



Egypt

New Communities Complete 2nd Round of Water Sector Analysis

Around mid 2006, the EMPOWERS team in Egypt started working with members from three new local communities on plans for improving water governance in accordance to EMPOWERS approach. As in the first group of communities, the villages of Bahsamon, Mamaleek and Manial Hani (also in Beni Suef governorate) were chosen according to a criterion by which a target community should:

- have a local community development association;
- be facing irrigation and drinking water problems;
- have a significant population that has experienced previous initiatives to address water problems.
- belong to a village board different from those of the other target villages.

Recently, participants from these new communities have completed analyzing the water sector components affecting their current water situation and possible rectifications of drawbacks.

For instance, the Bhasamon local stakeholders, mostly farmers, collaborated with government officials in analyzing the irrigation challenges within their village. They did that with ardency that reflected their need and hope to identify appropriate solutions to acute hardships they meet in irrigating their lands.

On the other side of the table, officials did not conceal their amazement over two things:

- villagers' ability to illustrate the elements of a difficult irrigational situation of which they (officials) had no clue.
- community's potential to assume a leading role in addressing their problems, making use of EMPOWERS approaches and tools.

Such an impression by the officials made it inevitable for them to welcome an enhanced degree of cooperation with the local stakeholders and to exert additional efforts for empowering the most marginalized groups amongst them.

A similar process took place in the other two villages, Mamaleek and Manial Hani, when the citizens analyzed the drinking water sector, in collaboration with representatives from the local unit, environment unit and



potable water company. Dialogue among those different stakeholders led to the identification of interventions that may help in providing better water services. A very early fruit of this dialogue and concerted action was a promise by the local unit to provide facilities along the main roads of the two villages with water pipes.

In brief..

- Officials from CARE Atlanta (USA) visited three EMPOWERS communities in August 2006 to learn about the project's activities

and local women's participation.

- Also in August, EMPOWERS organized a workshop on gender for its local stakeholders; training was conducted by Dr. Rhodante Ahlers from UNESCO-IHE.
- Families with access to safe drinking water in Beni Suef governorate is 74.7% of the total population; EMPOWERS, in cooperation with stakeholders, seeks to increase this percentage.

More news on EMPOWERS activities in Egypt can be found at: <http://www.empowers.info/page/1228>

EMPOWERS Impact on Masharqa

Masharqa is one of the first group of target communities in EMPOWERS.

Masharqa, that is 25 kilometers away from Beni Suef city has an area of 965 feddans, inhabited by 4500 citizens.

Throughout the past two years, this village has displayed an increasingly high level of adherence to EMPOWERS methodologies and involvement in its activities.

It is a wide range of newly developed capacities that exemplifies the behavioural and functional changes taking place in the village.

The first pilot project implemented in Masharqa was operating a tractor pulling a sewage tank. Being an outcome of the local stakeholders' efforts in data collection and analysis followed by integrated planning, the project helped alleviate a health problem by regularly transferring domestic cesspits contents away from houses and water resources.

Another empowerment benefit was displayed when the Masharqa women group that had been formed in the second stage extended its activities as to include non-EMPOWERS activities. One of these was delivering bread to houses in return for a monthly fee. The group members invested their access to households in creating public awareness about bird flu.

Other Masharqa citizens have started developing a website to help raise funds for proposed projects in the village.

See: www.empowers.info/page/2309