

**Middle East and Maghreb
Region**

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PRESSURE ON CIVIL SOCIETY

Middle East and Maghreb Regional Strategic Portfolio Management Progress Report 2007

At the end of the year, Oxfam Novib was supporting fifteen partner organisations as part of the regional cluster: seven in Egypt, six in Morocco and two in Lebanon. Oxfam Novib has an ongoing loan to a micro finance institution in Morocco. Possibilities to further expand our investments in micro finance in the region have not yet materialised. However, we have identified a new partner organisation that supports capacity building of micro finance institutions on social performance management in the region. This new partnership will start in 2008.

Sustainable livelihoods

With partner organisations in Egypt, Oxfam Novib started to work on improving the livelihoods of small farmers and landless peasants in the countryside. Farmers are switching to organic fertilizer and are organising themselves in order to strengthen their position in spite of their small plots of lands. Also in Morocco Oxfam Novib started its strategy, which includes income-generating programmes for women, workers' rights and advocacy on free trade agreements. Egyptian workers held unprecedented protests in 2006 and 2007, including in their demands the right to independent labour unions. Oxfam Novib labour rights partner organisations have trained and supported workers leaders and union members over the past years on labour rights issues. In the government's reaction to the strikes, the Centre for Trade Union and Workers' Services (CTUWS) came under increased pressure. The CTUWS offices have been closed by the government for more than a year by now.

Basic social services

Within the MME regional cluster, Oxfam Novib supports one regional innovation fund partner, the Ecumenical Popular Education Program (EPEP), which develops methodologies for literacy training and provides training to numerous local organisations in Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon and Sudan. EPEP's human and women's rights perspective in its pedagogical approach for attaining literacy, matches well with addressing sexual and reproductive health issues. With technical support of Oxfam Novib and Youth Incentives, we started a trajectory to include culturally sensitive education on sexual and reproductive health rights, including HIV/Aids in the curriculum.

Social and political participation

Oxfam Novib human rights partner organisations face difficult circumstances in challenging the human rights situation in their countries. Despite this difficult environment, Oxfam Novib's human rights partner organisations in Morocco and Egypt including the Association Marocaine des Droits Humains (AMDH) in Morocco, continue to defend cases related to freedom of speech, torture, freedom of association and civil and political rights. They assist people who otherwise might not have the opportunity to have legal aid or counsel. AMDH in Morocco organises regular

demonstrations and sit-ins on issues such as reform of the Moroccan constitution or opposing torture. These sit-ins are not without risks: a sit-in on 23 September against the increasingly high cost of living, in Sefrou, ended in a confrontation with the police, and among the 47 detainees, three were members of the human rights organisation. Their trial is pending. An earlier grant to the Egyptian human rights organisation Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) resulted in a report on Egyptian state interference with religious freedom. The report was a co-production of EIPR and Human Rights Watch and received international attention. In the beginning of 2008, Egypt took some small steps towards more religious freedom, such as the court ruling that Bahais are officially allowed to leave the space for 'religion' on their ID-cards blank, in stead of being forced to choose between Muslim, Christian or Jewish.

During the 2007 Moroccan parliamentary elections, Oxfam Novib co-financed election monitoring by a coalition of local civil society organisations: Collectif Associatif pour l'Observation des Elections. This initiative, also funded by the European Commission, gave a role to 3,000 trained local observers in monitoring the three stages of the elections: the campaigns, the casting of votes and the results. The Collectif documented various violations of election procedures, such as voting without an ID or voter card. In response to the low turn out, the Collectif called for a constitutional democratic reform aiming at the separation of powers. Moroccan civil society, including Oxfam International partner organisations, formed a coalition protesting against the high cost of living. The new government decided to abandon the planned price rise and to continue the subsidy on the price of fuel.

Gender and diversity

Oxfam International's women's rights partner organisations in the region Association Marocaine pour la Lutte contre la Violence à l'égard des Femmes, (AMLVF) in Morocco, New Women Foundation (NWF) the Centre for Egyptian Women Legal Assistance (CEWLA) and the women's program of Better Life Association for Comprehensive Develepment (BLACD) in Egypt and Rassemblement Democratique des Femmes Libanaises (RDFL) offer a combination of strategies. At the community level, they provide services that are empowering for women ranging from literacy training to legal aid to providing identity cards and awareness training on women's rights among men and women. They offer counselling services to women facing violence and work with communities to raise awareness on domestic violence.

