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# Feinstein International Center

Strengthening the humanity and dignity of people in crisis through knowledge and practice



## Refugee Livelihoods in Urban Areas: Identifying Program Opportunities

*Case study Egypt*



**Tufts**  
UNIVERSITY

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# Table of Contents

<b>Key Findings</b> . . . . .	<b>.2</b>
<b>The livelihoods context for refugees in Egypt</b> . . . . .	<b>.4</b>
<i>Map of districts where refugees live in Cairo.</i> . . . . .	.5
<i>Legal framework for refugees in Egypt.</i> . . . . .	6
Non-refugee Organizations in Egypt with potential livelihood programming . . . . .	.9
<b>Mapping and desk review</b> . . . . .	<b>.9</b>
<i>International organizations</i> . . . . .	10
<i>Nongovernmental and community organizations</i> . . . . .	11
<i>Egyptian governmental bodies.</i> . . . . .	11
<i>Private sector.</i> . . . . .	11
<i>Microfinance programming in Egypt.</i> . . . . .	13
Organizations with refugee-specific programming . . . . .	14
<i>UNHCR and implementing partners.</i> . . . . .	14
Livelihood programs currently available for refugees. . . . .	16
Key conclusions of mapping exercise . . . . .	17
<i>Refugee interviews.</i> . . . . .	18
<i>Key Informant interviews</i> . . . . .	18
<i>Findings workshops</i> . . . . .	18
<b>Research methods for refugee and key informant interviews</b> . . . . .	<b>18</b>
Demographics and household composition . . . . .	20
Previous livelihood activities and skills . . . . .	20
<b>Findings from our refugee interviews.</b> . . . . .	<b>20</b>
Experience in Cairo. . . . .	21
<i>Local integration – relations with</i> . . . . .	21
<i>Egyptians.</i> . . . . .	21
<i>Impact of the Egyptian revolution</i> . . . . .	22
Living conditions and coping strategies . . . . .	24

<i>Housing and rent</i> . . . . .	24
<i>Health care</i> . . . . .	25
<i>Education</i> . . . . .	26
<i>Children's education</i> . . . . .	26
Work: Wage employment and self-employment . . . . .	28
<i>Wage employment</i> . . . . .	28
<i>Self-employment</i> . . . . .	29
<i>Women's experience</i> . . . . .	30
<i>The importance of documents in obtaining work</i> . . . . .	31
<i>Help finding work or starting business</i> . . . . .	31
Income and financial assistance . . . . .	32
<i>Assistance from refugee organizations</i> . . . . .	33
<i>Non-organizational assistance</i> . . . . .	34
Supporting livelihoods –Increasing access to assets . . . . .	35
<i>Caritas Vocational training</i> . . . . .	35
<i>Other training</i> . . . . .	36
<i>Skills and education</i> . . . . .	37
<i>Niche markets</i> . . . . .	38
<i>Community centers</i> . . . . .	38
Assessing their lives in Cairo and future migration plans . . . . .	39
<i>Migration plans</i> . . . . .	40
<b>Annexes</b> . . . . .	<b>42</b>
Annex 1: Activities in home country vs. current occupation . . . . .	42
Annex 2: Organizations providing programming . . . . .	44
Annex 3: Programming currently provided by organizations interviewed . . . . .	45
Annex 4: Egypt's governorates and population distribution and map . . . . .	47

*Despite a growing body of research about the livelihood problems of refugees in urban areas in countries of first asylum, there is little evidence about which humanitarian programs work, what livelihoods initiatives refugees undertake themselves, and where opportunities for programming interventions lie. This study addresses this knowledge gap by analyzing the urban livelihoods context for refugees and asylum seekers, and identifying programming opportunities and examples of promising program initiatives.*

*The study's key objective is to find ways to strengthen existing livelihoods and generate new ideas from related fields of inquiry, such as low-income urban development and youth employment, that could be adapted for refugees in countries of first asylum.*

*We selected three case studies -- Cairo, Tel Aviv and Quito, Ecuador -- because they represent contrasting refugee policy contexts and livelihoods experience, and offer lessons for other host settings.*

*We began with a review of existing livelihood programs in each country. This includes a mapping of commercial, humanitarian and governmental organizations that provide programming, advocacy or other resources that support the livelihoods of refugees, migrants and low-income nationals. In the second phase of the project, we interviewed refugees and key informants to deepen our understanding the livelihoods context in each country. After we had compiled our data, we conducted workshops to which all the refugee groups were invited, and an in-depth discussion of our findings was held. Our main program recommendations, based on all three cases, can be found here: [fic.tufts.edu](http://fic.tufts.edu)*

# Key Findings

- (1) In Egypt there is little effective livelihood support programming for refugees. Existing refugee programming provides some services, but lacks a coordinated strategy to build livelihoods or improve economic/financial security. Participants repeatedly mentioned their concerns about the quality of the services, and lack of access of refugees to services. These concerns included:
  - (a) Organizational problems, including limited capacity and funding, too little training and supervision, and “complex” relations between service providers and clients.
  - (b) Very few income generation activities that are part of programs.
  - (c) Lack of interagency collaboration and coordination among service providers. For example, there are a wide range of programs providing adult and children’s education, language training, and psychosocial services, but these are not coordinated.
  - (d) Limited consideration of programming needs as perceived by refugee populations, and which match the existing skills profile of the refugees. It would be useful to know the kinds of skills already present in the refugee population, that could be built into programs.
- (5) Networks are a strong and reliable source of assistance, especially in the form of shared dwellings and rent, and help in emergencies. However, each refugee community differs in terms of mutual trust and levels of suspicion. Amongst Somalis there is a high level of trust and mutual support, but this type of social capital is much weaker within the Iraqi and Ethiopian communities.
- (6) Many refugees are unable to use their skills and capacities developed both in their home countries and in Egypt. There is a lack of services and support that encourages entrepreneurship, capacity building, and job networking. Those who do establish businesses or are gainfully self-employed are the “risk takers” and could lose it all at any time.
- (7) There is a need for training and courses in areas such as business literacy (including budgeting, administration, and marketing) in order to support the establishment of small businesses. The existing vocational training program for refugees (run by Caritas) seldom leads to work, or job placement. There is both potential and demand for holistic livelihood programming that incorporates training, mentorship, job placement, market analysis and perhaps microfinance, all of which are linked together in a logical way.
- (8) Refugees rely on sources of income that vary among different communities. Iraqis often had multiple sources of income, including remittances. Ethiopians tended to have fewer sources of income. Participants without income are assisted by their communities, but this assistance is not stable or constant and community assistance is vital, but not sustainable.
- (9) The January 2011 revolution in Egypt created a heightened sense of fear, uncertainty and insecurity amongst refugees, with livelihoods consequences. Increased insecurity on the streets, including harassment

of women, has limited refugees' willingness to move around in search of work. Tensions with the Egyptian population also affect livelihood strategies.

- (10) Gender roles and relations differ across refugee communities, but all communities experience unequal employment and work opportunities, particularly for single mothers, and youth. This needs to be approached strategically by programming.
- (11) Each refugee community is diverse in terms of education and skill levels. Each community has people who are illiterate, those with advanced education and skills, and all levels in between. The Iraqis tend to have more educated people and the Somalis less, but there is a wide range within all groups.

# The livelihoods context for refugees in Egypt

Roughly 43% of Egypt's estimated population of 78-81 million people<sup>[1]</sup> live in urban areas, and in Cairo, eight million people live in slums.<sup>[2][3]</sup> Like most cities, the low-income areas of Cairo include a large migrant population of many nationalities, each of which includes both refugees and other kinds of migrants. For example, both the Sudanese and Eritrean population in Cairo comprise recent refugee arrivals and an older, more integrated population that has lived in Cairo for decades. Many of these long stayers came to Egypt as migrants rather than refugees, and their experience is very different from that of the new arrivals.<sup>[4]</sup>

The actual number of people living in Cairo who fled conflict and persecution is not known, but is probably larger than the official number of refugees. As of July 2012, UNHCR had registered 44,670 asylum seekers and refugees in Egypt, most living in Cairo. The breakdown by nationality is shown in Table 1:<sup>[5]</sup>

**Table 1:** Nationality of asylum seekers and refugees in Egypt

Nationality	Number	%
Sudan	22,645	51%
Iraq	7,078	16%
Somalia	7,473	17%
Eritrea	2,181	4%
Ethiopia	2,803	6%
Other	2,124	6%

Source: UNHCR Egypt, July 2012

The different refugee groups live mainly in the following districts, indicated on the map<sup>[6]</sup> below.

- Ain Shams (North East Cairo, Sudanese)
- Nasr City (East Cairo, Kilo Arba wa Nus – Sudanese, El Hay el Asher – Somali)
- Heliopolis, Abbassia, Sakakini (Central North Cairo, mixed nationalities)
- Abdeen (Old Cairo downtown, Sudanese)
- Maadi Arab/Hadayek Maadi (South Cairo, mixed nationalities)
- Dokki, Ard el Lewa, Bulaq el Dakrur (West Cairo, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Sudanese)
- Sixth October City (West of Cairo, Iraqi)<sup>[7]</sup>

[1] CAPMAS website retrieved January 1, 2012 <http://www.capmas.gov.eg/?lang=2>

[2] Sabry, Sarah (2009). 'Poverty Lines in Greater Cairo: Underestimating and Misrepresenting Poverty'. Working Paper #21, International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

[3] Tomorrow's Crises Today: The Humanitarian Impact of Urbanization. 2007 report from IRIN, UNHABITAT.

[4] For more on the Sudanese in Cairo, see Karen Jacobsen, Maysa Ayoub & Alice Johnson, "Remittances to Transition Countries: The impact on Sudanese refugee livelihoods in Cairo," Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, The American University in Cairo. Working Paper No. 2/ July 2012

[5] UNCHR fact sheet, May 2012. According to IOM, as of July, 2011, 1,924 third country nationals that fled to Egypt during the Libyan uprising remain in Egypt and have claimed asylum. They are in a camp near Salloom on the Libya-Egypt border, where UNHCR provides medical care, shelter and food assistance until

their claims are assessed for resettlement to a third country. The Egyptian government has refused to allow them to enter Egypt.

[6] Map retrieved January 1, 2012 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Districts\\_of\\_Cairo\\_%28small,\\_English%29.PNG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Districts_of_Cairo_%28small,_English%29.PNG)

[7] Field data from Jacobsen, Ayoub et al 2012, (Sudanese Remittances study).

Some of these districts have mixed socio-economic strata (Dokki, Maadi), while other areas, such as Kilo Arba wa Nus, are entirely informal slum areas. In all areas poor Egyptians and refugees live in mixed communities; there are no refugee enclaves. Even neighborhoods with high refugee concentrations have a majority of poor Egyptians.

There are no solid income data for refugee groups in Egypt, but refugees are considered vulnerable by virtue of protection issues and the difficulties they have with pursuing sustainable livelihoods. Refugees in Egypt are in protracted situations, because those who remain there are unlikely to be resettled, and there is little prospect of voluntary repatriation. Small numbers

continue to return to Sudan, South Sudan and Iraq each month, and very small numbers are resettled. The only durable solution is some form of de facto local integration, although there is no official policy that supports this.

A further complication that has added to their difficulties was the 2011 revolution in Egypt and the ongoing uncertainties it has brought, both to Egyptians and to the refugee population. For refugees, 2011-12 has brought increased discrimination, racism and xenophobia on a daily basis. Egypt's economic crisis has meant that domestic workers are losing jobs or receiving smaller salaries, and the unemployed are struggling to cover their basic needs with little organizational support.

