local Developmental Association) is the best form of cooperation and mutual interaction between the local community and the official bodies.

(c) The features of the local counterpart emerged as the Project developed, as did the noticeable effect of its role in spreading awareness of the Project approach, mobilizing capabilities and voluntary work, solving problems arising from the differences in priorities in spending and other matters, identifying the needs and ways of meeting these needs, etc. These features were not limited to the local counterpart at the site itself, but extended to the government counterpart (at various levels). This matter created some problems which the evaluation mission considers necessary to mention, among them the following:

- (i) Motivating the local community to express itself and present its needs and ways of fulfilling such needs did not happen spontaneously or by accident, especially considering that the community had become accustomed to relying on the official bodies to identify and fulfil its needs. On the other hand, the representatives of the official bodies tended to take a paternalistic attitude and did not really engage in dialogue with the local community. The members of the Project's technical staff played a prominent role in this regard, and the benefits they achieved need to be consolidated by working with the cooperating bodies implementing the Project, which means that the contracts of the technical staff need to be extended to include the expansion or replication phases of the Project.
- (ii) In accordance with the Project approach, the achievement of the participation of the forces active in the local community means in practical terms that needs must be defined locally and that the responsibilities for meeting them should be distributed among the various segments of the local community, including the official bodies. This matter will require that the parties to the dialogue be at approximately the same level, which gives a high importance to Project efforts to establish means and foundations for developing the local community's capabilities to express itself. The situation was due basically to the absence of NGOs at the Project site and to the weakness of the existing cooperatives and associations (owing to the problems which were mentioned earlier), meaning that the focus of the Project needs to be enlarged to include training these grass-roots organizations, which in turn would require that financial and technical support be provided in the future to the Project administration to enable it to meet this need.
- (iii) Despite the growing role of the Local Committee, reflected in its legal status and high-profile character, its leadership role and relation with the Steering Committee has nevertheless remained to some extent at the mercy of the administrative mediation of the technical staff and the executing agency of the Project. This issue goes to the heart of the legal and organizational framework for all the Project activities included in the grass-roots approach to local community development. The mission understands that the Project administration enlarged the Local Committee to be incorporated within the framework of the Local Developmental Association. However, the question remains: Does this local entity have the ability and the authority to manage a comprehensive developmental approach and to transform the present project into a true pioneering project? This also leads to another question: Would an integrated cooperation system cover all the concerns which would be posed by the future development of the Project? This is especially relevant considering that the local community has now become able and qualified to participate in the implementation and development of the cooperative organizations as being the framework to spur into action the local community and expand the participation of its various segments. The answer to this question, in the view of the evaluation mission, will become the necessary basis of the Project effort to formulate a general policy articulation of local community development as a realistic counterpart to central development policies, and the social and economic returns of such policies will ensure that the worsening situation of rural areas in terms of poverty, unemployment and alienation will be addressed. Before discussing the implications of the following observation for policy issues, the mission observes that the period of project implementation, as well as its resources and limited scope, are inadequate to settle such issues, and consequently it recommends ensuring the resources needed to enlarge the scope of the project, in order to provide all the prerequisites for dealing with these vital issues.



(d) In reviewing policy design, or rather the Project's efforts to create the most important axes on which the policies for local community development in the rural areas depend, the previous stage of project implementation provided a means of understanding the governmental coordination mechanism and of following up on its authority in the management of local development policies at the national level. ORDEV was the practical framework for the mechanism controlling the coordination of local development efforts in an integrated fashion, just as Shurouq was the source of local development policy. The greatest challenge before the coordination mechanism and the effectiveness of the National Programme is dependent on the dynamism of the local links (committees, local leadership, centres of power) on which rests the main burden in a developmental approach that utilizes a grass-roots base as a starting point for reaching the national level. At some point, then, the project will have to discuss, for the second time, the issue of how to mediate successfully in ensuring the foundation of grass-roots participation in order to identify needs and plan how to meet them, and this demonstrates the practical advantage for local development of the decentralization of administrative decisions.