Conducting national campaigns on specific issues is becoming increasingly important in the strategies of partner organisations.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

SPM code	Expected result by the end of 2010	Results so far
MEM RES 1.1-1	By 2010, 10,000 small and landless farmers in rural Egypt will have increased income through claiming their rights over productive resources (land, water), training for better quality products and improved access to local and regional markets.	<p>A study on living and working conditions of small farmers and landless peasants in three communities in Minya indicated that scarcity of land, insufficient access to irrigation and the rising prices of farming inputs (seeds, fertilizers and pesticides) are direct obstacles to the ability of men and women working in agriculture to maintain a humane level of existence. A planned intervention for small and landless farmers is designed on the basis of these results.</p> <p>In Egypt, 767 female farmers have been trained in organic composting of household and animal waste, a first group of 48 (total planned is 1,600) small farmers shifted from chemical to organic fertilizer. Seven communities elected farmers' organizations (total of 47 members, of which seven are women). These farmers' organisations facilitated cooperation between small farmers and the private sector in planting crops of interest for the export market.</p>
MEM RES 1.1-2	About 800,000 rural and urban poor (of whom 70% women and 40% youth (below 35) in Morocco and Egypt have increased and secured income as a result of access to MFI services.	In Morocco, FONDEP supported 85,000 people with micro credit services, of which 70% are women. 30% of the loans were disbursed in rural areas.
MEM RES 1.2-1	By 2010, 5,000 Moroccan and Egyptian workers in the public, private and informal sector and 2000 Egyptian agricultural workers will be better equipped to collectively bargain for their rights because of more effective democratic representative bodies, increased rights awareness, national labour rights legislation in line with ILO standards, effective judicial bodies and precedent-setting court cases, impacting potentially the lives of hundreds of thousands of workers.	<p>As a result of capacity building work, quarry workers in Minya now have their own organisation, Wadi El Nil Association that raises awareness on labour rights and labour unions. In the summer, for the first time in history quarry workers claimed their rights collectively by organising a protest demanding better working hours and wages.</p> <p>20,300 Egyptian workers in textile, food processing and other industries were actively supported by Oxfam Novib partner organisation in their protest campaigns demanding their legal rights. Support to four workers campaigns led to focused and well formulated demands, media coverage, forming of trade union committees, solidarity actions and liaising with members of</p>

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		parliament. In all four campaigns, most or all demands were met.
MEM RES 1.2-2	Labour rights organisations will have reached at least 50% of the female labour force in the specific sectors they are targeting.	The development of an OI campaign strategy in Morocco, with special focus on female workers' rights, is underway. In Egypt, Oxfam Novib labour rights and women's rights partner organisations are studying how to effectively join forces, especially in relation to women workers in the informal sector.
MEM RES 1.2-3	Policy and practice change: Dutch companies with trade investments in Egypt and Morocco are aware of CSR standards, two of them have adapted their policies according to the principles of responsible chain management.	With a partner from the Dutch corporate sector Oxfam Novib works on a CSR project with the aim of improving labour rights standards in the supply chain of Egyptian fruit and vegetable exporters. A first step was a report about CSR practices and aspirations among Dutch importers of Egyptian fruits and vegetables.
MEM RES 1.2-4	These partner organisations will have given legal assistance to their employees (at least one fifth women) and filed cases	Oxfam Novib partner organisation trained workers preparing them for the trade union elections and gave legal assistance to candidates who were excluded from the elections or whose rights were in other ways violated. In total the centre filed 142 lawsuits in relation to the trade union elections.
Unexpected results aim 2	Innovation fund	A core group of people representing the different national committees of the regionally operating literacy training organization EPEP has knowledge and understanding of promoting education on sexual and reproductive health rights and HIV/Aids prevention from a gender perspective and prepares a trajectory to introduce these concepts effectively in EPEP's own curriculum.
Unexpected result Aim 2		2,992 young people in the south of Morocco are knowledgeable about HIV/Aids prevention
MEM RES 4.1-1	By 2010, 3,000 Egyptians and Moroccans, especially young people, women, people who are active in associations and people whose rights were violated by state authorities, have greater awareness of their human rights, hold their governments accountable when their rights are violated and engage with their governments at local and national level.	A campaign with the slogan 'Street Children - the responsibility of society, not the police?', supported by 45 organizations from different areas of work led to media attention for the plight of street children and the preparation of new legislation, incorporating the demands made by the group. Oxfam Novib partner organisation facilitated the launch of the campaign, initiated by ten CSOs, working together in a local network.

