

**KEY PRACTICES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO
IMPROVED OUTCOMES OF LITERACY
INITIATIVES IN EGYPT**

Education Reform Program

Community Participation and Adult Literacy Division

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Jane Rosser
Primary Investigator

Fatma Mossallem
Field Researcher

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On August 23, 2007 President Hosni Mubarak stated that even though the illiteracy rate was declining, more efforts should be exerted as “those rates were not enough.” Statements made by the Chairman of the Adult Education Agency (AEA), align with those made by President Mubarak by emphasizing a comprehensive strategy for decentralized reform.

ERP’s Adult Literacy component focuses on combating illiteracy in those idaaras in 7 governorates with the lowest enrollment and pass rates for literacy as measured by AEA. In just a short time, ERP has seen a dramatic increase in learner outcomes in terms of the number of learners entering literacy classes and passing the literacy competency exam conducted by AEA. In fact, in three of the seven governorates in which ERP is working, each of the targeted idaaras has achieved the highest percent increase in terms of enrolled learners and exam pass rates.

The purpose of this study is to clarify those key practices that contribute to the success of literacy initiatives in targeted idaaras in Cairo, Fayoum and Minia. For purposes of comparison, the study also reviewed the literacy program of Caritas (Minia).

The study is not an evaluation but rather a learning and stocktaking exercise based on the perspectives of key stakeholders. It used a combination of discussion guides, participatory rural appraisal and appreciative inquiry techniques to probe stakeholder perspectives with 368 respondents over a three-week period.

Key Practice #1: Public/Private Partnerships

ERP and AEA have promoted strategies for actively engaging non-governmental institutions and local government units and councils as critical partners (public-private partnerships) in improving learner outcomes. Such strategies seek to devolve responsibilities for the implementation of literacy programs from Cairo to the governorates and from AEA to local institutions. This has resulted in AEA actively consulting with Community Development Associations, local village councils, universities, businesses, mosques, churches and education committees about the literacy needs in their communities and incorporating them in the process of increasing the number and quality of literacy facilitators, classes and learners. .

Those that know the community best are now major partners in promoting literacy programs. Such institutional arrangements represent an acknowledgement by AEA of the potential programmatic and financial benefits of “outsourcing” key functions that contribute to increasing enrollment.

ERP’s Partner NGOs (PNGOs) have played a critical part in these new institutional arrangements. All of them have long-standing credibility with the target communities, are highly experienced with various types of community development efforts including education and literacy efforts, and have trained and worked closely with local CDAs.

Under the ERP, the PNGOs worked with the CDAs to help increase the number and quality of literacy classes, literacy facilitators and learners through social mobilization and literacy awareness campaigns.

Learning from the practice of public-private partnerships includes:

- * New institutional arrangements are critical for improving social mobilizing and recruitment efforts for literacy classes, literacy facilitators and learners; improving learner enrollment and coverage; and, providing credibility and often times financial benefits for AEA in these areas.
- * In addition to basic organizational development inputs, CDAs need training to promote social mobilization campaigns, conduct community needs assessments and support literacy classes.
- * Other local institutions such as village councils, local administrative units, BOTs, mosques and churches are also critical to mobilizing new classes, literacy facilitators and learners.
- * Creative leadership from a governor can be a major factor in successfully promoting literacy efforts in a governorate.
- * Large, experienced NGOs can play a critical role in coordinating literacy efforts with the governor and local institutions, strengthening the skills of smaller NGOs and CDAs to support such efforts, and introducing program and pedagogical innovations.

Key Practice #2: Technical Training and Systems Support

ERP has provided extensive needs-based technical training and systems support to AEA literacy facilitators as well as AEA monitors, mentors and, in some instances, supervisors or community facilitators to enable them to strengthen the skills of literacy facilitators.

Respondents from all the stakeholder groups state that a) the training directly contributed to strengthening the skills of the literacy facilitators and those that are responsible for training and supporting them; and, b) that excellent literacy facilitators are a major factor in encouraging learners to enroll in and regularly attend literacy classes. They are the lynchpin of any good literacy program.

The literacy facilitators in the three idaras consistently ranked training in *active learning* sessions as one of the most useful with other training topics following closely behind. In fact, active learning is a foundation topic since it is intended to be integrated with the other training sessions.

The monitors, mentors and supervisors were encouraged to attend the literacy facilitator training and, in addition, directly received training so that they could train and support the literacy facilitators.

The three idaras evolved different structures for training and supporting the literacy facilitators. In all three idaras the supervisors assumed a much more prominent role with those in Fayoum and Minia being identified by the literacy facilitators as more important than either the monitors or mentors.

Learning from the technical training and systems support includes:

- * Pre-service and in-service training as well as ongoing (weekly and monthly) mentoring of literacy facilitators is critical to strengthening their skills especially in such “new” areas as active learning, phonetics-based approaches and supplementary materials.
- * Constant upgrading of the skills and knowledge of the literacy facilitators and those responsible for training and supporting them is critical to achieving and maintaining program quality and learner outcomes.
- * Due to limited funding and human resources, the monitors and mentors are unable to provide the required inputs so supervisors (community facilitators in Minia) have assumed a much more prominent role. Given this situation, they should be included in any training sessions.
- * Wide dissemination of training manuals for those assigned to train and support literacy facilitators is critical to maintaining and expanding achievements.

Key Practice #3: Supplemental Literacy Materials and Teacher Training Guides

ERP and its partners have begun to fill critical gaps in materials by providing critical supplemental materials and teacher training guides. The supplementary materials include four integrated health and literacy books that expose both the literacy facilitators and learners to different materials that can reinforce learning and new literacy skills. The different stakeholder groups from monitors and supervisors to literacy facilitators and learners appreciate the relevance of these materials; they are an important reason for learners enrolling in and regularly attending literacy classes.

The cost to reproduce the supplementary materials is quite high since they are prototypes developed to test and promote integrated literacy methodologies. The situation of printing costs for non-AEA materials is a continual challenge and one that those looking to expand innovative literacy programs should address.

ERP along with its partner NGO and academic institutions also took the important step of reconfiguring the AEA literacy facilitators’ guide. The new Minia literacy facilitators’ guide integrates phonetics, and reorganizes and expands lessons of the AEA curriculum. The Minia manual is, at present, only being piloted in Abou Korkas idaara.

ERP has also developed a “qualifying” or gap curriculum for those learners that pass the exam and wish to go on to preparatory classes. They developed the curriculum in recognition that completion of AEA’s basic nine-month class and passing of the exam does not necessarily prepare a learner to enter into preparatory classes. For example, several subjects such as history, environment and science are not taught in the literacy classes.

Learning from the supplemental literacy materials and literacy facilitators guides includes:

- * The supplementary materials are an example of developing materials based on the needs and realities of learners’ lives.
- * The health materials demonstrate an approach that fully integrates literacy with critical development topics. The printing costs are still quite high since they have not yet been mass-produced as disposable workbooks.

- * Literacy facilitators and learners feel that the new Minia phonetics-based literacy facilitators' guide has made teaching difficult subjects such as Arabic language much easier and contributed to more learners being successful.