### *Map of districts where refugees live in Cairo*



## Legal framework for refugees in Egypt<sup>[8]</sup>

Egypt is party to both the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol as well as to the 1969 OAU (Organization of African Unity) Convention. Accordingly, people fleeing persecution who enter Egypt are entitled to asylum and protection on a temporary basis. Egypt does not have a policy of encampment and refugees settle among the local population. Apart from the creation of a refugee camp on the Libya border near Salloum, Egyptian asylum policy has not changed as a result of the Egyptian Revolution in January 2011.

As with many other host countries, the government sees the presence of refugees and asylum seekers as temporary, and even those with recognized refugee status are only guaranteed limited human rights protection. On acceding to the 1951 Convention, Egypt placed restrictions on five articles of the 1951 Convention: Articles 12(1), 20 and 22 (1) and 23 and 24. These concern personal status, rationing, access to primary education, access to public relief and assistance, and labor legislation and social security.<sup>[9]</sup> Refugees residing in Egypt are not able to acquire Egyptian nationality since citizenship is granted on the basis of descent (*ius sanguinis*).

[8] This section is taken largely from Jacobsen, Ayoub and Johnson 2012.

[9] See reservations to the 1951 Convention found at: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=3d9abe177&query=1951%20Refugee%20Convention>

While Egypt placed a reservation on the education article of the 1951 Convention, other conventions and bi-lateral agreements signed by Egypt give educational rights to refugees. Egypt has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which gives everyone under age 18 the right to free primary education regardless of nationality. Article 5 of Law 22 of 1992 states that any student funded by UNHCR (which is the case for many refugees in Egypt) is entitled to be enrolled in Egyptian schools.<sup>[10]</sup> In addition, bi-lateral agreements with countries like Libya, Sudan, and Jordan give children of these countries the right to be enrolled in Egyptian school regardless of their residency status. However, while refugee children are technically allowed to enroll in public schools, the overcrowding of schools and deteriorated educational infrastructure obstructs their access – as it does for local children.<sup>[11]</sup>

A similar argument can be made regarding refugee employment. Egypt did not place reservations on Articles 17 and 18 concerning wage-earning employment and self-employment, and Egyptian labor legislation that applies to non-nationals also applies to refugees.<sup>[12]</sup> Article 53 of the Egyptian constitution says foreigners who have been granted political asylum may be eligible for work permits. The problem is that,

[10] Interview with Mai Mahmoud, Assistant Protection Officer, UNHCR Cairo Office, June 14, 2012, 1 pm

[11] See Ensor, M. O. (2010). "Education and self-reliance in Egypt." *Forced Migration Review* 34: 25-26. Many refugee parents object to the Islamic curricula taught in Arabic in government schools. Unaccredited refugee schools, many of which offer classes in English, are the only realistic alternative for many refugee students in Egypt. Unable to obtain a recognized school certification, the majority of them are barred from pursuing a higher education

[12] Labor Law No. 12 of 2003

like all foreigners, refugees must go through the process of obtaining work permits. Getting a work permit is difficult. First, it is costly, and the foreigner must find an employer to sponsor him/her, including the payment of fees.<sup>[13]</sup> Getting a work permit also requires a valid residence permit, but the temporary residence permits provided to refugees by the Ministry of Interior are not clear about permission to work. Sudanese, who have special status in Egypt because of the Four Freedoms Agreement between Egypt and Sudan, do not need to get work permits before entering Egypt. The visa they obtain on arrival is a residency permit that allows them to apply for a work permit. All applicants must also prove that they are uniquely qualified, i.e., their work cannot be performed by a local. The latter condition is particularly challenging for most refugees as they are generally low-skilled like poor Egyptians. There are also regulations about the ratio of foreigners to Egyptian nationals in any organization. In sum, while refugees can get work permits, in practice doing so is complicated, and most refugees do not have work permits.

Egypt has not adopted national refugee legislation or established domestic asylum procedures. Responsibility for refugees is assigned to UNHCR by the 1954 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Egyptian government and UNHCR. According to UNHCR, the MoU has been useful in committing the Government

to maintain “a liberal admission policy” and to recognize the principle of *non-refoulement*. The MoU grants UNHCR unrestricted access to asylum seekers or refugees detained for illegal entry.<sup>[14]</sup>

As in all host countries, UNHCR’s mandated obligations are to provide protection and assistance to refugees in the form of registering asylum seekers, conducting refugee status determination, and finding durable solutions. Asylum seekers are required to register with UNHCR upon arrival in Cairo, when they receive the asylum-seeking card (the yellow card) which enables them to stay in Egypt under the protection of UNHCR until they are scheduled for a Refugee Status Determination (RSD) interview. The period between receiving the yellow card and the RSD interview varies, and can be years. If RSD is granted, the person becomes a recognized refugee and receives the blue card. Persons rejected after the RSD interview are entitled to appeal. If the appeal fails the file is considered closed, the person is no longer of concern to UNHCR, and is expected to leave Egypt. In practice, however, there is no mechanism by which either the Egyptian government or UNHCR makes ‘closed file’ people leave Egypt, and many asylum seekers live in Cairo in legal limbo, not entitled to any rights.<sup>[15]</sup>

Until recently, the main difference between a recognized refugee (a blue card holder) and

[13] The cost for a yearly work permit varies by nationality and is reciprocity-based. For Sudanese and Palestinians it is only 200 Egyptian pounds. For Somalis, Iraqis, Eritreans and Ethiopians the cost is 4,530.00 Egyptian pounds, or about US\$900. Interview with the AUC Business Support Center, June 24, 2012.

[14] UNHCR Egypt Country Profile 2004

[15] Grabska, K “Living on the Margins: The Analysis of the Livelihoods Strategies of Sudanese Refugees with Closed Files in Egypt”, FMRS Working Paper no.6, Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, The American University in Cairo, 2005

an asylum seeker (a yellow card holder) was that only recognized refugees were eligible for UNHCR's durable solutions (local integration, repatriation, or resettlement), and for assistance. As of March 2011, UNHCR changed its policy, and all people of concern to UNHCR (blue and yellow cards holders) from all nationalities became eligible for assistance.<sup>[16]</sup> Egypt,



Children playing at the St. Andrew's Refugee Services.  
Photo by Shane Bristow

like many countries in the Arab world, is not in favor of local integration. The MoU between UNHCR and the government of Egypt specifies voluntary repatriation and resettlement as the two durable solutions in Egypt.<sup>[17]</sup> De facto local integration for refugees is challenging because of the difficulty of finding work and paying for housing, and some refugee groups experience xenophobia and harassment on the streets. We explore the issue of integration below.

[16] Interview with UNHCR, June 24, 20012

[17] Kagan, Michael, "Shared responsibility in a new Egypt" A strategy for refugee protection. Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, The American University in Cairo.

# Mapping and desk review

Through interviews and desk research we identified organizations and entities at the civil society, governmental, international, and private sector levels that are working on urban poverty alleviation in Egypt. Our purpose was to explore the potential for these programs to include refugees and to generate new ideas for refugee-focused programs that promote livelihoods. We identified these organizations by reviewing two comprehensive guides to community development organizations in Egypt: UNHCR's 'Referral Guide to Refugee Services in Cairo', and the Directory of Development Organizations 2011.

In October 2011, we held two **focus groups** with refugee agencies in which we developed a programming grid that plots programs by sector, activity, and livelihood assets. We used the sustainable livelihoods framework to facilitate group discussion of refugee livelihood conditions, strengths, and contextual factors in Egypt. From October 2011 through June 2012, we conducted 47 **key informant interviews** with refugee leaders and senior officials in organizations conducting livelihoods programming.<sup>[18]</sup>

Information from the desk review, focus groups and interviews was compiled into a grid (see Annex 3) that maps beneficiaries, activities, and types of livelihood asset support.

[18] We also designed an online survey aimed at NGOs providing livelihood programming to refugees. However, only three organizations filled out the online survey so the majority of our findings were obtained through the key informant interviews. The online survey is available here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/livelihoods-program-survey>.

Our review does not capture the network of charity associations that mobilize Egyptian mutual support at the neighborhood level. These associations have relatively low-visibility, but their impact was recently felt during the Parliamentary elections (December 2011), when the associations -- based in mosques, neighborhood groups, and through the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi -- mobilized Egyptians to stuff the ballot boxes. Subsequent research should incorporate these community associations into an analysis of Egyptian livelihoods systems.

Throughout 2011-2012, intermittent demonstrations and clashes lasting up to one week occurred around the research team's office, and the office was shut down for up to a month at a time. While the research continued from alternate locations, the general sense of instability obstructed the team's access to Egyptian organizations and government officials.

## Non-refugee Organizations in Egypt with potential livelihood programming

We reviewed a total of 442 organizations, of which 77 had some refugee-specific programming, and 336 targeted Egyptian nationals or non-refugee specific population.

Using the sector categorization in the Development Directory, we grouped organizations by

region as shown in Table 1. There is a concentration of organizations in Middle Egypt, Cairo and Giza governorates, and a secondary concentration in the Delta, mostly in Alexandria.

**Table 2:** Development Organizations in Egypt by Region and Sector / \* Some organizations and entities are cross-listed in multiple sectors, including those labeled as both Civil Society Organizations and also Community Based Organizations.

By Sector	Lower	Middle	Upper	Canal	Sinai	Other	Total
International Organizations	0	48	0	0	0	0	48
Government Entities	0	40	0	0	0	1	41
Private Sector	4	22	2	1	1	0	30
Financial Institution	1	32	0	0	0	0	33
Training and Research	5	66	2	1	1	1	76
CSOs*	11	102	6	0	1	3	123
CBOs*	7	39	3	0	1	0	50
Development Consultants	2	13	1	0	0	0	16
Information Providers	2	2	0	0	0	1	5
Grantmakers	0	3	0	0	0	0	3

### *International organizations*

We identified 45 international bodies with operations in Egypt, of which nine have potential for livelihood programming:

AECID (Egypt) - Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo

AFD - Agence Française de Développement (Egypt)

BLAFE - Bureau de Liaison Agricole Franco-Egyptien (Egypt)

British Council (Egypt)

CIDA - Canadian International Development Agency (Egypt)

Cooperazione Italiana allo Sviluppo / Italian Development Cooperation (Egypt)

FAO (Egypt) - Food and Agriculture Organization

GEF - Global Environment Facility (Egypt), SGP - Small Grants Programme

USAID (Egypt) - US Agency for International Development

## *Nongovernmental and community organizations*

Nongovernmental organizations in Egypt are governed by the Law on Non-Governmental Societies and Organizations (No. 84 of 2002), and the Executive Statute on Law 84 of 2002 (Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs Decree No. 178 of 2002), which implement and clarify the provisions of the parliamentary law. The regulator for associations, foundations and unions is the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSA).

NGOs have faced significant obstacles over the last decades. The government under President Mubarak was known for restricting and over-regulating the creation and operation of organized civil society. The grounds for denial of registration were vague, inviting excessive government discretion. Grounds for dissolution were unclear and sanctions for legal violations included imprisonment.

Since the 2011 revolution, NGOs have been targeted for suspected foreign financing, as was the case with 17 NGOs that were raided by the army on December 28, 2011. In addition, generalized insecurity in the country has put many organizations at risk for attack or looting. Notably, our project's office in the American University in Cairo Tahrir Campus was ransacked during the clashes on Mohamed Mahmoud Street in November 2011. Normal operating procedures for many NGOs and community based programs are now subject to interruption due to the deteriorating security situation in the country.

At least 125 Egyptian community organizations conduct some form of community development work. Most are headquartered in Cairo or Giza (104 out of 125). Many carry out field programs in Upper Egypt and occasionally the Delta. The regions of North and South Sinai, the Western Desert, and the Eastern Desert are noticeably devoid of community programs. Of the 125 community organizations, about half (67) support livelihood development for Egyptians, and therefore merit exploration for their potential to incorporate refugees. The desk review did confirm the current operational status of the organizations in follow-up interviews.