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		<p>The economic, social and cultural rights department of Oxfam Novib's human rights partner organisation in Morocco participated in coalitions against increase in the daily cost of living, including electricity and water. Possibly in response to the protests, the government decided not to increase prices and keep the subsidy for fuel.</p> <p>Members of two local councils in Minya (Egypt) have increased knowledge on human rights, good governance, media, political participation of women, local councils legislation and available government resources. As a result, councils had meetings with government officials and demanded attention for communities' access to water, sanitation and education and discussed local budgets. A first meeting between the local council of Bani Khalid and the governorate secretary general on issues of village land ownership and use indicates that the governorate increasingly recognises the council as being the representative of the interests of local communities in the villages.</p> <p>Oxfam Novib human rights partner organisation in Egypt filed lawsuits and appeals in numerous cases of violation of basic rights of people who otherwise might not be able to find and afford legal aid and representation, such as the right to freedom of association, freedom of expression, minority rights and freedom of belief, right to a fair trial and family law. In the case of court judgments, 83% of the verdicts were in the client's favour.</p> <p>In cooperation with HRW, a local human rights organization in Egypt researched and published an official report on religious freedom, indicating that any Egyptian civilian who does not want to be registered as either Muslim, Christian or Jewish, can not obtain an ID, depriving him/her of civic and political rights which conflicts with Egypt's constitutional freedom of religion and belief. The report receives international coverage.</p> <p>A coalition formed by a number of Egyptian partner organisations and allies succeeded in postponing legislation on health insurance. Members of the coalition co-ordinate their advocacy work with Oxfam International</p>

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		in order to plan lobby actions toward the EU.
MEM RES 4.1- 2	Torture as a method to obtain confessions will no longer be systematically applied in Egyptian prisons and police stations.	Oxfam Novib human rights partner organisation in Egypt gave legal representation in 17 cases related to torture, detention and ill-treatment.
MEM RES 4.1- 3	Women and youth will participate and gain an increasing number of seats in local and national elections.	Although not (yet) members of local councils, women in two communities in Minya are invited to share in council meetings.
MEM RES 4.1- 4	The Moroccan constitution includes a reference to respect for international human rights standards.	<p>Together with a coalition of organizations, Oxfam Novib partner organisation issued an annual report about the status of human rights in Morocco, advocating for constitutional reform.</p> <p>In Morocco, the <i>Instance Équité et Réconciliation</i> (IER), established by King Mohammad VI to investigate human rights violations crimes committed under the reign of Hassan II, recommended in its final report constitutional reform and integration of international human rights treaties in Moroccan national law. AMDH representatives were consulted several times by members of the IER and lobbied for these recommendations.</p> <p>1,500 youth members of Oxfam Novib human rights partner organisation organised activities in their high schools and universities to raise awareness on human rights</p>
MEM RES 4.1- 5	Policy and practice of Moroccan state authorities reflects respect for freedom of association.	An Oxfam Novib partner organisation's study gives an overview of the different ways in which the current law of association hampers the freedom of association.
MEM RES 5.1- 1	By 2010, 15,000 women and girls in Morocco, Egypt and Lebanon enjoy better protection from discrimination and violence in societies that increasingly perceive gender-based violence as a public concern and allow women to claim rights that are legally ensured as a result of active lobbying and awareness raising of women's organisations, impacting potentially hundreds of thousands of women in these societies.	<p>1,862 women and 8 men in Morocco, Egypt and Lebanon facing domestic violence made use of the services of listening centres to find solutions to their cases.</p> <p>More than 3,500 women and at least 150 men in Egypt and Lebanon participated in meetings and seminars about rights of women, equal gender relations and domestic violence solutions.</p> <p>Over 7,500 persons were directly reached by the activities of our partner organisations.</p>

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MEM RES 5.1-2	National legislation in Morocco, Egypt and Lebanon is further in line with CEDAW provisions, especially in giving legal protection to women and girls against gender-based violence and in reforming family law.	Oxfam Novib partner organisation organised various activities (conferences) about women's rights, violence against women; Family Law; and advocacy work about the lifting of CEDAW reservations Oxfam Novib women's rights partner organisation in Morocco made a monitoring study on the application of the reformed Family Law.
MEM RES 5.1-3	Education programmes for judges and police in Morocco include modules on the new family law. The number of cases with judges applying the new family law provisions increases.	Oxfam Novib Moroccan women's rights partner organisation prepared a manual to be used by the police force about the police's role in protecting women against violence.
MEM RES 5.1-4	Women's rights are strongly advocated for and integrated in the work of a number of human rights and labour organisations	Discussions with partner organisation are underway, but no results yet at the level of programmes.
MEM RES 5.1-5	Projects in Morocco and the occupied Palestinian Territories will have sensitised the population and thousand officials at the police, the judiciary and health care of violations of womens' rights.	No results reported yet.
MEM RES 5.1-6	There will be special desks in courts and police stations where it will be possible to report violence against women..	No results reported yet.
Unexpected results Aim 5		As a member in the coalition of NGOs in Minya advocating for the MDGs (lead by UNDP), Oxfam Novib partner organisation participated in November in a march for women's empowerment. A number of community women, participated in the celebrations.

Colophon

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