Key Practice #4: Transfer of Capacity to Achieve Sustainability and Scale

ERP is attempting to ensure that local institutions engaged in combating illiteracy have the capacity to implement, adapt and expand key practices through transferring such practices and innovations to those institutions. The ultimate purpose of this capacity transfer strategy is to support the government's commitment to address issues of scale and sustainability of literacy program interventions and positive learner outcomes.

ERP's capacity transfer strategy began by assisting branch and idaara staff to develop and monitor strategic and annual plans. At present, it primarily focuses on organizing and training cadres of AEA idaara and branch staff to train literacy facilitators, and transferring capacity and lessons learned between an initial ERP idaara to other idaaras in the same governorate. AEA's Cairo branch is the first to introduce this outward expansion strategy and now has four idaaras engaged at various stages of implementing adult literacy best practices.

As noted by ERP staff, with planning and training systems and guides in place, the capacity transfer strategy could occur with any agency or group of institutions that have responsibility for wide-scale dispersal of adult literacy innovations and training and supporting literacy facilitators.

Learning Summary

- * The capacity transfer strategy builds on the Adult Literacy component's staging approach which enabled the program to clarify effective interventions prior to transferring them to AEA and local institutions.
- * The capacity transfer strategy consists of three aspects: strategic and annual planning assistance, establishment of training cadres to train literacy facilitators, and outward expansion to other idaaras. All three are important for sustaining program innovations but would need to be complemented by other interventions to achieve wider impact.

ERP/AEA Learner Outcomes:

Barriers to enrollment and retention emerge from three main factors mentioned by the different stakeholder groups.

- * Uneven quality of AEA literacy facilitators, curriculum and examination system;
- * Restrictive social and religious traditions contributing to a lack of awareness about the benefits of education especially for girls; and,
- * Economic circumstances (poverty)

The primary reasons for increased enrollment and retention are social mobilization campaigns, improved quality of the literacy facilitators and more relevant curriculum including the phonetics-based teaching methods.

According to different respondent groups, the commitment and high quality of the literacy facilitators is a primary reason for increased pass rates along with the use of active learning methodologies and encouragement by the literacy facilitators and CDAs to attend class. However, the official pass rates do not account for the number of successful learners that choose not to take the exam even after they had completed the course and passed the qualifying test.

Caritas

Caritas has offices in Cairo and five other governorates including Minia where its office opened in 1987. It works in a number of different development sectors but along with other church-related programs has been a leader in developing innovative literacy programs.

As a member of the Ecumenical Committee for Literacy Programs, Caritas helped develop the well-known, phonetic-based basic curriculum, *Learn and Be Free*. They also developed a number of supplemental materials and books for new literates to complement the basic curriculum.

The main course consists of two nine-month phases for a total of eighteen months. The first nine-month phase includes the basic curriculum supplemented by discussions on health, women's enhancement and culture (the government, being a good citizen). The second nine-month phase includes supplemental books on culture, health and women. According to the coordinators, the Caritas curriculum is slower-paced than that of AEA and the phonetics approach makes it easier for new learners to become literate.

In 1995, Caritas introduced a third phase targeted for those learners above fifteen years old. In 2001 Caritas Minia introduced a post-literacy program that is based on learner-promoted community libraries and reading clubs.

Learning from Caritas is as follows:

- * They have identified different types of learners and developed curriculum to meet the needs of those learners.
- * As a non-governmental parallel program, Caritas is under constant pressure to raise funds to support its literacy programs and, in particular, its printing costs.
- * Their emphasis on moving learners to become coordinators (literacy facilitators) and coordinators to become monitors is an innovative approach that others may want to consider.

Conclusions

Increases in AEA enrollment, retention and pass rates are the result of public-private partnerships that contribute to the enrollment and support of learners, the quality of teaching and learning, and the introduction of new and more relevant materials and teaching methodologies. Achievement in learner outcomes, however, does not address the issue of long-term dispersal and sustainability of program innovations.

As mentioned by ERP staff, the capacity transfer strategy will not actually address the problem of the limited time and resources for monitors, mentors and supervisors to provide consistent technical mentoring of the literacy facilitators. An additional challenge would be to clarify which practices to devolve to civil society, the private business sector and communities and which should remain within an official body.

For these and other issues to be addressed, those concerned with improving literacy in Egypt will need to learn from both their mistakes and successful innovations, of which there are many, and seek creative partnerships to pursue a dynamic new course.

To support such an undertaking, key players may want to pursue two major next steps: The first would entail holding high-level discussions with key decision-makers concerning the future of Egypt's efforts to combat illiteracy. The purpose of such meetings would be to set the groundwork for quickly convening a working group to map out a possible design and new institutional arrangements for future literacy efforts. The second step, which could overlap with working group meetings, would be to investigate key issues that could affect future literacy efforts. These include:

- * clarifying those areas that may benefit from being centrally housed and those areas that would do best through devolution to governorates and different types of public and private institutions;
- * clarifying current and future program costs and budgetary arrangements and decision making;
- * examining the optimal mix of public and private institutions to support literacy efforts in the different governorates; and,
- * examining other areas of literacy program innovation in Egypt so that any new program design can learn from such best practice innovations.

It is clear that the Government of Egypt has committed itself to reforming its current literacy program. This commitment is critical to moving forward on building innovative institutional partnerships and securing the human and financial resources necessary to increasing and sustaining learner improvements.

I. INTRODUCTION

Overview of literacy in Egypt

According to official statistics, illiteracy in Egypt in 2005 was 26% (14% for males and 38% for females)¹. However, there are a number of problems with this figure:

- * It masks the fact that illiteracy rates vary by residence and geographic area so that rates for rural women living in upper Egypt are much higher.

¹ *National Planning Report: Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP)*. Social Research Center/AUC. Cairo, May 2006.

- * The rate of decline is slower than achievements in many other developing countries and does not necessarily correspond to the political commitment to eradicate illiteracy.
- * The census year figures are based on a questionnaire asked to the household head whether particular family members above 10 years old are illiterate. In non-census years, the figures are based on the census year illiteracy figure minus the number of those that passed the official AEA literacy examination during the period from the census year to the year in question.

Official statistics thus only consider the level of illiteracy among those that may have passed the AEA exam and do not include all illiterates. For instance, they do not account for the **estimated one third of those that pass the AEA examination that fall back to illiteracy** or the continual flow to illiteracy that results from the poor quality of education or those individuals that may have never attended or dropped out of school. (National Planning Report: Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme (LAMP).

Sample Responses from Learners in Two Literacy Classes (Marg) that had Previously Attended Formal Schools

- I attended:
- * for 6 years but forgot everything;
 - * for 3 years but did not know how to read and write;
 - * for 4 years but wasn't good at reading and writing – I can now read and write;
 - * for 7 years but could not read and write so my father took me out;
 - * for 6 years but got nothing from school.

ERP, AEA and literacy

On August 23, 2007 President Hosni Mubarak stated that the government must pay attention to pursuing development in the poorest villages and that Upper Egypt is the focus of the state's interest. He also noted that even though the illiteracy rate was declining, more efforts should be exerted as "those rates were not enough." Furthermore, President Mubarak stated that he was not satisfied with this rate and that he would apply the principle of accountability at the local level. "President Mubarak said governorates and localities will be responsible from now on for implementing programs aimed at eliminating illiteracy and securing the budgets for this purpose. The General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education (also known as the Adult Education Authority) will be in charge of setting the plans and targets." (Egypt State Information Service).