## *Egyptian governmental bodies*

The current transition in Egypt makes assessment of governmental bodies difficult, in terms of livelihood support programs or any other capacity. Until 2011, there were up to 34 individual ministries, in addition to numerous other governmental authorities, agencies and institutions. Some 40 government agencies include some form of development work within their mandate, from the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education, Youth, to the National Council for Women, to the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration. At least five include some form of livelihood promotion in their scope of work, as described in Table 3.

## *Private sector*

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a commitment from corporations to be ethical and contribute to the social and economic develop-

ment of the society in which they operate. CSR is slowly gaining momentum in Egypt and the region, but there is very limited involvement of corporations or the private sector with refugee service organizations.

The John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement at AUC provides knowledge

and resources for strengthening philanthropic practice in the Arab region. They have good relationships with different organizations from the private sector. In addition, PepsiCo, Vodafone, Bank El Misr and Shell are possible patrons of livelihoods for refugees.

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**Table 3:** Egyptian governmental bodies and livelihood programming

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Ministry of Finance, SME Development Unit	Small to Medium Enterprise Development Unit hosts a portal of information and support for Egyptian nationals seeking to initiate small-business projects, including resources on government regulations and a national impact survey of microfinance in Egypt (conducted in 2008).
Ministry of Local Development	Offers services including loans and training aimed at Egyptian nationals.
Ministry of Manpower and Emigration	Serves Egyptian nationals who have migrated outside of Egypt.
National Council for Youth and National Council for Childhood and Motherhood	A range of development and capacity building programs specifically for children, women and youth throughout the country, including a small grants program administered by the NCCM, targeting working and rural women, and female heads of household.

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## Microfinance programming in Egypt

We identified 28 organizations or associations that engage in some form of microfinance or small-grants programming, spanning government, private sector, and CSO/CBOs:

Organization	City	Region in Egypt
ABA - Alexandria Business Association, Small Micro Enterprise Project	Alexandria	Lower
Al Tadamun Microfinance Foundation	Giza	Middle
AYB-SD - Alashanek ya Balady Association for Sustainable Development	Cairo	Middle
BBA - Beheira Businessmen Association, BDC - Business Development Center	Beheira	Lower
BEST Foundation - Business Enterprise Support Tools Foundation	Giza	Middle
Citadel Capital S.A.E. Tanmeya Microenterprise	Cairo	Middle
DBACD - Dakahlya Businessmen Association for Community Development	Dakahlia	Lower
EACID - Egyptian Association for Community Initiatives and Development	Aswan	Upper
El Mobadara - Community Development and Small Enterprise Association	Giza	Middle
ESMA - Egyptian Small and Micro Enterprise Association	Giza	Middle
Fawakhria Association for Development of Small and Medium Industries	N Sinai	Sinai
FMF-E - First Microfinance Foundation Egypt	Cairo	Middle
GEF - Global Environment Facility (Egypt), SGP - Small Grants Programme	Cairo	Middle
LEAD Foundation (Egypt)	Giza	Middle
Ministry of Finance (Egypt), SME Development Unit	Cairo	Middle
NCW - National Council for Women	Cairo	Middle
NM - Nahdet El Mahrousa	Cairo	Middle
NSBA - North Sinai Businessmen Association	N Sinai	Sinai
PlaNet Finance	Giza	Middle
RADE - Regional Association for Development and Small Enterprises	Sohag	Upper
Sanabel - Microfinance Network of the Arab Countries	Giza	Middle
Sawiris Foundation for Social Development	Cairo	Middle
SBACD - Sharkeya Businessmen's Association for Community Development	Sharqia	Lower
SCDEPA - Siwa Community Development & Environmental Protection Association	Matruh	Lower
SECDA - Small Enterprises and Community Development Association	Giza	Middle
SFD - Social Fund for Development	Cairo	Middle
Al Tadamom Microfinance Foundation	Cairo	Middle
PPIC-Work (Working Children NGO)	Cairo	Middle

## Organizations with refugee-specific programming

Of the 442 organizations and agencies reviewed, 77 have refugee-specific programming within their scope of work. All are located in the Cairo/Giza area. There are four international organizations, 13 training and research entities, and 60 community-based organizations. There is no Egyptian government agency dedicated to refugee livelihoods. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a Refugee Affairs Liaison office, which is effectively inactive. Community organizations with refugee-specific programming range from faith-based organizations such as Saint Andrews Refugee Services, to community-based schools, such as African Hope or Happy Child School.

### *UNHCR and implementing partners*

Since 2006, UNHCR's regional office has been located outside Cairo in Sixth October City, a 'new city' about 20 km west of the downtown area of Cairo, and a journey that can take more than an hour given the traffic congestion. This distance makes it difficult for refugees, most of whom do not live in Sixth October, to travel to UNHCR offices. UNHCR's activities in Egypt are carried out by some 80 staff.<sup>[19]</sup> The main governmental counterpart is the Refugee Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[19] The UN Volunteer program provides support to UNHCR Cairo protection staff with refugee status interviewing, identification of resettlement needs, and country of origin and legal research. IOM is responsible for providing assistance in processing the departure of refugees accepted for resettlement See UNHCR Country operations plan, 2004

UNHCR has responsibility to assist refugees, but as elsewhere, UNHCR is not itself an operational agency and instead subcontracts implementing partners that carry out specific programs. These partners include governmental agencies and international and local NGOs and can be seen in Table 4.

The 1954 UNHCR-Egypt MOU states that UNHCR will "help ... the most destitute refugees" and will coordinate the activities of "welfare societies" for the benefit of refugees (Kagan, 2011). One of UNHCR's main objectives in its country operations plan for 2011 is "to address basic needs with priority given to strengthening access to health-care and education, including by providing essential services such as education support and subsidized primary and emergency healthcare as well as individual and family support for persons with specific needs, *inter alia*, survivors of SGBV and unaccompanied or separated children".

According to UNHCR, around 22,000 refugees and asylum seekers annually receive subsidized health care from Caritas and Refuge Egypt. Caritas, through its Project 25, provides an average of 3,500 monthly medical consultations (175 per day) to adults and children in two areas of Cairo (Garden City and Nasr City). Refuge Egypt provides antenatal and postnatal care, well-baby and well-child clinics, and TB and HIV/AIDS care. Their services are provided in different locations throughout Cairo: Zamalek, Arba wa Nuss, Ain Shams, Sixth of October and Maadi.

**Table 4:** UNHCR Implementing partners

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Service provided</b>
CARITAS	Social and medical services, financial assistance and vocational training
Refuge Egypt	Social and medical services
Catholic Relief Services	Educational grants
Egyptian Family Planning Association	Family planning information
ACSFT	Legal orientation and representation
Egyptian Red Crescent	
Islamic Relief Worldwide,	
Egyptian Federation for Scouts and Girls Guides	
Danish Refugee Council	
Tadamon (the Egyptian Refugee Multicultural Council)	Community support and development
The Psycho-Social Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC)	Counseling and psychosocial support
St. Andrews and All Saints Cathedral	Individual education assistance and other social services to refugee children and their families

In 2011, CRS provided educational grants for basic education and kindergarten to 7,800 of 10,700 children between 3 and 18 years old who are registered with UNHCR. The education grant for academic year 2011-2012 varies between USD 151 and USD 453 depending on the type of school and grade. CRS reports that around 1,330 will receive reduced grants compared to previous years due to shortage of funds. According to CRS, in 2009, children receiving grants were enrolled in 400 schools, mainly in the cities of Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said.

Refuge Egypt provides nutritional support for refugees with specific needs through its pre-natal, post-natal, TB and HIV care services. Some 9,800 people in need of nutritional supplements

are assisted with micronutrients or supplementary feeding. Some of these people receive services as well from Caritas if they are considered the most vulnerable populations.

These services target only the most vulnerable populations. Some 60% of refugees and asylum seekers receive very limited or no assistance, and are left to their own resources in order to meet the basic needs of food and shelter, and to eventually move beyond a survival existence.

Caritas provides services such as financial assistance and vocational training. According to UNHCR, some 12,000 vulnerable individuals (30 per cent of the refugee population) receive housing and food assistance. Caritas refers an additional 1,200 people (2.7% of the refugee

population) to Caritas projects and to the Don Bosco Vocational Training Center for vocational training. There are 22 available courses, including: hairdressing, electrician training, driving, appliance repair, tailoring and Arabic classes. All participants receive about 3 USD per session. We have not been able to gather statistics disaggregated by sex and age or the impact of these courses on the livelihood strategies refugees undertake, but this is one of the key areas of inquiry for the next phase of research.

In addition to its implementing partners, UNHCR has operational partners - organizations that work to protect and assist refugees, but do not receive funding from UNHCR. The Referral Guide lists 77 international, national/local and community based organizations currently providing one or more services for refugee population.<sup>[20]</sup> The organizations were divided into the following categories based on the services they provide:

- Adult learning programs (12)
- Children's education (19)
- Employment assistance (5)
- Legal aid (12)
- Material assistance (9)
- Medical services (9)
- Psychosocial and mental health services (17)
- Research and advocacy (13)
- Services for persons with disabilities (5)
- Refugee community associations (20) providing various services (language classes, cultural and arts activities).

[20] In April 2011, a Referral Guide - a directory with contact details, description of programming and referral mechanisms for refugee services - was distributed in Cairo in Arabic and English.

Several organizations provide more than one category of services.

During the Egyptian uprising, UNHCR closed its offices in Cairo and some of the staff left the country. The office remained closed for 14 days, from January 30 to February 13, 2011. Implementing partners were also forced to suspend their services. After some days, UNHCR and its partners managed to create an emergency response system including the establishment of hotlines for medical, social and legal inquiries and financial assistance for all persons of concern. Around 6,000 people reported to the distribution centers to receive assistance. The hotlines currently remain active.

## Livelihood programs currently available for refugees

Of the 77 identified entities with refugee-specific programming, 14 organizations provide livelihood related services for refugees:

- ADEW
- African Hope
- AMERA (Africa Middle East Refugee Assistance)
- Cannosa Centre
- Caritas
- CCIP (Cairo Community Interpreter Project, at the American University in Cairo)
- CRS (Catholic Relief Services)
- IOM (International Organization for Migration)
- PSTIC (Psychosocial Training Institute of Cairo)

- Refuge Egypt
- Sakakini Church
- STAR (Student Action for Refugees)
- StARS (Saint Andrews)
- Tadamon Council

The main livelihood services provided are:

- Vocational training for young people and adults,
- Children's education for children between 5 and 18,
- Language programming, and
- Health and psychosocial services.

The Referral Guide includes twenty refugee-led entities, of which twelve are Sudanese and the rest are Egyptian (1), Eritrean (1), Ethiopian (2), Palestinian (2) and Somali (2). They provide small-scale programming related to children's and adult education, language programming, and psychosocial support. Only one organization (Nuba Mountains Association for Development) lists "job placement support" as one of its main activities.

Only a handful of programs include income-generating activities, and these almost entirely in the form of handicraft or domestic work training.

## Key conclusions of mapping exercise

Existing programming lacks a coordinated strategy to build the livelihoods of refugees or improve their economic/financial security. Participants repeatedly mentioned their concerns about the

quality of the services, and lack of access of refugees to services. These concerns included:

- Organizational problems, including limited capacity and funding, too little training and supervision, and "complex" relations between service providers and clients.
- Very few income generation activities that are part of programs.
- Lack of interagency collaboration and coordination among service providers. For example, there are a wide range of programs providing adult and children's education, language training, and psychosocial services, but these are not coordinated.
- Limited consideration of programming needs as perceived by refugee populations, and which match the existing skills profile of the refugees. It would be useful to know the kinds of skills already present in the refugee population, that could be built into programs.