General issues such as these are seen by the evaluation mission as being important to be followed up on by the Project administration in the future in order to establish the principal axes of the local development policies in the rural areas and to contribute to the formulation of strategies and plans for this development at the national level. Although the Local Developmental Association falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Affairs, this should have no adverse impact on the Project administration in the future, since the Ministry of Social Affairs is represented in the National Programme and is part of its executive secretariat, besides the fact that the directorates concerned with local affairs belong administratively to the Governorate, which in its turn falls within the Ministry of Local Administration. In addition, the base for dissemination adopted by Shurouq in its dealing with NGOs is compatible with the Local Developmental Association representing the Project site. Furthermore, the framework of Shurouq deals with the small-scale residential areas or neighbourhoods comprising the Local Unit, and the Shurouq representatives have adopted this administrative level as the organizational context for training the local leadership which the Project has prepared for such tasks as these within the National Programme. Of course, ORDEV is ready to finance and support local development projects that the Local Developmental Association proposes if they meet conditions of feasibility and of catering to the general interest. One final observation in the area of policy design is related to the project that ORDEV has undertaken for setting up central markets to facilitate collective marketing for the Shurouq programme, or marketing local production in each of the governorates.

(e) In going back over the achievements realized by the Project, starting with its mobilizing of the resources and capabilities of the local community, its provision of a good deal of investment to promote grass-roots participation, and its dealing with some of the requirements of income-generation, on to the fruitful coordination of the efforts of the bodies involved in project implementation, and going further to its promising treatment of the obstacles to and the realities of local development, the evaluation mission believes that the Project was not merely an experiment, but that it came to possess the actual components of a pioneering development approach. This can be summarized in two points:

- (i) The achievement of these activities at the Project site implies that some of them should continue and be enlarged so as to derive more benefits from them. In addition, the achievements of some objectives created self-motives to deal with new objectives which would go to the core of local development, such as projects on infrastructure and social services which were not originally mentioned in the Project document as direct objectives.

- (ii) The Project developed a framework to consolidate the efforts, initiatives and contributions of the various bodies which sought through their programmes to work within the context of local development considerations, especially once the attractive cost-benefit ratio of this coordination mechanism became apparent.

Therefore, the mission recommends that the Project administration start benefiting from the resources which are going to be made available, as a starting point for consolidating the achievements of the Project locally and for enlarging the scope of its activity to include the neighbouring villages and settlements (the number of which would be determined later in the light of the available resources).

## **9.2 Other observations**

The observations detailed below are selected, in accordance with what the mission considers more important in various and diverse fields, and there is no direct link among them.

(a) With regard to grass-roots participation, despite the worthwhile achievements in this field as a result of implementing what was mentioned in the Project document regarding the central importance of the concept of participation, the evaluation mission nevertheless recognizes that some obstacles hindered the effective participation of various segments of the local community in designing and implementing the activities. In regard to income-generating projects, for example, the limited resources of the revolving loan fund remained an obstacle to these projects and kept them from reaching the point of economic feasibility. Likewise, the loan procedures set limitations on dealing with high-risk projects with uncertain profits. In addition, there was a great diversity in the projects, which were distributed among various segments; this was commensurate with the diversity of the Project's concerns and the diversity in the concerns and priorities of the various segments of the local community in regard to the inputs needed to improve income. Therefore, the Project administration, and at times the members of the technical staff, deliberately intervened to overcome these obstacles, thinking that their expertise would provide the means of reaching a solution. This kind of approach to solving problems, however, contradicts the main principle of grass-roots participation, which has been described by the Project as a bottom-up approach.

(b) In regard to women's participation, the Project yielded good results in terms of enhancing women's family role and developing their capabilities to participate in economic activity. However, the evaluation mission believes that women's participation in the proposed projects for income-generation was limited for the most part to activities with low economic returns (sewing, production of simple dairy products and so forth), some of which go into household consumption. It therefore is incumbent upon the Project administration to develop models of sectoral projects that women could benefit from directly, such as projects for carpet-making and more sophisticated areas of dairy production. In regard to women's participation in decision-making at the local level, the mission sees that there is a need to raise the percentage of women in the membership of the Local Developmental Association, in the light of the fact that women have now been trained in management and decision-making.