Views expressed by Dr. Raafat Radwan, Chairman of the Adult Education Agency (AEA)², align with those made by President Mubarak by emphasizing a comprehensive strategy of reform including:

- * outsourcing of literacy classes to community and non-governmental institutions;
- * large-scale and cost-effective training of teachers, monitors and supervisors;
- * use of learner-centered techniques and curriculum;
- * communications and incentive campaigns to promote literacy, community mobilization and participation; and,
- * systems reform including linking budgets with results.

Some senior AEA staff such as General Said Abdel Gawwad, AEA's Cairo branch manager, welcomed the increased effort by the government, "What is happening is very important. It

² ERP staff meet regularly with Dr. Radwan to discuss AEA reform strategies. Many of these ideas are contained in discussion and planning documents for the reform initiative in Beni Suef.

should have happened a long time ago because one-third are illiterate, and we will never be able to succeed without political support.”

This commitment from the highest level of the government also reinforces the efforts by a variety of institutions to combat illiteracy including those of the National Council of Women, academic institutions, local and international NGOs, and multi-lateral and bi-lateral programs including USAID’s efforts through the Education Reform Program (ERP).

ERP’s Adult Literacy component focuses on combating illiteracy in those idaaras in 7 governorates³ with the lowest enrollment and pass rates for literacy as measured by AEA. In just a short time, ERP has seen a dramatic increase in learner outcomes in terms of the number of learners entering literacy classes and passing the official literacy competency exam. In fact, in three of the seven governorates in which ERP is working, each of the targeted idaaras has achieved the highest percent increase in terms of enrolled learners and exam pass rates according to official AEA figures (Appendix 3).⁴ Many of the other ERP idaaras have had equally impressive results. This is quite notable given the presence of contextual factors that often influence literacy class attendance and learning such as traditional gender roles, the opportunity costs of attending literacy classes and variability in AEA branch and idaara leadership.

This study emerged from the interests of ERP USAID and AEA representatives to learn more about the reasons for the improvements in the targeted idaaras. Its aim is to help inform the government’s efforts to address illiteracy and ensure an efficient use of ERPs resources in the remaining months of program implementation (late spring 2009). Its specific purpose is to clarify key practices that contribute to the success of literacy initiatives in targeted idaaras in Cairo, Fayoum and Minia and document those practices for key stakeholders, including government representative, literacy practitioners, civil society actors, the donor community and the private sector. For purposes of comparison, the study also examined the literacy program of Caritas (Minia), a well-recognized local NGO that does not work with either ERP or AEA but has achieved high pass rates on the official AEA exam.

Each of the key practices consists of supportive interventions such as training, materials or organizational inputs provided by ERP to AEA staff, local councils and non-governmental organizations⁵ including CDAs, and actions or activities directly implemented by the host of institutions working to combat illiteracy that result from the supportive interventions. Our documentation indicates that these key practices are a major factor in the recent improvement in learner outcomes.

³ Aswan, Qena, Minia, Fayoum, Beni Suef, Cairo and Alexandria.

⁴ It is important to be cautious when interpreting AEA’s retention and pass rate data. For instance, the AEA definition of retention is based on the number of students that take the certificate exam not on those that successfully complete the two-book course or those that pass a pre-qualifying test to take exam. Even though there is not clear data on this, we found instances of students that successfully complete the course but choose not to take the exam. In addition, according to our interviews, the aggregate pass rate for test takers in areas that are outside of the official testing clusters (a geographic area or group of villages)can not be higher than the pass rate for those in the official clusters.

⁵ The term non-governmental organization refers to a broad array of institutions including

The study was conducted as a learning exercise to understand from the perspective of key stakeholders the particular conditions, interventions and practices that contribute to significant improvements in literacy in targeted areas. Due to time and human resource constraints and the need to capture key learning quickly, the study was not intended to be an evaluation of ERP's adult literacy component. Instead, it was designed as an initial stocktaking exercise that could set the stage for a next level of inquiry that considers a broader range of issues including costs of key supportive interventions and practices.

Study Methodology

In addition to the impressive increases in official literacy statistics, the three idaaras were selected because of innovative program features:

- Marg idara and the entire AEA Cairo branch office is engaged in “second generation” programming which focuses on transferring technical capacity and learning (“mainstreaming”) to three other idaaras in Cairo⁶;
- Fayoum, along with Minia and Cairo, has introduced training cadres to address issues of scale and sustainability and has been a focus of in-depth literacy research conducted by the American University of Cairo's Social Research Center (SRC); and,
- The ERP team in Abou Korkas in Minia has developed and tested a new literacy facilitator's guide that introduces phonetics into the official AEA curriculum and reorganizes specific lessons. Minia governorate is also home to a number of innovative and high performing non-AEA literacy programs.

Due to the abbreviated timeframe of the study and its emphasis on stakeholder perceptions, the Primary Investigator and Field Researcher selected study sites for data collection based on a transect line in each area. (Appendix 2) In Marg this meant identifying sites along Mooessaset El Zaka Street and in Fayoum idara the transect line cut across both urban and rural areas.

Focus groups from the six major stakeholder groups located along the transect line were then organized. The groups included: ERP and Partner NGO staff, learners, literacy facilitators, AEA branch and idara managers, and AEA monitors, mentors and supervisors. Discussion guides were developed for each of these groups. (Appendix 4) To assist in understanding best practices and organizing the report, the areas of inquiry were categorized according to ERP's intermediate results of coverage, quality and management and learner outcomes of enrollment, retention and pass rates. In addition, the investigators used the discussion guides in a flexible manner to ensure that specific points were covered and that appreciative inquiry techniques could be used to more closely examine certain areas. The investigators also use PRA approaches such as Venn Diagrams and card rankings to ensure greater participation from the respondents and enable them to take the lead in discussing, reflecting upon and analyzing key issues.

Key documents were reviewed prior and during the field study and translators and recorders were present at all meetings. Discussions were held with 368 respondents from the key stakeholder groups during the three-week field investigations. (Appendix 5 and 6)

⁶ Discussions were held with monitors, supervisors and mentors from the four idaaras but Marg was the focus of discussions with learners and literacy facilitators.

II. KEY PRACTICES

2.1 Background

Contextual differences

In recognition of contextual differences,⁷ ERP supports decentralization to governorates for specific planning and implementation based on a broad vision and technical plans developed by ERP's technical advisors and directors. The commitment to devolution means that governorate plans and activities evolve from the needs of local partners, learners, literacy facilitators and AEA and results in particular program variations between the different idaras.

Examples of contextual issues that could affect both program interventions and learner outcomes are as follows:

Marg (Cairo) is a large area spread between two governorates. As a result, there is often a gap in service provision by the government. It also has a large immigrant population from all over Egypt that moves there to seek employment. Like many densely populated, poverty-stricken areas of large cities, early marriage, drugs and crime are common. These conditions contribute to the need for literacy facilitators to adapt curriculum so that it is more relevant to the urban conditions of the learners and introduce additional activities in the classes that address the learners' desires for income enhancement interventions.