These concerns are further discussed in the next section where we also assess whether and in what ways programs or organizations have an impact on refugee livelihoods. While current programming does not improve household income, it may impact human or social capital development. A more general problem is whether livelihood programming can succeed with urban refugee populations, in light of the larger economic difficulties in Egypt as a whole.

# Research methods for refugee and key informant interviews

From February to May 2012, in order to deepen our understanding of the livelihoods experience of refugees in Cairo, we interviewed 90 refugees from the six main refugee populations in Egypt, and 51 key informants from different organizations in Cairo. We shared our findings in two workshops, first with refugees in Cairo, then with invited staff from the organizations we visited.

## *Refugee interviews*

We began by identifying and training field researchers from each nationality group, who were responsible for selecting a purposive sample of about fifteen individuals from their community. Each sample aimed to have an equal number of men and women, single and married individuals, and a diverse representation in terms of length of time in Egypt. For the Ethiopians we sought an equal number of Oromo and Amhara participants, and for Eritreans an equal number of Muslims and Christians. The final sample was as follows:

- Eritrea (14),
- Ethiopia (15),
- Iraq (16),
- Somalia (14),
- Sudan (16),
- South Sudan (15)

All interviews were conducted in the relevant languages: Amharic, Arabic, Oromo, Somali and Tigrinya, and then translated into English and transcribed into Word documents. These interviews were then entered into Hyper Research and coded by our field coordinator and supervisor. A detailed report was then produced.

## *Key Informant interviews*

We interviewed staff from Egyptian NGOs (12), international organizations working in Egypt (16), the private sector (5), refugee representatives (10) and UN organizations (5). We sought interviews with the Egyptian government, but the pre-election political climate in Cairo meant we could not find anyone willing to grant interviews. Our research coordinator and assistants conducted the interviews in English and Arabic. These interviews were transcribed into Word documents and analyzed.

## *Findings workshops*

After analyzing the data, we drafted a set of findings and shared these first with our field team, and then in two workshops held at the American University of Cairo (Tahrir Campus) in September 2012. In the first workshop, we asked our each of field researchers to invite 15 members of their communities, We began by presenting

our findings, then asked each group to spend an hour discussing these findings in light of their own experience, and to identify opportunities to support their livelihoods in Cairo that could be taken forward in the form of recommendations. Each group reported on their discussions in plenary and this was followed by a general discussion of livelihood opportunities in Cairo. In the second workshop, we invited representatives from all the organizations we had interviewed earlier, shared our findings, and had a discussion about ways forward.

Information from our interviews and the workshops is reported as follows. First we describe the demographics of our refugee participants, explaining briefly key differences among the six groups. Then we describe the kinds of livelihood activities our respondents engaged in before they came to Cairo, what they do now, and

how they perceive their livelihoods opportunities. We integrate the perspectives of our key informants into these sections, along with the feedback we received during the two workshops.

It is important to note that our samples are not representative of the different refugee nationalities in Cairo, nor of the overall refugee population. While we do report some differences between groups, we see these as suggestive only. Our purpose was to gain different perspectives on the livelihoods issues the refugees face. We also note that the social and political instability in Egypt created much uncertainty about whether we would be able to complete the original target number of interviews, particularly those related to governmental sectors. In the end, we conducted fewer interviews than we initially intended.

# Findings from our refugee interviews

## Demographics and household composition

Our 90 participants had different immigration statuses, and included asylum seekers, recognized refugees, 'closed files', and migrants. Just under half (43) were women, and one third were heads of household. Three quarters of participants (64/90) were 18-35 years of age (half women). This large number in a productive and reproductive age group is typical of urban migrants/refugees.

Marriage and the presence of spouses represent sources of financial support and/or responsibility. A third of our participants were married (35), of which half were women, and the Iraqi group had highest number of married participants (9/16). Most married participants were married before coming to Egypt, and half (mostly Iraqis) were with their spouses in Cairo. Six did not know the whereabouts of their spouses due to detention or disappearance, five spouses lived in other countries (US, Canada, Israel and Yemen), and three were in home countries.

One third (32/90, half of whom were women) had a total of 95 financial dependents among them. Of these dependents, 22 were adults (spouses and children) and 73 were children under 18 years old. It is notable that participants

only counted their relatives as their dependents. In some cases, especially the Somalis, they shared their homes and supported others financially, but did not count them when asked about dependents.

A small number (4/90) reported having household members with special needs, and several also had psychological problems and chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, cancer and back problems.

## Previous livelihood activities and skills

The refugee population in Cairo is diverse in backgrounds, skills, and assets, and our participants reflected this diversity. Most of our informants (78/90 - 33 women and 45 men) had engaged in economic activities before coming to Egypt. Fourteen (8 women and 6 men) had been students in their home countries. In general, South Sudanese had had access to university while displaced in Sudan, and many Eritreans did too. However in our sample most Eritreans had left before university age. Our participants from Ethiopia and Somalia did not have access to higher education in their home country. This is more typical of the situation in Somalia.

About a quarter (26/78 -14 women and 12 men) had been in wage employment, including with the government or private enterprises. Jobs included: shop keeping/cashier/sales, waiter in a restaurant, production engineer for TV, travel agent, nurse, NGO worker, tour guide, maintenance/car repairer, cleaner, guard, teacher, accountant, lecturer at university, hospital director, government worker, construction, and private consultant.

Another group (19/78 - 7 women and 12 men) had been self-employed, as individuals, small business owners or as part of family enterprises before they left. Such enterprises included: production and sale of traditional food, shop and restaurant keeping, carpentry, goldsmith, leather trade, music, pipe welding and sex work. Several respondents had combined self-employment and wage employment.

Our respondents came to Cairo with a range of urban skills, including:

- business literacy and management skills,
- computer repair and programming,
- carpentry, electronics, mechanics, goldsmithery, plumbing,
- teaching and administration,
- embroidery, decoration, hand crafts production, knitting, and sewing

Languages included, for African participants, their mother tongue as well as another African language, and Arabic and/or English. Iraqis who studied university have also some understanding of English and/or French.

## Experience in Cairo

One of our main findings was the variety of experience in our different refugee groups – but also many similarities. In this section we report on our participants relations with Egyptians, and their experience during and since the January-February 2011 revolution.

### *Local integration – relations with Egyptians*

For those refugees who do not speak Arabic - Somalis, Eritreans and Ethiopians - the language barrier is one reason for lack of integration with Egyptians. More than half (54/90) our participants said they do not have any relations with Egyptians.

Among the Sudanese and Iraqi groups, who do speak Arabic, there was varied experience, and one factor appeared to be race. Our Iraqi participants generally felt they had good, respectful relations with Egyptians. Some had made friends or received help from Egyptian neighbors. They share similar customs and traditions, and said they felt grateful and safe particularly before the revolution. However, the Sudanese and South Sudanese, even though they spoke Arabic, did not feel at all integrated and had few relations with Egyptians. Many referred to their own and their children's experience of discrimination and racism, including being subject to ethnic slurs and harassment such as being called "samara" and "chocolate".<sup>[21]</sup> They also

[21] Samara" and 'Chocolate' in Egyptian slang is often used to describe a dark skinned (black) person. This experience of racism

mentioned being cheated in the market, and intentionally mistreated in traffic either as pedestrians or when involved in traffic accidents. One participant said: “most Egyptians are not willing to interact with foreigners”.<sup>[22]</sup> Such social exclusion by Egyptians diminishes refugees’ sense of integration.

For the Sudanese (and South Sudanese), a key incident was the Mustafa Mahmoud event in 2005, which had a negative effect on their relations with Egyptians. In this event, Sudanese refugees conducting a three-month long protest in the park were forcibly evicted and 29 people died as a result.<sup>[23]</sup> According to one of our key informants,

*“After the incident, the Egyptian media began depicting Sudanese as being lazy, drinking alcohol, and carrying diseases, and they created a stigma and bad image*

*for Sudanese. From then on, the past [positive] stereotype of Sudanese, which gave them access to certain jobs, was affected, and Egyptians became more reluctant to hire Sudanese”.*<sup>[24]</sup>

According to an Ethiopian key informant, Ethiopians also feel discriminated against, particularly since the revolution. “After the Nile issue<sup>[25]</sup>, Ethiopians feel they [the Ethiopians] are perceived as the enemy, as well as often blamed for the Egyptian unemployment and poverty”.<sup>[26]</sup>

One factor that seems to increase refugees’ feeling of integration is studying in Egyptian universities. Our Sudanese and South Sudanese participants who were students all stated that they relate well with other students and have friends in university.

### *Impact of the Egyptian revolution*

The Egyptian revolution brought widespread optimism about the future of Egypt, including the new government’s responsiveness to the needs and rights of non-nationals. However, the transitional period has been disappointing, not least for migrants and refugees in Egypt. In our interviews and workshops people expressed concerns about increased insecurity and xenophobia, and greater hardship for refugees in Cairo.

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was a significant finding in our earlier study of Sudanese in Cairo (Jacobsen et al 2012).

[22] SC5

[23] In late 2005, a sit-in by Sudanese asylum seekers and refugees in Mustafa Mahmoud park near the UNHCR offices in Cairo culminated in tragedy. Between September and December, up to 2,500 Sudanese protested UNHCR’s suspension of refugee status determination procedures and conditions in Cairo. Negotiations between the refugees and UNHCR failed to end the protest, and on December 30, Egyptian security personnel entered the park and forcibly removed the refugees, in the process killing 27, at least half of whom were children and women. Later a 14 year old boy died in hospital and one man committed suicide in detention. Most cardholding refugees and asylum seekers were released within a few days, but more than six hundred remained in detention for weeks until their status was clarified between UNHCR and the government of Egypt. The Mustafa Mahmoud events elicited criticism locally and abroad, strained relations between UNHCR and the government, and exacerbated an atmosphere of distrust between UNHCR and Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers. This summary is taken from a detailed report by FMRS, “A Tragedy Of Failures And False Expectations. Report on the Events Surrounding the Three month Sit-in and Forced Removal of Sudanese Refugees in Cairo, September–December 2005.” The American University in Cairo, Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Program. June 2006. [http://www.aucegypt.edu/gapp/cmrs/reports/documents/report\\_edited\\_v.pdf](http://www.aucegypt.edu/gapp/cmrs/reports/documents/report_edited_v.pdf)

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[24] KISUDCR, 3

[25] In March 2011, Ethiopia announced their intention to build a large hydropower plant on the Nile, despite Egypt’s strong opposition. Egypt claimed this would affect the amount of water flowing to Egypt with possible devastating effects on agriculture and daily life. Many Egyptians perceive Ethiopia as threatening Egypt, after years of Egypt’s control of the treaty and most of the Nile water share.

[26] KIETHAMH, 1

During the eighteen days of the revolution (January 25-February 12, 2011), everyone in Cairo endured difficulties, but vulnerable groups usually suffer more during crises and refugees in Egypt were no exception. For refugees, living close to the margin of poverty, there was little in the way of safety nets. The main refugee agencies (UNHCR and Caritas) were closed. Some cash assistance and food bags were provided to the most needy refugee families, but most refugees in Cairo struggled until mid-February when UNHCR staff returned to Cairo. Rapid assessments by IOM and Tadamon found that the main issues facing refugees during the 18-day revolution period were personal insecurity, and lack of income from loss of employment, with women more likely to have lost employment. The assessment found that 80% of the migrants interviewed did not receive their payment for January.