In the light of these two points, the evaluation mission stresses the great importance of supporting the revolving loan fund with financial resources and increasing its share of the total budget for the Project's expansion, in order to maximize the benefit of the fund and to expand it further to reach greater numbers of trainees in whom the Project invested great efforts to qualify, especially as this relates to women. ORDEV is prepared to support the revolving fund via loan requests made by the Local Developmental Association if they have economic and social feasibility.

(c) With regard to the revolving loan fund, and in addition to what was mentioned earlier in this regard, as well as what was mentioned in the discussion of the income-generating plan, the extension of loan facilities made it possible for 60 projects (job opportunities) to be started up and enabled the evaluation mission to examine the various fields for which the loans were used. The mission's observations were limited to the following: The subjugation of the general policy of the revolving loan fund to the Project's approach to grass-roots participation was inevitable considering the official loan regulations governing the administrative procedures (that is, from the central level to the local level). This is why it was proposed by the previous evaluation mission to put the revolving fund under the appropriate official aegis, which in this case was the Local Development Fund, after adjusting certain procedures having to do with the role of the Local Committee at the level of the Project site. In the future the Project administration will have to shoulder responsibility for the technical and administrative follow-up on the activity or project of the loan recipient and for studying the suitability of the produced commodities and services for the needs of the local markets in the light of the new developments in liberating the market and encouraging the private sector. In addition, the follow-up on the mechanism for implementing loans, which will become more systematic over the course of field implementation, will put a burden on the Project administration to modify the proposed inputs for this mechanism and develop their relations in a simplified pattern to ensure a balance between the economic aspects and the social aspects (improvement of income levels along with enhancing the standard of living).

(d) In regard to the activities for improving income levels in order to provide the prerequisites that could deal with the problems of poverty and unemployment, these prerequisites were distributed in accordance with what is considered a preliminary way to handle poverty and unemployment. The mobilization of human resources and the development of knowledge, capabilities and skills locally available were practical ways of dealing with poverty and low levels of income. Likewise, the expansion of the production base, the diversification of production resources, the increase in the productivity of existing activities, and the development of income-generating activities and supporting these with credit and extension services, among other things, give productive labour a chance to rise above subsistence level. This is not to mention the indirect impact of the Project in dealing with the causes and the results of these problems, for example, in various activities having to do with agricultural technologies, the factors of population growth, the status of women, illiteracy, etc. Despite the long-term nature of such inputs, their impact on the phenomena of poverty and unemployment has already started to materialize in some positive changes.

(e) Finally, the mission recognizes that the Project, in the field of communications and information exchange, provided a body of literature following up on the implementation process and developed a network of relationships and contacts to transfer information and exchange knowledge and expertise, going on further to the various media fields. In this regard the evaluation mission believes that the future enlargement of the Project scope should be coupled with launching a media campaign (a symposium or meeting of experts or national conference) in which personnel in the broadcast and print media would take part; such projects, since they depend on mobilizing local resources and encouraging initiatives for self-reliance, involve looking for suitable roles for the various concerned parties within the widest possible resource base.

Regarding the same issue, the mission recognizes that the Project has provided a site at the grass-roots level for consolidating international cooperation and testing out its benefit in a direct fashion, while the Project administration was able to provide the link among the concerned parties on both the national and international levels (the organizations participating in implementation). The mission noted also the extent of the difficulties that the Project encountered as it strove to transform the thinking of the members of the rural community into a language that could be understood by the international organizations and cooperative and funding bodies. This means that the intermediation in implementing field projects with a basic approach to development (that is, grass-roots participation) depends on the extent to which two parties can

communicate and requires that the international organizations adjust their thinking and their technical and administrative procedures. It is too early to pinpoint the most suitable field projects for local communities and funding bodies and international cooperation organizations, and the same can be said about the best policies for activating local development and improving how it is managed. Therefore, this Project provided a model of a pioneering experiment which could be replicated on a smaller or a larger scale, depending on the resources and support available. Finally, the mission concludes that such projects need at least a five-year time-frame to fulfil the requirements needed to respond to the pending questions which were raised by this report.