Unlike many rural areas, Marg as an urban area has numerous qualified candidates for literacy facilitator positions. Many of these literacy facilitators have graduated from secondary school or higher, have worked with such non-formal education programs as New Horizons, New Visions or Alam Simsin and have held their positions for more than five years. In fact, in one group of twenty literacy facilitators in Marg, more than 30% had worked for more than fifteen years. This is a very different situation than that of Fayoum and Minia governorates where experienced literacy facilitators are in short supply and where agricultural production and rural communities are the norm.

Fayoum governorate has a massive challenge in terms of literacy with approximately 40% illiteracy for those ten years old and above and much higher rates for women in rural idaras. There are also areas where households strongly prohibit girls' education; older women are discouraged from attending literacy classes; and, out-migration to urban areas during non-agricultural seasons affects school enrollment and attendance. The governorate has a long history, however, of cooperating with various literacy programs including the British CELL (Capacity for Lifelong Learning) program and programs and research promoted by the Dutch government through the agriculture ministry, Caritas, AUC's Social Research Center and the Ecumenical Committee for Literacy Programs.

⁷ For instance, differing social, cultural, and religious environments as well as experiences with various literacy and development programs.

Fayoum governorate is an example of an area where the demand for literacy facilitators far exceeds that of the number of qualified candidates. In many of its rural areas, the literacy facilitator positions are considered part of the government's employment program for educated, unemployed youth. In Fayoum idaara, however, which covers both urban and rural areas, there are a greater number of qualified literacy facilitators with the average literacy facilitator in one focus group had been a literacy facilitator for 5.4 years.

Minia governorate has a long history of exceptional non-governmental literacy programs that serve both the urban area of Minia city and the small towns and villages of the governorate. Because of this history and the presence of notable university resources, it has been able to develop innovative nationally recognized literacy programs. Despite these resources, it still has many of the same characteristics as Fayoum and other governorates with highly conservative attitudes concerning girls' education. It benefits, however, from a forward thinking governor who recently ordered that 5000 new learners be eligible to receive official identification papers. This action has proved to be a major incentive for enrolling new learners.

The contextual differences between the governorates and idaaras mean that there should not be a blue print approach to implementing literacy programs. For purposes of efficiency, it is clear that a national literacy program must clarify what pieces should be centralized such as testing, record keeping, statistical analysis and printing and what areas should be open for contextual adaptations and outsourcing to other institutions.

The Learners

"I came to the class because I wanted to help my children. I don't understand about the world."
Learner, Marg

Based on ERP baseline surveys, the learners are located in underserved areas with high incidences of poverty. However, there is great variability within this group with some literacy classes mainly composed of learners that are married with children and that have personal reasons for wanting to be literate, and other classes containing adolescent girls that eventually want to attend preparatory classes and find jobs.

Among learners that we interviewed, 46% (30) from three sites in Marg and 48% (21) from two sites in Fayoum had previously attended school. None of these learners felt, however, that they had sufficient skills to pass the official exam. In Abou Korkas 88% (30) of the learners had never attended school.

In both Marg and El Siefia (Fayoum), a number of learners had gone to school for up to 6 years but still were unable to read or write. Others had even reached prep classes but were very weak in reading and writing and had dropped out. There were also cases where girls that had attended schools in other governorates were unable to join the schools in their new governorate because of

either their age or lack of space. Others had dropped out of school because of economic reasons or early marriage and had forgotten everything they had learned. In the more rural area of Zaweit el Karadsaa (Fayoum), most of the learners that had attended school dropped out after their second year due to a combination of economic and social pressures.

Those that had never attended school fell into four categories: their fathers felt that there was no need for girls to be educated, the economic conditions of their families forced them to work, they were not interested in being educated, or they knew they were going to marry early so that there was little need to attend school. In Fayoum they added an additional issue: the geographic distribution of schools which meant that some schools were far away from a girl's village and thus posed perceived security problems.

The Fayoum branch manager said that there were actually three different categories of learners: those that had never attended school, those that had dropped out of school in early primary and those that dropped out after the fifth or sixth year. He felt that this last category of learner would progress faster than the others since they had some background in reading and writing and that a nine-month class may be more suitable for them. This implies that there may need to be additional classes and curricula for specific categories of learners similar to the approach taken by Caritas (Section IV).

The different types of learning goals as provided by learners were indicative of this variability although some goals such as reading the Koran were common to many of the 190 learners that participated in the study. In addition to wanting to learn to read the Koran, the learners in El Shorafa (Marg) listed the following other reasons in order of preference:

- to help their children with their homework
- to feel good about themselves
- to keep letters secret
- to read letters, street signs and medicine labels.

“My son is in 5th grade and I cannot help him with his homework. He says he wants me to be educated so I can help him, and I do not want to go to the neighbors for help.”

“My husband and children are educated, and I am the only uneducated one. I want to be like them.”

Learners, Marg

Others wanted to be able to text message to their husbands that lived outside of Cairo, understand what they are signing so that they won't be cheated, continue on to prep classes, obtain a better job and get higher social welfare payments. (The official exam pass certificate is necessary for both the preparatory classes and higher social welfare payments and would be a benefit in seeking a higher paying job.) In El Siefia (Fayoum) and Zaweit el Karadsaa (Fayoum) as well as in Abou Korkas (Minia) the learners had similar learning goals such as learning the Koran or assisting their children with home work, however, a number of the younger learners said that they wanted to get the certificate so that they could get a better job. Others said that they wanted to understand the health messages.

“I want to be a doctor or engineer or anything.”

Learner, Abou Korkas

At the Mroog (Cairo) CDA literacy class, the learners offered similar responses even though assisting their children with homework and being able to read letters, street signs and medicine

labels were their main priorities. It is interesting to note that two of the women mentioned that their husbands wanted to “marry an educated woman”.

In El Siefia (Fayoum) two of the learners were men who said that they needed to pass the exam in order to get a driving license and a better job.

AEA: Planning, Roles, Curriculum and Testing⁸

To encourage a more professional planning approach, the AEA Chairman instructed the branch managers to transition from annual plans based on the absolute number of illiterates in a governorate to one that assesses the actual needs and capacities to meet those needs. For instance, in 2003 in Abou Korkas (Minia) the idaara manager developed his annual target of 14,000 based on his five-year target of 70,000 illiterates even though the idaara could only meet a fraction of this number. The branch and idaaras now develop their plans and accompanying targets based on the previous year’s achievements, the number of staff and their ability to enroll learners.

The development of training targets also follows this approach. Previously, a branch such as Cairo would construct an annual plan that called for a large amount of training, however, AEA headquarters whose entire training budget is only 3 million EGP (\$556,000), could only provide resources to support approximately 30% of the branch’s training program. The result was that in Marg they could only provide the standard fifteen-day pre-service training and a very limited amount of refresher training to the literacy facilitators. AEA administrative and operational staff received very little training. Unfortunately, even though the targeting may be more accurate, there is still a gap between the need to strengthen the skills of AEA staff and literacy facilitators and the available resources to support strengthening these skills.

AEA resources only support minimal training and salaries for the literacy facilitators, purchase of basic curriculum books (but not supplementary materials) and salaries for branch staff and 10 staff per idaara. There are no resources to train supervisory and monitoring staff. The idaara positions cover functions such as personnel, administrative tracking of learners, exams, finances, public relations, cashiers and stores. In addition to their technical support of literacy facilitators, the two monitors in each idaara must also assume responsibility for some of these administrative functions thus further undercutting the time they can provide to the literacy facilitators. The three idaara managers felt that this structure should be reviewed.