Crime and violence increased in post-revolution Egypt, often in the form of hijackings and robberies in the streets of Cairo. Some citizens, witnessing the inability of the state to deal with this crime surge, took matters into their own hands and bought pistols or other weapons to protect themselves. While there are no studies yet, anecdotal evidence indicates that crime against refugees increased after the revolution. However, refugees are reluctant to report incidents, and non-Arabic speaking refugees such as Eritreans and Ethiopians are less able to defend themselves against accusations or to report crimes or harassment. Refugees report that the police are less helpful than before. This insecurity is probably one factor explaining increased appli-

cations for resettlement, which have gone from 900 to 1550 cases per year after the revolution (El-Rashidi 2012).

Most of our participants (85) were in Cairo in the first months of 2011. Half (42) said they feel more insecure after the revolution, and 23 reported an increase in prices of food, rent and other basic needs. 18 participants said they had been threatened, robbed, or assaulted at home or in the street since the revolution, with Somalis most affected. One third (14/42) of our women participants reported they had experienced sexual harassment, especially after the revolution. However, sexual harassment has also increased for all women, including Egyptians and westerners, in Cairo since the revolution.

One street vendor said after the revolution there was less risk of the authorities confiscating goods, but other vendors said they now fear the roaming thugs who have replaced the authorities in robbing their goods. However, two participants said during the revolution Sudanese and Egyptians worked together to protect their streets from thugs, and this allowed them get to know each other more, making the Sudanese feel more integrated into the local community.

After the revolution, employment decreased as foreigners left and business contracted. Egyptians reduced their consumption of goods and services, and trade restrictions increased. According to one participant:

*"...revolution really affected my business here in Cairo because the government*

*became very strict with exporting and importing goods particularly when you are not Egyptian”.*<sup>[27]</sup>

Refugees who worked as domestic workers and cleaners also lost their jobs as foreign families departed Cairo. These included Somali diaspora families who had employed refugees as teachers for their children. Three of our participants lost their jobs as an immediate consequence of the revolution. One woman who worked in a supermarket lost her job there after thugs ransacked the supermarket during the revolution.

## Living conditions and coping strategies

Currently, the biggest hardships reported by our participants was the ability to cover their basic needs such as rent, health expenses, and food. Other expenses included bills (electricity, gas), communication, education fees and materials. Transportation is both a household expense and an important factor in people’s decisions to access services and livelihood opportunities. Distances, fares and possible risks during transit create obstacles for people, especially for women living in poor areas where the use of public transportation includes the risk of sexual harassment.

## Housing and rent

Housing is the main expense. Many poor Egyptians receive a rent subsidy, but refugees do not. Based on 83 participants reporting:

- 10% (8) currently do not pay rent and of these 3 currently owe rent,
- half (46 ) pay between 100 and 500LE a month,
- a quarter (21) pay between 501 and 1000 LE,
- 10% (8) pay more than 1000LE a month.

All groups except Iraqis have shared or are currently sharing their living space with non-relatives, usually from the same nationality or ethnic group (one exception was a Somali family who shared with a Nigerian). Rent and expenses are usually divided among those sharing the flat, but those without work are excused for a time. The Eritreans and Ethiopians said men and women (both friends and family) share flats because it is easier for women to find jobs and they contribute to the rent and support men. Somalis share apartments with multiple families, sometimes four or more. Young women help with house chores in exchange for shelter and food. Single mothers tend to live together so that children can be raised together and they can support each other. One participant lived with nine other people in this arrangement.<sup>[28]</sup>

Covering the rent was the main financial problem noted by our participants, and most people had experienced a time when they could not. When asked what they did when they were un-

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[27] ERT008

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[28] S08, S07

able to pay the rent, 14 said it would be possible for them to ask the landlord to wait, and 22 said they would borrow from friends or community members. There were differences between groups. All our Somalis identified community leaders and roommates as a source of assistance, however, none of our Iraqis mentioned asking the community for help as an option. Our sample was not big enough to enable us to say that these patterns represent the different communities, but they suggest there might be differences between nationalities when it comes to community networks. Others also identified UNHCR, Caritas and AMERA as sources of help with rent payment difficulties.

### Health care

Many refugees have health and psychological conditions resulting from traumatic experience in their home country or during their journey. One participant's views captured the others': *"I am psychologically, physically, and morally broken"*.<sup>[29]</sup> Key informants who have worked with refugees stressed that many had traumatic experiences in their home countries and during their journey to Egypt, and this often led to psychosocial effects that affected their health and their ability to function, and to relate well to others. These health problems directly affect people's livelihood strategies, and also create health care expenses.

Asked what they did in health emergencies, about half said they would go to Caritas for medical care and the other half preferred to go

to private doctor or the closest hospital. Several participants stated that they would not go to Caritas, unless it was an emergency dealing with a serious or chronic medical condition. One participant said, *"If I got sick I depend on our [own] money in receiving treatment, except in severe illness we depend on Caritas as we get a discount for treatment"*.<sup>[30]</sup> Other participants did not see Caritas as the first option because the cost of transportation from their homes was too expensive.

However, refugees also expressed mistrust and uncertainty about Caritas and their medical procedures. One key informant said there is a general perception that Caritas does not provide needed treatment and people feel frustrated and abandoned by organizations that should be helping them. Another informant who worked with refugees said she had personally frequently observed rudeness and lack of concern on the part of Caritas providers towards refugees. Ten of our participants said they do not go to Caritas because although it covers 70% of medication, doctors do not take care of patients, prescribe unneeded medication<sup>[31]</sup>, and accuse people of pretending to be sick. They also said it takes too long to be attended to<sup>[32]</sup> and this was main reason why several said they do not go to Caritas.<sup>[33]</sup> There is also suspicion about the treatment and medication available at Caritas, with one participant stating *"I feel the type of the medicine is not standard and the cost of the medication is too cheap and I feel as if it not the right medica-*

[29] ETH05

[30] IRQC6

[31] S09

[32] ETHC3,ETH09

[33] SC7

tion”.[34] There is no evidence that any of these beliefs are correct, but such attitudes point to the need for awareness raising, information sharing and more communication between service providers and users.

Several participants said they would rather go to Refuge Egypt for medical services, or to religiously affiliated hospitals such as the one in Mar Girgis, the Italian hospital, or the medical centers financed by religious endowments such as Rabia Adaweya in Nasr City where fees are low.

## Education

Many refugees in Cairo were unable to finish their education in their home countries because of instability, lack of education opportunities, and because they had to flee. Once in Cairo, efforts to complete education are stymied - even refugees and migrants who have documents and know the language often cannot access education opportunities. This is an important issue, given the large number of children who are financial dependents.

A third (15 women and 14 men) of our participants had some or completed university degrees, mostly in their home countries. Eight of our Iraqi respondents had completed their bachelor degrees in Iraq and one while in Egypt, 2 had completed masters’ degrees in foreign countries. Most of the Southern Sudanese who had education completed their studies while displaced in Sudan but they also had access to

private and public universities while in Egypt. All the Ethiopians (6) and Eritreans (2) completed their studies in home country. No Somalis had completed higher education.

Two Sudanese informants had taken Sudanese curriculum classes at refugee schools in Cairo. One completed high school, which enabled him to successfully enter the Cairo branch of Khartoum University. Both have financial dependents, and worked while completing their studies.

Alternatives to formal education mentioned by participants were technical high school and Quranic school. Ten informants (5 women and 5 men) had no education, mostly Sudanese and Southern Sudanese.

## Children’s education

Refugee children’s access to basic education has been an overall positive experience, with most school-aged children able to access education. Eritrean and Ethiopian children tend to go to refugee schools in churches such as African Hope and Saint Andrews, where affordable education is available. Sudanese and South Sudanese send their children to Saint Bakhita, Sakakini, Saint Andrews, Al Azhary school in Sheikh Zayed , and two other private schools. Somalis preferred religious schools including an Al Azhar affiliated school. Many Somali families from the diaspora (mostly those residing in Europe and North America) have come to Egypt specifically to access affordable, Islamic-oriented education in private schools for their children. According to one informant *“I came here*

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[34] ETH02

*because of my children... I want my children to grow up in an Islamic country and the Islamic way*".<sup>[35]</sup> Several Iraqi refugees said they are financially burdened by having their children go to private schools because the Egyptian government does not allow them to enroll in public schools.<sup>[36]</sup>

Refugee families with children receive financial assistance from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to cover school fees and some related expenses. AMERA also provides assistance to help gain access to educational services and to cover educational costs.

However, refugees demonstrated a poor understanding of schooling for their children in Cairo. Misinformation and rumors abound - several participants said they did not know how much assistance they were entitled to, and that while they received only 600LE, they had heard of children who had private education yet received 2,000LE per year from UNHCR. This points to the importance of providing more and better information to people about services available, as well as their rights and responsibilities in Cairo.

According to one key informant, some refugee children (especially from Darfur) often spend years in Egypt without going to school because refugee children do not integrate easily, and their parents want to avoid having their children confront discrimination by Egyptian children. Also, some refugee children have a lower level of education that prevents access to

local schools. In some cases, refugee parents do not enroll their children in school because they believe they are only temporarily in Egypt. Other participants mentioned long waiting lists to access refugee schools, particularly nursery school, difficulties covering school fees, and long distance from schools. One participant said she worries about whether the documentation issued by refugee schools was valid *"the refugee school is not recognized by the Egyptian government and that's why my kids can't get a valued school certificate. Even if they get a certificate but it is not recognized by other Egyptian public or private schools"*.<sup>[37]</sup>

Key informants raised concerns about the quality of both education and care children receive at home and at school. Teachers at refugee schools are unqualified and often unable to meet required education standards. In addition, refugee children face nutrition, and hygiene needs. Children at home often lack of support from their parents and face financial and emotional problems. As a consequence children are poorly educated and lack hope or a positive vision of the future, and this potentially leads to risky livelihood strategies. Schools could benefit by providing more funds both to pay better salaries and to provide better training to teachers, as well as offer nutritious meals, medical care and some services to parents such as parenting classes or adult education.

Iraqi participants tended to be more concerned about their children's higher education.

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[35] SOM10

[36] IRQC6

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[37] ERT02

*“...my older son 20 years old .. graduated from secondary school in 2010 and now he stays at home because I can’t afford expenses of college study”.*<sup>[38]</sup>

For Eritreans, the main obstacle to accessing university is lack of documentation to prove their past level of education. Eritreans fear and do not go near the Eritrean Embassy, so cannot get a passport or other documentation, including identity documents.

## Work: Wage employment and self-employment

Of our 90 participants two thirds (27 women and 31 men) were earning income, compared with three quarters (33 women and 45 men) who had earned income in their home countries. Just 12 (8 women and 4 men) believe they are currently doing better than in home country, compared with 27 (15 women and 12 men) who think they are in similar circumstances and more than half (20 women and 31 men) who consider themselves worse off than in their home country. Many participants said they had been unable to develop their skills, improve their financial situation or enjoy better life conditions.

A third of our participants (16 women and 16 men) had no income generating activity at the time of the interview. The main reasons they gave for their unemployment were:

- inability to find a job with a competitive salary,
- Egyptians unwilling to hire foreigners,
- physical/psychological inability to work,
- lack of documentation to start a business,
- resettlement process pending

### *Wage employment*

Of our 58 income earners, about half were in wage employment (11 women and 16 men), usually in the service sector as cleaners, drivers, security guards, and child care providers for middle and upper class Egyptian families and some foreigners. Other activities were interpreters, NGO worker, pharmacist assistant, and factory workers<sup>[39]</sup>. This work differed from that done in the home country, which tended to be more in small and medium businesses and government, and was more diverse. People who had worked in the agriculture or livestock sectors in their home countries and had few skills relevant for urban settings tended to work as cleaners.

Our participants worked on average 9-13 hours per day, with varying number of days per week. Long working hours and being underpaid were frequently mentioned as reasons for leaving jobs. Experiences with employers varied. Eritreans, Ethiopians and Southern Sudanese working as domestic workers reported generally poor relationships with Egyptian employees, includ-

<sup>[39]</sup> Factories in the satellite cities of 6th October and 10th Ramadan are a source of employment for men. Sudanese men usually gather in particular locations in 6th October and wait for employers to come by and pick up them for short work periods (1 or 2 days). People hired for longer periods usually do security jobs such as gate keepers and guards.