The idaaras clearly do not have sufficient funds to upgrade the skills of their own staff or to motivate or attract learners. Given this situation and the mandate from AEA headquarters, the branches in Fayoum, Cairo and Minia have all established close partnerships with larger NGOs, CDAs, local government units and councils, mosques and other community entities in order to outsource key functions such as identification and recruitment of literacy facilitators and learners. According to the Cairo branch manager, “We shouldn’t be concerned with who gets credit.”

⁸ ERP has supported a number of studies to examine AEA’s systems and, in particular, their testing systems and curriculum. (Please see reports by Barbara Garner and Cristine Smith.) This section does not reiterate their comments but rather just reflect comments made in stakeholder discussions during the recent field visits.

Such an approach requires attitudinal change on the part of branch and idara managers and some staff within headquarters since AEA is in fact a large government bureaucracy working in a non-traditional area. Based on the mandate of AEA's Chairman, it requires flexibility to address contextual differences, and a willingness to modify standard recruitment, training, curriculum, support, and resource mobilization activities. In all three idaras, community partners have begun to work closely with AEA on almost every aspect of the literacy program.

Curriculum and Testing

The AEA basic curriculum consists of two books studied during a nine-month course. In Fayoum and Abou Korkas learners felt that the first book was understandable since it had short sentences but that the second book was too difficult with paragraphs often containing nine complex sentences. The Fayoum learners also mentioned that the AEA books should contain more illustrations and topics that pertain to their own lives. In Abou Korkas, a number of the learners felt that the AEA books became more understandable if the literacy facilitator used the phonetic approach contained in the new Minia literacy facilitators' guide.

Classes are usually for three hours per day, four or five days per week. During the class time, two hours are devoted to studying the regular curriculum while one hour entails an activity period. During the activity period, literacy facilitators can introduce supplementary materials such as the health guides or other complementary activities.

In both Marg and Fayoum, literacy facilitators said that they have been encouraged to reduce the class from nine months to seven months. The reduction in course time may result from some learners being impatient to take the exam that is conducted quarterly in January, April, July and October. The literacy facilitators said that a seven-month course is definitely too short a time for most students. Monitors and mentors in Abou Korkus (Minia) also felt that a nine-month course was too short and was the reason why many students failed the exam. Literacy facilitators in Marg agreed with this perspective and said that the nine-month course resulted in a very superficial understanding of literacy. They said that it was like "cramming" for a test and were not surprised that many learners slid back into illiteracy especially since additional materials (post-literacy) were not available.

Testing issues abound in the AEA system. Respondents emphasized a few critical points that reflect some of the myriad of concerns:

- * The exam tests memorization of a specific text and not actually skills needed to sustain literacy capacity.
- * AEA retains twenty percent of a literacy facilitator's salary until they can determine how many of her learners passed the exam. This approach can contribute to corruption related to literate individuals receiving payment for taking the test for illiterate or new learners. In addition, despite successfully completing the course, there are learners that choose not to take the exam. Because of the twenty percent rule, the literacy facilitators are penalized for the personal decisions of learners concerning the exam.
- * In Abou Korkas, the community facilitators (supervisors) said that there are actually three tests: the pre-qualifying test, the official exam and a post-test that learner must take before receiving their certificate.

- * Some literacy facilitators and learners belonging to classes where the end of the nine-month course does not align closely with the quarterly exam date, feel pressured to take the exam even if it is just 7 to 8 months from when the class first began. In these instances, the literacy facilitators alter the course schedule to meet the official exam date. Such a schedule is very detrimental to new learners. On other occasions, where a literacy course finishes a few months before the next exam date, some students that have successfully completed the class continue to attend the classes so that they will not forget their literacy skills prior to taking the official exam. It is unclear whether these learners, even if they pass the official exam, will quickly fall back into illiteracy because of a lack of materials to reinforce their new literacy skills. In addition to these learners, there are those that have passed the exam and are waiting to enter preparatory classes. According to one adolescent girl in Marg, “If prep classes haven’t yet started, we stay in the literacy class to maintain our literacy skills.”
- * Some learners entered into the class a number of months after it has started and thus may be far behind the other learners in the class. This situation is especially dire if the class has already moved onto book two. The late entrants to the class will definitely have difficulty both in the class and if they decide to take the exam.
- * Those that pass the exam often do not receive their certificates for six months; this situation clearly discourages others from even taking the exam.
- * The AEA headquarter’s examination committee selects the clusters in an idaara with the highest density of classes. They then examine every learner in that cluster that registers for the exam. If out of 400 learners, 200 pass then the committee establishes a pass rate of 50 % across the idaara. If an area outside of the cluster actually has a better pass rate (perhaps 75 %), the committee can still only officially pass 50 % of those that took the exam. This procedure results in a certain portion of the exam takers that actually took and passed the exam receiving a failing notice. It also discourages people from taking the exam. One learner in Abou Korkas said that she had previously taken the exam and knows that she answered everything correctly. However, she received a failing grade, and she and the literacy facilitator think it is because of the quota system.

2.2 Key Practice #1: Public-Private Partnerships

“There are 300 employees but until recently they were not qualified enough to work with the community.”

AEA Branch Manager, Cairo

ERP and AEA have promoted strategies for actively engaging non-governmental and local government units and councils as critical partners (public-private partnerships) in improving learner outcomes. Such strategies seek to devolve responsibilities for the implementation of literacy programs from Cairo to the governorates and from AEA to local institutions. These strategies support the AEA Chairman’s intention to outsource literacy classes to community and non-governmental institutions. Due to the mandate and rationale provided by AEA leadership, branch and idaara offices feel it is imperative to pursue such relationships⁹. This has resulted in AEA actively consulting with CDAs, local village councils, mosques, churches and education committees about the literacy needs in their communities and incorporating them in the process of increasing the number of and quality of literacy facilitators, classes and learners. **Respondents from all stakeholder groups say that the involvement of CDAs and other local government and community organizations have directly contributed to increases in enrollment.** (Section 3.2)

“AEA needs to learn from past experiences. Its role is to plan and monitor not to implement...Now emphasis is on local implementation through local councils, and governorate level bodies.”

General Said, AEA Branch Manager, Cairo

In Minia governorate a range of other partners have been included in their literacy efforts:

- * private sector businesses have been asked to help promote literacy classes;
- * faculty members from Minia University have contributed to the new Minia literacy facilitators’ guide;
- * representatives from the agriculture and health ministries have contributed to class room activities by providing health examinations and agricultural extension services for those passing the exam; and,
- * local literacy committees have been established to complement the efforts of CDAs or to operate in areas where there are no CDAs.

Building on these efforts, the Governor of Minia held a workshop with NGOs to increase the number of organizations actively promoting literacy and sponsored the formation of a governorate-wide executive council to involve key individuals. Furthermore, the governor has established six committees in Minia to promote literacy activities.

Those that know the community best are now major partners in promoting literacy programs. Such institutional arrangements represent an acknowledgement by AEA of the potential financial benefits of “outsourcing” key functions that contribute to increasing enrollment. AEA now consults with CDAs, local units and councils, local education committees and BOTs concerning the literacy needs in their areas and possible social

ERP Cairo Branch Training Topics for PNGOs

- * PRA for educational needs assessments;
- * Monitoring and supervision of literacy facilitators;
- * Institution building of CDAs;
- * TOT for CDAs to conduct participatory community needs assessments;
- * Social marketing for literacy including the role of the community organizations in literacy and increasing the capacity of CDAs mobilizing and opening classrooms.;
- * Arabic and math skills;
- * Building a strong relationship between PNGOs and AEA.

⁹ It is important to note, however, that most idaara staff and some branch staff strongly resisted the outsourcing strategy. It took a long process of meetings, discussions and field visits to “melt the ice’ between AEA and civil society institutions and convince them of the merit of devolving responsibilities especially at the field level.

mobilization strategies for increasing the number of literacy facilitators and learners.

ERP's Partner NGOs (PNGOs) have been a critical part of these new institutional arrangements. They have worked along side ERP staff to implement the adult literacy component and have made critical contributions to both the design and innovation of activities. All of them have long-standing credibility with the target communities, are highly experienced with various types of community development efforts, and have trained and worked closely with local CDAs and other community-based institutions. In addition, most of them have extensive experience supporting literacy interventions.

In Cairo, the *Egypt Association for Comprehensive Development* (EACD), have worked in Marg idara for more than ten years and are familiar with many of the local issues and key figures in the community including religious and community leaders, business people, local political figures and community development workers. ERP staff, as EACD partners, thus did not enter into the communities as outsiders or need to spend time addressing credibility issues.

EACD through their work with health and educational reform programs have become knowledgeable about many formal and non-formal education methodologies including participatory approaches. They have also worked in literacy using the non-AEA curriculum of *Live and Be Free* and training their own literacy facilitators. Like almost all non-AEA literacy programs, their link with AEA has been through their learners taking AEA's official exam in order to obtain their certificates. EACD's background in health has also allowed them to be an excellent resource for the literacy facilitators when introducing ERP's integrated health materials.

EACD staff received training from ERP in order to help implement the adult literacy component. They feel that the most important training was on using PRA for educational needs assessment. As part of these efforts, they met with students in twenty-five classrooms to clarify why people are uninterested in enrolling in literacy classes. The second most important training from ERP was on monitoring and supervision of the literacy facilitators so that they could work along side ERP staff to strengthen the skills of the literacy facilitators and then upgrade the capacities of AEA monitors and supervisors to perform these duties.

Prior to ERP, EACD had worked with CDAs but had just upgraded their technical skills not organizational capacities. Under ERP, they began to support the organizational strengthening of CDAs as a key strategy for supporting the various ERP components including that of the adult literacy component. Thus even though there was no specific training provided to CDAs by the adult literacy component, CDAs gained organizational skills necessary to help conduct social mobilization campaigns, and increase the number and quality of literacy classes, literacy facilitators and learners.

- | |
|--|
| <p><u>Topics for CDA Training to Support Various ERP Components (Fayoum)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Planning* Communications* Resource mobilization* Team building* Needs assessment and awareness |
|--|

In addition, since many of the CDAs did not have room for classes, they built relationships with mosques, churches, youth groups, schools and others to secure space for CDA-supported classes.

Prior to ERP, Marg annually had 600 learners. This has since increased to more than 1500. AEA feels that much of the increase is due to the social mobilization campaigns organized by CDAs and the improved capacity of literacy facilitators resulting from systematic recruitment and improved training inputs. In addition, the CDAs accompanied the monitors for classroom visits with individual learners and held monthly meetings with literacy facilitators and mentors to discuss their problems and needs. The branch manager participated in these discussions so he could help resolve any problems.

The PNGO, *Family and Community Development*, is part of a large NGO network in Fayoum governorate and had worked in education although not in adult literacy prior to ERP. Under ERP, they began by orienting the community about adult literacy and assisting six CDAs and local community education committees to identify and mobilize illiterate individuals to join literacy classes. They provided training to the CDAs so that they and other local groups could take the lead in advertising for literacy facilitators and be part of a panel with AEA and ERP/PNGO staff to test the literacy facilitator candidates. Eventually the CDAs in Fayoum idaara opened 100 classes with just under 2000 learners.

The roles of the CDAs and community education committees promoted by ERP evolved to the point where the CDAs and AEA jointly visited classrooms and the local community education committee worked to solve issues such as AEA's delayed payment of literacy facilitator salaries. In addition to the CDAs and community education committees, ERP worked with school Boards of Trustees (BOTs) to open literacy classes in their schools after school hours and with health centers and mosques to offer space for literacy classes.

ERP in Fayoum emphasizes a dual strategy of a) relationship building between CDAs, community education committees and other local bodies, AEA and ERP; and, b) strengthening the skills of the literacy facilitators. According to the AEA monitors in Fayoum, networking with CDAs and NGOs is one of most important skills that they have learned. For the Fayoum idaara literacy facilitators, they agreed that the CDAs played an important start-up role but that their on-going support was limited to helping them liaise with ERP and assisting with particular issues such as obtaining official identification papers for learners and being an intermediary with the community.

Minia has a long history of NGO efforts in literacy. Many of these groups do not use the AEA curriculum or methodology but instead use an eighteen-month phonetics-based curriculum, *Learn and Be Free*, which incorporates learner-centered approaches and numerous supplemental lessons that reflect the learners every day lives. One of the more prominent NGOs following this approach is ERP's PNGO in Minia, *Jesuit et Freres* (Jesuit). Jesuit began in 1982 by following an approach that balances reading and writing skills with awareness building. They currently operate thirty-eight classes in seventeen villages in three idaaras in Minia. The classes enroll about 400-450 students annually from which approximately 375 graduate from the program and pass the AEA test. Of these, 53 percent (200) continue on to preparatory school. Unlike similar NGO agencies in Minia, however, Jesuit is open to incorporating different curriculum and methodologies and continually modifies its curriculum and teaching methods especially in areas such as teaching Arabic and math.

Jesuit began working with ERP and AEA in 2005 and along with Minia University faculty investigated the problems inherent in the AEA curriculum. The team decided that the AEA curriculum needed to incorporate phonetics, integrate active learning approaches and be reorganized into thirteen lessons that introduce the twenty-eight Arabic letters. These suggestions were the basis for developing a new teachers' guide for AEA literacy facilitators (the Minia literacy facilitators' manual) and would prove to be key in introducing these approaches to learners.

ERP and Jesuit staff began by assessing the needs of learners and literacy facilitators in existing AEA classes in Abou Korkus idaara. They also trained and worked with CDAs (and in some instances BOTs) so that they could help assess community education needs, organize social mobilization campaigns, conduct home visits to allow women to attend literacy classes, mobilize classes, and identify class locations. Eventually the CDAs also identified literacy facilitator candidates; in collaboration with AEA and ERP/Jesuit, tested the literacy facilitators; and, opened 111 classes.

In those areas where there were no CDAs, Jesuit helped form community education committees some of which have since reorganized themselves as CDAs.

As in Fayoum, the literacy facilitators in Abou Korkas stated that the CDAs were most important during the literacy component's start-up phase. They felt that for on-going support they relied on, in order of importance, ERP staff, the community facilitators, the monitors, mentors and branch manager, and then the CDAs. However, they also said that the village council provided a valuable service by providing a meeting hall and assisting learners to secure official documents.