<sup>[38]</sup> IRQC6

ing not being treated with respect, not being provided food during working hours, and being asked to work extra hours with no extra payment. One participant disclosed that she was sexually harassed/abused by her employer. Domestic workers (both Egyptians and refugees) are in a vulnerable situation as there are no laws that protect them.

Several participants doing non-domestic work said they had experienced sexual harassment by customers and abuse by authorities and Egyptians during work. Several participants said they had experienced physical injuries at work especially in factories and workshops. Others providing services in their homes feel vulnerable to being robbed or attacked by customers. Such experiences, along with lack of protection from the authorities, have made respondents quit their jobs even if the relation with the employer and co-workers was good.

Some participants reported good relations with their Egyptian employers and employers from the same nationalities. In some work situations, being hired is not only based on skills, but also on personal attributes and national stereotypes. Eritreans, Ethiopians and Sudanese are sometimes paid more than Egyptians, especially for lower level service sector jobs. Our key informants and participants said Egyptians perceive some African people as good workers, educated, honest and reliable, with good character and manners, and this creates a preference for them for service jobs.

## Self-employment

Our self-employed participants (12 women and 14 men) were running businesses including trade between Egypt and home countries, currency trading, a bookshop, car repair, selling goods (clothes, qat, traditional food and handicrafts from home), restaurants, and tailoring. Other activities included sex work, language tutoring, henna art, serving as an extra for TV and films, and filling out forms. Several people worked at more than one activity. Some Iraqis and South Sudanese used their savings from previous jobs to set up their businesses.

To open a business in Egypt it is essential to form partnerships with Egyptians, due to legal regulations, including the license needed:

*“I would like to start my project [a dental surgery] because I have money and experience but I have faced difficulties with governmental legislation and bureaucratic procedures when trying to get the license to start. I searched for some organization that might support me but I didn’t succeed. I only found some people who promised to issue the license but in an irregular way (by giving bribe in illegal way) but I refused”.*<sup>[40]</sup>

and,

*“the governmental employee still exploits me with the excuse of not having the license under my name, so I have to bribe them each time they raise this issue”.*<sup>[41]</sup>

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[40] IRQ10

[41] IRQ04

Refugees who partner with Egyptians said they are at risk of losing their capital, depending on their relations with their Egyptian partners and authorities. Several mentioned having to frequently bribe the authorities in order to continue working, and they know that these irregular agreements can end at any time:

*“...here the government can shut our business any time. So I need a place that I can live and work legally, have a restaurant legally and expand it”.*<sup>[42]</sup>

Even in our small sample of participants doing business, eight said they had been victims of fraud by Egyptians. The following experience is typical:

*“...I faced a lot of problems with my partner, he began to cheat me and lie to me, we started to argue, mostly about financial issues. As a consequence we had heavy losses which affected the capital, so I cancelled the partnership in 2007 and took my money.”*<sup>[43]</sup>

### **Women’s experience**

Women’s experience in Cairo is diverse. Those with employed husbands can afford to stay home as housewives, which for some groups is culturally valued. One Iraqi said:

*“One of the most valuable Iraqi traditions is that whenever there is an adult men in the*

*family, the women are not allowed to work so only adult mature male are responsible for providing financial means to cover the livelihoods’ expenses”.*<sup>[44]</sup>

The livelihoods’ situation for refugees and other migrants in Egypt challenges the norms established by cultural practices. There are more job opportunities for women than men since women do cleaning jobs. However, this can generate conflicts within families as it is culturally more acceptable for women to work at home.

Some female heads of household are employed, and others receive money from their working adult children to pay for the families’ basic needs. Others rely on remittances or financial assistance (from Caritas). Women with absent husbands must adapt and negotiate their gender roles. Where men are heads of household and unemployed, the situation becomes difficult and tensions arise.

At least 6 participants, especially those engaged in illegal activities such as sex work, said their livelihood activity brings some risks:

*“... I have faced several problems - some men beat me and some men don’t pay me at all and forced me to sleep with them and there is nothing I can do about it since sex work is strictly illegal here in Cairo and I cannot even file a police report”.*<sup>[45]</sup>

[42] SOM06

[43] IRQ01

[44] IRQ04

[45] ERT07

Sex work also isolates those who do it from the community since it is not socially accepted.

### *The importance of documents in obtaining work*

Two kinds of documents are related to migrants' ability to work in Egypt: identification documents, including a work permit, and business licenses. The need for work permits is seen as a disadvantage for foreigners:

*"...unemployment and lack of opportunities is a reality here for both Egyptians and foreigners, but it is harder when as a foreigner you do not have a work permit, and as a refugee you don't have anything at all".<sup>[46]</sup>*

One South Sudanese said working in Egypt illegally limited his opportunities – instead of working in a shop; he had to sell his goods in the street. Eritreans and Ethiopians said having identification documents which state that refugees are not allowed to work was an impediment to finding work. Refugees said that without a valid passport or a UNHCR card their ability to seek employment is restricted. Those without legal documents to work or run a business in Egypt do not pay taxes, nor do they receive social security or any other benefits or protection.

However, some key informants including UNHCR have said that currently the authorities are not creating problems with work permits. The importance of work permits - how they are perceived by refugees and monitored and

enforced by the authorities - changes with political developments. Compared with other host countries where work restrictions are more strictly enforced, Egypt does not monitor foreigner activities closely, and government authorities tend to turn a blind eye. This gives refugees some space to work – the informal sector and other 'open' channels allow both foreigners and Egyptians to avoid the official radar. This is an important consideration in advocating for work permits. Too much advocacy for providing work permits has the potential to backfire if the state starts cracking down, and could mean many lose the jobs they currently have.

### *Help finding work or starting business*

Our participants all mentioned their community -- friends, relatives, roommates and neighbors -- as well as religious institutions (such as the church for Eritreans and Ethiopians) and community centers as a source of help finding work or starting a business. The Oromo community center is an important source of support for the Ethiopian Oromo, even if no formal assistance is provided. Relatively fewer Iraqis mentioned the community as a source of help; most said they got no help finding their jobs or starting their business.

Other sources of help finding work mentioned were:

- employment brokers,
- Refuge Egypt's domestic worker placement program,
- an employment office, and

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[46] KIERTS2

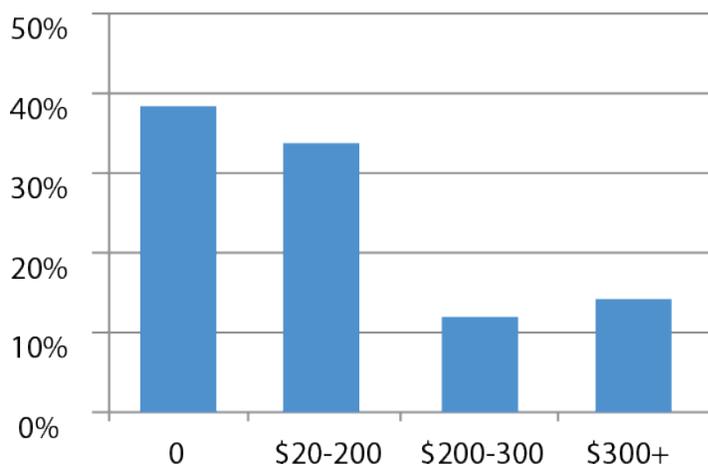
- Egyptians (Iraqis and Sudanese mentioned that Egyptians helped them set up a business and find work)

Partnerships with and help from relatives and close friends in the home country are necessary for the exportation of goods. Help from the home country includes logistical support to obtain the correct documentation, and financial support.

In sum, employment for migrants and refugees is largely in the informal sector. Without official permission to work and with limited or non-existent assistance, refugees (and migrants) rely on their own resources and the help of their communities to meet basic needs of food and shelter. Those who move beyond a survivalist existence have the ability to adapt, look for niche markets, learn a new language, and take financial and legal risks. Others - who are unable to accommodate to a new urban setting, or are unable to cope with the psychological and physical consequences of their displacement and mobilize their own resources - face severe financial hardships.

## Income and financial assistance

Our participants' household income came both from work and from other sources of assistance. Reported household income of the 83 participants willing to share information is represented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Monthly reported income in US\$ (n=83 reporting)

### *Less than 500LE per month*

One third of our participants (32) is currently unemployed and has no income.

- Of these, 18 said they have other sources of income such as remittances or stipends from Caritas (see below).

7 participants (9%- 5 women and 2 men) receive between 100-500LE per month.

- 4 complement their income with remittances and support from Caritas.
- 2 are heads of household with 6 financial dependents.

### *500-1000LE per month*

22 participants (27%, 10 women and 12 men) receive between 501-1000LE per month.

- 7 (5 women and 2 men) receive remittances (5) and support from Caritas.
- 8 are heads of household with 19 financial dependents.

*More than 1000LE per month*

10 participants (6 men and 4 women) receive more than 1000-1500LE per month.

- 9 are heads of household with a total of 25 financial dependents among them.
- Four received remittances in addition to their work income.

12 earn more than 1500LE monthly, (6 men and 6 women).

- In addition to their salaries, 4 receive remittances,
- 5 are heads of household with 12 dependents.

In addition to income generated by household members or the diaspora (remittances), financial assistance also comes from refugee aid organizations and community sources.

*Assistance from refugee organizations*

In Cairo, formal refugee assistance is largely limited to registered refugees with a UNHCR card. Of our 90 participants, 73 said they had a UNHCR card. Those without this card have limited access to services and organizations, including Caritas, CRS and UNHCR. Refuge Egypt has its own policy towards African refugees, and AMERA, PSTIC, and St. Andrews provide services to all refugees, independent of UNHCR status (except for AMERA's legal services, which mostly provide legal aid for refugee claims). In an earlier survey of only Sudanese refugees (including South Sudanese) in Cairo,<sup>[47]</sup> we found

[47] Jacobsen et al 2012.

that more than 90% of Sudanese refugees had contacted UNHCR.

Caritas is UNHCR's implementing partner for providing financial assistance to refugees. This assistance is usually provided to families, (the number of children dictates the amount of financial assistance) and to individual with medical problems. Of our 73 participants with a UNHCR card, 16 said they were currently receiving financial assistance from Caritas, and another 5 said they were waiting to receive it. (In our earlier Sudanese survey, 64% reported being in contact with Caritas, but only 13% reported receiving cash assistance from Caritas) The recipients included 14 families and two singles who receive financial assistance due to medical and psychological issues. The 14 families had 2 – 8 household members, most with serious medical conditions or disabilities. The assistance is used to cover rent and other expenses. Participants identified the gap (a few months) between the periods in which they receive assistance as the most difficult. Seven of the recipients also had other sources of income. All Iraqis stated having other sources of income.

Two participants had received financial assistance from UNHCR in the past for specific reasons. After the Mostafa Mahmoud incident in 2005-6, UNHCR gave 300 EGP to those whose names were listed for participating or had been arrested. One participant's husband had been arrested and detained for 3 months then, and on his release, they were given 300 LE.<sup>[48]</sup>

[48] SS05

Several participants said they did not seek assistance and services from refugee organizations. One Iraqi participant said he thought receiving services from NGO or “charity” organizations “*felt like begging*”.<sup>[49]</sup> A number of participants stated they have not accessed refugee services because they are financially stable, while others said they would not access such services if they did not have to for financial reasons. However, the refugees’ perception of services also explains why they often choose not to utilize services. According to an Ethiopian informant, the Ethiopian community is suspicious of UNHCR because most Ethiopians are rejected by UNHCR. Ethiopians think they are discriminated against by Caritas, who only gives financial assistance to Ethiopians on special cases. The suspicions about UNHCR feeds into the rift between Oromo and other Ethiopians: the Oromo accuse Amhara Ethiopians of using Oromo claims to try to get refugee status.<sup>[50]</sup> This tension exists between the Ethiopian community and service providers, and amongst the Ethiopians themselves.