Jesuit's credibility with communities was a major factor in convincing communities and CDAs that AEA would pay the salaries of literacy facilitators if they organized classes. The lack of trust between the communities and AEA reflected the fact that AEA's idaara staff were not well known in Abou Korkas and that those at the branch and idaara levels seemed unresponsive to community needs and conditions. In response to this situation, ERP and Jesuit staff developed a training program for both literacy facilitators and idaara monitors and made sure that the AEA branch staff were also included in such sessions.

Learning Summary

- * New institutional arrangements through public-private partnerships are critical for improving social mobilizing and recruitment efforts for literacy classes, literacy facilitators and learners; improving learner enrollment and coverage; and, providing credibility and possibly financial benefits for AEA in these areas.
- * The mandate from the AEA Chairman to devolve program responsibilities to governorates and outsource recruitment to community-based institutions was critical to catalyzing branch and idaara managers to take action on these fronts. However, the mandate needed to be matched with personal discussions and meeting with AEA idara and branch staff to convince them of the value of the outsourcing strategy.
- * In addition to basic organizational development inputs, CDAs need training to promote social mobilization campaigns, conduct community needs assessments and support literacy classes.

- * Other local institutions such as village councils, universities, businesses, local administrative units, BOTs, mosques and churches are also critical to mobilizing new classes, literacy facilitators and learners.
- * Creative leadership from a governor can be a major factor in successfully promoting literacy efforts in a governorate.
- * Large, experienced NGOs can play a critical role in coordinating literacy efforts with the governor and local institutions, strengthening the skills of smaller NGOs and CDAs to support such efforts, and introducing program and pedagogical innovations.

2.3 Key Practice #2: Technical Training and Systems Support

ERP has provided extensive needs-based technical training and systems support to AEA literacy facilitators as well as AEA monitors, mentors and, in some instances, supervisors or community facilitators to enable them to strengthen the skills of literacy facilitators. These inputs use participatory approaches that model active learning and are transferable to those responsible for technically supporting the literacy facilitators. They reinforce the AEA Chairman’s intention to develop an effective broad-based training system for literacy facilitators, monitors and supervisors.

Many of the ERP training and systems interventions in the three idaaras are similar. However, variations have occurred due to different levels of support and innovation provided by AEA branch and idara managers and staff; numbers of literacy facilitators, monitors, mentors and supervisors requiring training and systems input; and, contextual factors including the presence of highly experienced and active local bodies such CDAs or local councils. In addition, some of the idaaras have begun to review the compendium of training topics in order to compile a condensed pre-service and in-service training curriculum and design effective literacy facilitator mentoring systems. **Respondents from all the stakeholder groups state that a) the training directly contributed to strengthening the skills of the literacy facilitators and those that are responsible for training and supporting them; and, b) that excellent literacy facilitators are a major factor in encouraging learners to enroll in and regularly attend literacy classes.** (Sections 3.2 and 3.3)

Selection of Literacy Facilitators

Prior to ERP there was no standard qualifying test for AEA literacy facilitators. The only selection standards were the number of learners that a proposed literacy facilitator could recruit and a technical or secondary school certificate.

Upgrading the skills of the literacy facilitators began with the selection process. This meant that in Marg, Fayoum and Abou Korkas, ERP provided a workshop for AEA on standards and qualifications for literacy facilitators.

Test Results for Literacy Facilitator Candidates in Marg (Cairo)	
# Candidates	# Pass
35	13
15	7

Teams consisting of ERP/PNGO staff, AEA and CDAs made public recruitment announcements, gave written tests to ascertain Arabic and math skills and interviewed literacy facilitator applicants every three months. In Fayoum idara, the CDA also tested some applicants who said that the CDA test was much more difficult than that given by AEA. However, in the same idara

some AEA staff felt that it was important to screen candidates according to the required qualifications but that they needed flexibility because of the huge demand for literacy facilitators. They also felt that a candidate's relationship with the community was as important as her educational qualifications.

The CDAs and other local groups were thus responsible for identifying likely candidates but AEA was responsible for providing their nine-month contracts and salaries. The literacy facilitators receive eight EGP (\$1.45) per learner per month with two additional pounds per month if the learner passes the test. In Fayoum they said that 150 EGP (\$27) per month is the maximum for a literacy facilitator but very few reached this amount. They also said that a literacy facilitator's contract is renewed only if she has ten learners that have passed the exam or works with those that failed the exam without salary until they have finally passed. It is not clear whether this policy is always enforced, given the number of learners that choose not to take the exam and other issues concerning pass rates.

Literacy Facilitator Training

AEA normally provides fifteen days of pre-service training to literacy facilitators and a two-day refresher training during the year¹⁰. The Fayoum idaara monitors and mentors as well as AEA staff in the other two idaaras feel that that the literacy facilitators need much more training and on-going support than AEA can presently provide.

AEA headquarters provides the curriculum for the pre-service and in-service refresher sessions. Any staff within AEA can provide these training sessions despite a lack of training experience or capacity. In addition to the two-day refresher training, AEA provides limited in-service support to the literacy facilitators through the mentors and monitors. The mentors are actually employees of the Ministry of Education seconded to AEA to assist the literacy facilitators with teaching Arabic and math skills. The monitors are regular AEA employees who in addition to other responsibilities provide general pedagogical support to the literacy facilitators. With only two mentors and two monitors per idaara, there is little possibility of them being able to meet the demands of all the literacy facilitators. Due to these staffing constraints, the supervisors, who normally provide more administrative support, often assume a much greater role in providing technical and pedagogical support to the literacy facilitators.

In the three idaaras, ERP rightfully assessed that the literacy facilitators are critical to improving learner enrollment and other learning outcomes. They also recognized, however, that they first needed to demonstrate to AEA staff specific types of training methodologies for different content areas before AEA could independently conduct effective pre- and in-service literacy facilitator training and support services. They began by assessing AEA's pre-service literacy facilitator training and found that it primarily consisted of lectures with few adult learning teaching methodologies. They then asked the AEA branch managers if ERP could assist with the literacy facilitator training by introducing or revising various sessions according to the stated needs of the literacy facilitators and various AEA staff such as monitors and mentors. These sessions were

¹⁰ The Cairo branch now divides their training budget between a short pre-service sessions (5 days) and a series of in-service training sessions for literacy facilitators. Abou Korkas also divides the 15 pre-service training into at least two sessions.

designed to parallel and reinforce AEA’s pre- and in-service training. Representatives from AEA’s branch and idaras attended the literacy facilitator training including sessions on active learning and teaching Arabic and math. ERP encouraged this as a strategy for moving AEA staff away from lecture type training to assuming the lead on integrating active learning approaches across the spectrum of training topics.

Initially ERP provided separate workshops for the various topics. During its second year, however, it combined related topics such as active learning and lesson planning or active learning and Arabic and math skills. These sessions complemented but were still external to AEA’s official training. Beginning in 2006, ERP began to assist AEA to reshape its pre-service training by having training cadres introduce the new sessions into the official training curriculum.