Ethiopians are not the only community that feels discriminated against by organizations. Another key informant said South Sudanese believe they are discriminated against by refugee services and feel unsupported. South Sudanese “*view that the UN as not humanitarian but implementing political and legal [policies]*.”<sup>[51]</sup> These beliefs are likely to affect the way South Sudanese and Ethiopians use services.

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[49] IRQ01

[50] KIETHORM, 2

[51] KISSUDCL, 3

In addition to the refugee agencies in Cairo, a number of charity organizations donate money and food to individuals and families regularly and during special occasions such as Eid and Ramadan. Churches and mosques are also sources of assistance. Churches appear to have the most active community networks, including Orthodox for Ethiopians and Catholic for South Sudanese. The church networks often provided assistance during financial emergencies or when seeking employment.

### *Non-organizational assistance*

Refugees receive assistance from their own communities, and from the diaspora. Participants also mentioned Egyptians helping – in addition to landlords helping with the rent, one participant said his employer had helped with health costs related to a work incident, and another was given a sewing machine by a neighbor to start his own tailoring business. Some parents marry their daughters in order to receive dowries, which could represent a risk for women.

About a third (38/90) of our participants are currently being assisted by friends, relatives and others of the same nationality. All the refugee communities except Iraqis stressed this help especially upon first arrival. Often this help came in form of shelter, food, connections, and information about procedures.

Somalis saw their community as the main source of assistance.<sup>[52]</sup> As previously explained, assistance to individuals with no income in the

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[52] KISOMCL, 2

Somali community often takes place in exchange for housework and becoming part of a household.

Among the Ethiopians, five said they were assisted with shelter and information upon first arrival by other nationalities – Sudanese and Eritreans.

Remittances are an important source of assistance, but relatively few households receive them regularly. Only a quarter of our participants said they received remittances (15 women and 6 men) from friends and relatives in Israel, South Sudan, Jordan, USA, Australia, Canada. In our earlier study of Sudanese refugees in Cairo, we found that out of 565 in the survey sample, 153 respondents, or 27%, had received remittances at least once. Of these 153 receivers, only 21 (4% of total) reported receiving remittances on a monthly basis, and most said they received “help” only once or twice a year - on Eid (Muslim Feast) or upon request in an emergency.<sup>[53]</sup>

## Supporting livelihoods – Increasing access to assets

UNHCR’s main implementing partner in Cairo, Caritas, has a vocational training (VT) program. We asked our participants about their experience in this program, and about other ways in which refugees could be supported – both in terms of training and new opportunities.

### *Caritas Vocational training*

In addition to their social and medical services, Caritas has a Vocational Training program for registered refugees. In 2011, Caritas referred some 1,200 refugees (2.7% of the refugee population in Cairo) to Caritas projects and the Don Bosco Vocational Training Center, which offers some 22 courses, including hairdressing, electronics, welding, driving, appliance repair, tailoring and Arabic classes.

In order to learn more about how the Caritas program was perceived by refugees, UNHCR and Caritas enabled us to interview former participants. Caritas prepared a list, broken down by nationality: Sudanese (80), Somalis (25), Iraqis (25), and Eritreans and Ethiopians (20). However, we encountered difficulties in accessing these participants. Most of the phone numbers were either out of service or belonged to someone else, and when we did reach people less than half agreed to be interviewed because they did not feel comfortable given the political instability. After trying for several months both to get the list from Caritas and then to contact the participants, we were able to interview only 22, of whom 8 were from Sudan, 7 from Iraq, 4 from Somalia, 2 from Ethiopia and one from South Sudan.

Our interviewees told us they had learned about the vocational training through friends and relatives, during registration interviews, or through sporadic announcements at Caritas offices. Those wishing to enroll put their names on a waiting list and were later screened through

[53] Jacobsen et al 2012.

a Caritas interview, informed of the available courses and given an option to register. Waiting time for an interview varied, in one case up to four months, but it can take just a few weeks.<sup>[54]</sup>

The courses they had taken were: computer (maintenance and operational systems), mechanics, first aid, electronics, hair dressing, satellite dish installation and adjustment, maintenance of air conditioning systems, mobiles and household appliances, welding, sewing and embroidery, and Arabic language. All course fees are covered by Caritas, which also provides transportation money, an average of 20 EGP (\$US3.50) per class. However, two courses – driving and welding – require additional fees and documents (such as confirmation of literacy) and a letter from the driving school.<sup>[55]</sup>

Our informants said the instructors were good (spoke clearly) and they learned new information and acquired skills that could help find jobs should they return to their home country or travel elsewhere. However the biggest problem was finding work after acquiring the new skills. Only two participants reported being able to make use of their skills. Both were conducting informal businesses at home. One said:

*"this training course made me more professional, my income increased to 1000LE per month. I gained more customers and I became a famous woman in my neighborhood. I thank my God and I thank Caritas which helped me in improving my skill. My*

*older son... started to help me in my small business, he is responsible for buying raw materials from the market and also for selling the products. We built a small workshop at the apartment".<sup>[56]</sup>*

The other participants have not found work that uses their new skills. Some of the reasons given were that employers prefer to hire Egyptian people, and the inability to develop their own businesses. One respondent said:

*"I didn't get any benefit from Caritas training programs because most of these programs were theoretical and after we finish these courses we couldn't find job. Most of the employers were not interested in people who took these courses".*

Respondents who tried to take Caritas vocational training in driving could not complete because they could not pay the additional fees. The driving course requires extra fees for the literacy certificate and for the traffic authority, which had to be paid up front.

### *Other training*

Twenty-two respondents said they (and some of their household members) have taken training courses other than Caritas (8 Sudanese, 4 Southern Sudanese, 3 Eritrean, 3 Ethiopian, 2 Somali and 2 Iraqis). These courses included:

- English language with STAR, British Council-AMERA, Saint Andrews, Refuge Egypt

[54] S04, SOMC04  
[55] SC07, S05

[56] IRQC4

and Tadamun

- Cleaning course at Refuge Egypt
- Computer skills at Saint Andrews
- Interpreters program with CCIP at AUC
- Arabic classes at CBOs like Safwat school in Hay el Ashir, or religious charter schools for adults such as Hamein school
- Welding course at Don Bosco
- Computer courses in private institutes

One female participant said “...these training programs helped me in many ways, it increased my self-confidence and it gave me good chance to work with these organizations later on. It opened to me a new horizon to work and learn.”<sup>[57]</sup>

Participants who have not taken any of the courses available, nor continued with their education, gave the following reasons:

- financial difficulties,
- lack of time (difficulties balancing work, family duties and education),
- lack of information – some believed that refugees are not allowed to access education while in Egypt
- not being psychologically ready to do so
- the belief that courses do not provide skills that could increase access to employment while in Egypt.

Refugees face many obstacles to taking literacy and adult education classes in Cairo, but there is much demand for these courses, and having them offered at refugee schools is an important livelihood support.

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[57] IRQ02

## Skills and education

More than half (57/90) our participants said they wanted to complete higher education degrees (14), or continue with their education or adult training courses such as language classes [Arabic (9) and English (24)], computer courses, business management, welding and other technical skills, and nursing/health care.

Our participants also sought help with accessing education, both to finish secondary education and in the form of scholarships or grants to pursue university studies. Several South Sudanese said they wanted to gain education and skills in Egypt in order to apply it to livelihoods or start businesses back in South Sudan. They also wanted to learn English both because it is an international language, and because it is the official language of South Sudan.

21 participants said they could establish their own small businesses if they were not blocked by obstacles including:

- lack of financial resources such as credit or access to organizations that lend money,
- lack of identification documents from the Egyptian government, and
- legislation that does not allow foreigners to set up businesses.

Participants who worked in risky jobs such as sex workers and qat sellers said they would like to find safer jobs. However, one participant thought he would never be able to work legally, and would only be able to find legal and non-risky employment if he left Egypt.

Half our participants said they wanted skill building and training courses, including business development/management, as well as assistance in obtaining business licenses and with learning business procedures. Among the Iraqis, perhaps because they have more financial assets than other refugee communities, the focus on investment was higher. They explained the need for “orientation about how to invest in Egypt”, and help with administrative procedures for opening a business and how to avoid fraud. South Sudanese and Eritreans also sought business-focused services.

Our participants said they wanted to improve their skills in order to integrate into the job market: *“the training programs at Caritas [are] not enough because they only take few people, and I wish there were programs that develop other skills (i.e., advanced carpentry)”*.<sup>[58]</sup> Other participants sought more courses for women, including driving courses, as well as support for networking activities and job placement programs.

One weakness identified was that the agencies do not see the problems of the refugees ‘holistically’, i.e. that livelihood skills are linked to other market-based needs. Thus even with vocational training, people do not find employment because to use their new skill they must be able to set up a shop, have merchandise, access markets, etc. All this requires many procedures and obstacles to be faced. The entire process needs to be tackled, not just providing the skill.<sup>[59]</sup>

[58] ERT013  
[59] KISUDCR, 4

### *Niche markets*

In Cairo, our participants frequently mentioned competition with Egyptians as a reason for not being able to pursue livelihoods. One way around this is to explore ‘niche markets’ for refugee goods and services. “Niche markets” are geared towards a particular consumer group and provide goods and services that relate to refugees’ particular culture or traditions, or to certain types of employment for which the refugees are better suited than locals. Niche markets include language skills and translation, culinary skills, provision of cultural/traditional services such as nostalgia trade and musical performance, and different services for the humanitarian community.<sup>[60]</sup>

The Somali community has a strong market for Somali goods and services. An example already described is the Somali refugees who tutor the children of Somali diaspora families who come to Cairo, and those who help with Somali businesses. In the Abassiya markets, Sudanese goods are in demand – some produced in Cairo and others imported from Sudan. Such markets could be expanded to include other services and goods produced by refugees, and thus would not compete with the Egyptian labor market. Future market assessments could analyze how deep such markets could be.

### *Community centers*

Many participants and key informants emphasized the need for a physical place – such as a

[60] L. DiPangrazio, Draft paper, 2011

community center – where refugees can meet, conduct ‘cultural’ activities, exchange information, and strengthen social networks, as well as places for sports (especially important for youth). The refugees’ own communities are a resource than can be tapped into, but a space is needed to facilitate this. Such center could be designed to be neighborhood-based so as to include locals – this could be part of a wider integration strategy.

## Assessing their lives in Cairo and future migration plans

When asked how they viewed their lives in Egypt, about a third of our participants said they had had a positive overall experience because they gained access to education, skills and language courses, and had even been empowered: *“I had to learn how to survive in a society which is not mine”*.<sup>[61]</sup> A South Sudanese participant said: *“the experiences in Egypt, from the education I gained here to my working experiences and skills have greatly influenced my business and life”*.<sup>[62]</sup> Some Iraqis said they valued having been able to save the lives of themselves and their families, and had developed new relationships and learned to relate to people from another culture.

Another third said Egypt had not had a good influence in their lives, because of lack of access to higher education, feeling stuck in Egypt, their

poor financial situation and uncertainty about their own and their children’s future. One South Sudanese said: *“Always when I start to think about my children’s future my mind is confused, with feelings of a dark future for my children”*.<sup>[63]</sup>

Others saw their experience as a mix of opportunities and difficulties that block livelihood pathways. One Sudanese participant said:

*“my life in Egypt has positive and negative influences. The positive is the ability to study English - there are many centers where you can study English and it is affordable, and the time suits everyone especially those who work during the day have the chance to study at night. The negative is the poor financial conditions that make it difficult to go forward in your educational future plans”*.<sup>[64]</sup>

One South Sudanese participant said:

*“The protracted situation for refugees means many are unable to fulfill meaningful social roles, gender-based responsibilities, and inter-generational relationships. Many work illegally in jobs that do not match their qualifications. Some stay at home, dependent on their spouses. Women have assumed greater responsibility for their families often because the men are unwilling to do the lower status – and lower paid – jobs that are available.”*<sup>[65]</sup>

[61] SOM05  
[62] SS03

[63] SS05  
[64] SC4  
[65] SS02

Our participants were also concerned about Egypt's financial and social instability, as well as discrimination.

### Migration plans

About half (48) our participants said they wanted to leave Egypt for another country, such as USA, Europe, Australia, or Canada, either through resettlement or migration. However, only six had concrete plans to be resettled either through UNHCR or family sponsorships. People wanted to leave because they saw no opportunities in Egypt for education, business, or work. One Somali participant who has lived in Egypt for 11 years off remittances from his brother in Canada said he feels he has lost a chapter of his life, but in Canada he will be able to start work and life for himself.<sup>[66]</sup> These views are widely held: “We

*are not able to live here. Long-term psychological problems cannot be changed even if policies changed now. We have no right to move, work, education and access to health”.*<sup>[67]</sup>

25 participants said they wanted to return to their home countries. None were from Ethiopia or Somalia. Of our 15 South Sudanese participants, 10 said they wanted to go back to South Sudan, including one who had been born and raised in Egypt. They could not go however, because they lacked financial means to go to South Sudan, and because of the instability, lack of infrastructure, and high cost of living there.

About half our Iraqi participants said they would like to return to Iraq: “...when the security situation improves, I would like to return to my country, get married with an Iraqi girl and return

*back to my original job as goldsmith”.*<sup>[68]</sup>

In the past few years, a stream of refugees have found traveled to Israel from Cairo to find work. In recent months, however, it is believed that fewer people have left for Israel because of the increased trafficking and danger in North Sinai. Respondents were very aware of this danger. Another important issue highlighted



Photo by Alice Johnson

[67] KIETHAMH3  
[68] IRQ08

[66] SOMC04

by key informants was that people are trying to cross to Turkey and Europe without documents or with false documents. Our participants' views on this migration reflected the (somewhat misguided) belief widely held by refugees in Cairo that countries like Israel, Turkey and Europe would provide better legal protection – would not deport them - and better access to livelihoods.

Given their difficult livelihoods experience, it is not surprising that most refugees wish to leave Egypt. But return to their homelands appears to be desired by only a small number. This means that onward migration – with all its risks and uncertainties – is a likely outcome for those who can manage it. For those who can not, their lives in Egypt will continue to be impoverished and unfulfilled, and perhaps increasingly insecure, as long as livelihood opportunities are not forthcoming. With the new UNHCR Livelihoods Program, there is hope that this could change.

# Annexes

## Annex 1: Activities in home country vs. current occupation

<b>Businesses Home Country</b>		<b>Businesses Current</b>	
Women (W)	Men (M)	Women	Men
Produce and sell traditional bread, street tea seller, cosmetic shop, restaurant, shop keeper family business.	Carpentry, car repair, goldsmith, grocery shop, water seller, leather trader, market seller.	Produce and sell traditional bread, restaurant owner, cook and restaurant owner, designer and tailor.	Exports goods to ERT from EGY and SUD, exports to SSUD, currency broker, bookshop and stationary, car repair, women's clothes and accessories street seller, qat seller
<b>Employment Government Home Country</b>		<b>Employment Government Current</b>	
W	M	W	M
Teacher primary school, Admin work	Guard, Ministry of Tourism	None	None
<b>Employment Private Home Country</b>		<b>Employment Private Current</b>	
W	M	W	M
Grocery shop, cashiers studio and production engineer for TV, travel agency sales, nurse, worked at NGO.	Travel agency employer, salesman in bakery, communication company maintenance, car repairing assistant, restaurant cleaner, gas station keeper	Cleaner, baby sitter, pharmacist assistant, NGO worker (psychosocial worker).	Cleaner, NGO worker (interpreter), driver, security guard.
<b>More than one occupation Home Country</b>		<b>More than one occupation Current</b>	
W	M	W	M
Selling traditional alcohol drinks and sex work, waitress and sex work	Min of agriculture + electronics shop owner, farmer + nurse assistant, Min of housing + construction, taxi driver + jewelry seller, lecturer + supermarket owner, hospital director +private consultant, taxi driver and car spare parts business, musician and pipe welder, groceries shop and soldier, grocery trade and driver	House cleaner and English tutor, house cleaner and henna artist, tailor and business (women's clothes and electrical appliances).	Teaching in private school and tutoring

<b>Self-employment Home Country</b>		<b>Self-employment Current</b>	
W	M	W	M
Afaan Oromo teacher, henna artist	Farmer, tailor, construction worker, livestock	Sex worker, handcrafts production, Arabic tutor, henna artist, extra for TV and films	Handcrafts, fills forms and teaches English at home

## Annex 2: Organizations providing programming

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Acronym</b>
Association for Development and Anhacement of Women	ADEW
African Hope	-
Aga Khan Foundation	AKF
Al Shehab	-
Al Tadamun Micro Finance	TMF
Alashanek ya baladi	AYB
African and Middle East Refugee Assistance	AMERA
Barclays	-
Canossa Learning Center	Canossa
Caritas Egypt	Caritas
Cairo Community Interpretation Program	CCIP
Canadian International Development Agency	CIDA
Catholic Relief Services	CRS
Don Bosco	-
Drosos Foundation	Drosos
Egyptian Foundation for Refugee Rights	EFRR
Food and Agriculture Organization for UN	FAO
Food Bank	-
Habitat International Coalition	HIC
Injaz	-
International Organization for Migration	IOM
Joseph Employment Office	Josephs
Proctor&Gamble	-
Psychosocial Training Institute in Cairo	PSTIC
Refuge Egypt	-
Saint Andrews Refugee Services	St. Andrews
Sakakini	-
Shell	-
Student action for refugees	STAR
Tadamon Refugee Council	TRC
Terre des hommes	TDH
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
UNHABITAT	-
UN High Commissioner for Refugees	UNHCR
UNICEF	-
Vodafone	-

### Annex 3: Programming currently provided by organizations interviewed\*

	Education	Vocational Training	Language Training	Micro-Finances / Business literacy	Grants / Emergency Cash	Housing	Job Placement
Children under 5	Refuge Egypt Canossa Centre** African Hope (American Curr)**				CRS		
Children over 5	St Andrews Sakakini African Hope(American Curr)** Shell	Drosos (Prison)			CRS ADEW (Girls)		
Young People (18-25)	African Hope (American Curr)**  South Sudanese Embassy FB Vodafone	STAR Don Bosco St Andrews Caritas** FB	STAR St Andrews Canossa Centre Caritas (Arabic)** FB	Barclays Injaz Shell TRC** Vodafone	South Sudanese Embassy		Barclays
Adults	Canossa Center** Drosos Vodafone	STAR - handicrafts Don Bosco St Andrews Refuge Egypt Caritas** CCIP** Drosos AYB ADEW AKF CIDA	STAR St Andrews Refuge Egypt Canossa Centre Caritas (Arabic)**	TRC** AYB AKF Barclays CIDA Drosos	TRC**		Refuge Egypt Joseph's Agency AYB CIDA
Men							
Women	ADEW AKF	Barclays	Caritas Somali Women Arabic	ADEW TMF		ADEW Women at risk and children under 16	
People with Disabilities					Caritas** CRS Vodafone		
All		IOM - Health Trg. Vocational Trg  Canossa Center**	Canossa Center**  TRC**	FB	AMERA El Nadim Center Caritas**  IOM ERT Church Oromo Comm	Habitat  Refuge Egypt	AMERA

\*Organizations in red are providing services only to local population, those in black provide services to migrants and refugees and those in blue to both groups.

Leadership and Life Skills Development	Mobilizing Social Networks	Business Development	Agriculture	Health /Psychosocial /Programs	Legal Advice	Food / in kind donations
ADEW						
ADEW Drosos (Prison) P&G						Vodafone
Refuge Egypt UNICEF AKF Barclays EASER (students) Injaz	Somali Embassy	CIDA				
OFW IOM TRC** CRS Cairo Family Planing Association AYB CIDA	TRC** Al Shehab	Refuge Egypt CIDA (Value chain & markets)	CIDA	PSTIC		
ADEW EASER (domestic workers) Al Shehab		TMF TDH	TDH	Al Shehab	ADEW EASER (domestic workers)	
AMERA St Andrews-Conflict Mediation	AMERA St Andrews PSTIC Habitat	Tadamon	St Andrews FAO	Refuge Egypt Caritas AMERA El Nadim Center P&G	AMERA EFRR	FB Shell

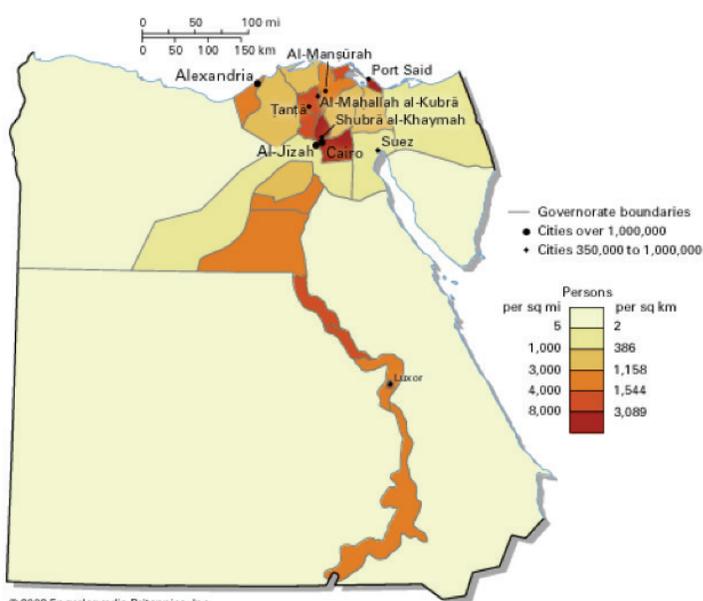
## Annex 4: Egypt's governorates and population distribution and map

Egypt's current population (estimated at between 78-81 million people<sup>69</sup>) is distributed across 27 governorates (Table 5). By far the highest concentration is in the Middle Cairo-Giza region, which now includes the former governorates of 6th October (re-integrated into the Giza) and Helwan (re-integrated into Cairo), as of April 2011.<sup>†</sup> This region comprises just two percent of the country but is home to 19% of the population – more than 15 million people.

In 2009, poverty levels averaged 22%, with urban poverty at 11% and rural poverty 29%. However, the rapid growth of informal “ashwaiya” –slum areas in urban areas - means that urban poverty levels are likely underestimated.

**Table 5:** Population concentration by region in Egypt, approximate figures

Egypt Region	Area KM	% total country land area	Population	% of Total Population
Canal	37,122	4%	2,183,346	3%
Lower (Delta)	241,073	26%	37,146,951	48%
Middle (Cairo/Giza)	14,202	2%	15,076,088	19%
Sinai	60,714	7%	529,012	1%
Upper	591,231	64%	22,839,850	29%



<sup>69</sup> CAPMAS website retrieved January 1, 2012 <http://www.capmas.gov.eg/?lang=2>

<sup>70</sup> Egypt State Information Service, retrieved April 15, 2011, <http://www.sis.gov.eg/En/Story.aspx?sid=54863>



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