<u>Marg Literacy Facilitator Group #2</u> <u>Ranking of Most Important Training Topics</u>	<u>Fayoum Literacy Facilitator Ranking</u> <u>of Most Important Training Topics</u>	<u>Abou Korkas Literacy Facilitator</u> <u>Ranking of Most Important Training Topics</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Active learning * Individual learner differences * Educational resources and aids * Supplemental health messages * Arabic and math skills * Classroom management * Lesson planning * Communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Active learning * Classroom management * Supplemental health messages * Educational resources and aids * Lesson planning * Arabic and math skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lesson planning * Active Learning * Phonetics * Arabic and math skills * Communication skills * Adult learning

The literacy facilitators in the three idaras consistently ranked the *active learning* sessions as one of the most useful with other sessions following closely behind. In fact, active learning is considered a foundation topic since it is intended to be integrated with the other training topics.

In all three idaras, the monitors, mentors and in some instances the supervisors were encouraged to attend the literacy facilitator training provided by ERP.

Monitors, Supervisors and Mentors: Training and Support of Literacy Facilitators

Idara **monitors** are full-time AEA employees who have a secondary or technical school certificate. Their salary is approximately twenty EGP per class (\$3.64) per month. The actual salary is based on each monitor having fifteen to forty classes even though in reality the class load is often much more¹¹. Due to the limited number of monitors (two per idara) and other AEA staff, the monitors have responsibility for both the technical monitoring of literacy facilitators and classrooms and general idara and classroom administrative tasks. The

<u>Monitors and Mentors Ranking of</u> <u>Most Important Training Topics</u> <u>(Abou Korkas)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Active learning * Effective lesson planning * Arabic and math skills * Strategic planning * Supplementary health materials * How to stop learners from dropping out * Training of trainers

¹¹ Given the variability in the number of classes per monitor, it is unclear whether there is a ceiling or cap on their salaries.

idaara administrative tasks can range from overseeing the inventory of literacy books to providing security and financial services. In all three idaaaras the monitors are not responsible for opening new classes which is a role now assumed by a combination of the CDAs, other local organizations and supervisors. In Abou Korkas some monitors also assume responsibility for specialized tasks such as assisting literacy facilitators with educational aids, issuing exam certificates or coordinating the qualifying text and official exam. Prior to ERP, the monitors at the classroom level focused primarily on administrative tasks related to keeping track of attendance of the literacy facilitator and learners, and providing a limited amount of technical support. .

In addition to attending the literacy facilitator training, the monitors attended specific workshops based on training topics that they and other idaara staff identified. The topics emerged from the need to improve their training and support of literacy facilitators and strengthen their planning and management skills. (Appendix 7) In Abou Korkas the active learning sessions were identified as critical to assisting other idaaaras and governorates make progress in achieving their target and improving learner outcomes. Unfortunately, not all the monitors could attend all the training sessions due to space limitations. The monitors in Cairo though felt that the training was critical to assist the large number of unqualified literacy facilitators.¹²

For purposes of efficiency, ERP/PNGO adult literacy staff in three governorate offices (Fayoum, Alexandria and Qena) jointly trained AEA staff in literacy needs assessments, community participation and critical topics for monitors such as active learning. In some areas, however, some topics such as ToT or networking with NGOs and CDAs were not introduced until 2006 when the scaling-up or mainstreaming strategy was introduced. In Abou Korkas they introduced additional training concerning the new Minia facilitator’s guide that incorporated phonetics and reorganized lessons.

After receiving training from ERP, the monitors provided a host of technical support activities to the literacy facilitators including completing the literacy facilitators’ monthly achievement and results reports and conducting quarterly assessments of learners.

“Before the training, I knew nothing about lesson planning but now I can assist the literacy facilitators in preparing their lessons and developing learning objectives.”

Monitor, Marg

ERP developed the monthly technical monitoring format so that the monitors and mentors would have a systematic way of providing support to the literacy facilitators. (Appendix 8) The monitors are supposed to visit each classroom four times per month and discuss the form with the literacy facilitator so that they can review areas for improvement, sign the literacy facilitator monitoring form and assess learners in preparation for the exam. Due to there only being two monitors per idaara, this sequence of review and discussion, does not always occur. In some cases such as certain areas in Fayoum idaara, the supervisors actually assume responsibility for monitoring some of the literacy facilitators. The situation is similar in Marg where some

¹² Most of the monitors in Marg felt that team building was a very important workshop. This could be because for the first time they weren’t just concerned with numerical targets but on how to work together to improve the entire system and delivery of high quality literacy services

monitors have assignments of 50 classrooms or more and as a result can only visit classrooms once a month or less. Once again, in such a case the supervisors have assumed many of the monitors' responsibilities and are often considered almost as important as the monitors. Despite the infrequent visits by the monitor, however, 35 literacy facilitators in Marg emphasized the importance of their role in upgrading the skills of the literacy facilitators

In contrast to Marg, the literacy facilitators in Fayoum idaara felt that the monitors did not play as important a role as the supervisors. They said that they rarely saw the monitor and then when they saw him it was so he could check the attendance rate, ask learners about the curriculum and help supervisors organize training for them. In Abou Korkas the literacy facilitators also felt that the community facilitators, who are similar to supervisors, played a more important role than the monitors who could only visit classes twice a month.

Unlike the monitors who are regular AEA staff, the **supervisors** are from the local community and are hired on a contractual basis at a rate of approximately twenty EGP (\$3.60) per classroom per month with an average of five classrooms per supervisor. They must have a secondary or technical graduation certificate and in some cases pass a qualifying test. Almost all of them have other jobs such as being a teacher in the local school since the supervisor position is only part-time. Unlike the monitors, however, since the supervisors are from the community, they are often familiar with many of the learners and their particular situations. In Abou Korkas the community facilitators assume the functions of the supervisors. CDAs recruit the community facilitators to work closely with the community on a variety of issues related to recruiting and supporting literacy facilitators and learners.

<p><u>Supervisor Ranking of Literacy Facilitator Training Topics (Fayoum)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Active learning* Supplemental health messages* Educational resources and aids
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Wherever possible, the supervisors¹³ in the three idaaaras attended the ERP literacy facilitator training. In addition to this training, some supervisors also attended monitor training. After attending the training sessions, the supervisors began to regularly visit the classes and assist with various tasks.

The Fayoum supervisors added that since they often assume the responsibilities of the monitor, they are actually the connection between the classes and the monitor and idaara manager. They also stressed the importance of their role in everything from working with the CDAs, mosques and schools to organizing new classes and select new literacy facilitators to assisting the literacy facilitator with teaching difficult subjects. In Fayoum they actually develop a list of twenty-three questions that track the literacy facilitators' abilities in active learning. If a number of the literacy facilitators have problems then the supervisors conduct a training session for them.

Because of the increased role of the supervisors in Fayoum, the literacy facilitators actually rated the supervisors as more important to them than the monitors. They said that the supervisors visited their class rooms every week, checked the attendance of the students, helped with lesson planning, persuaded students to regularly attend class, explained difficult aspects of the curriculum to the literacy facilitators, and organized weekly meetings with all the idaara literacy facilitators to exchange experiences.

¹³ In Abou Korkas, the title supervisor includes the community facilitators who assume many of the same functions as the supervisors in Marg and Fayoum.

The community facilitators in Abou Korkas serve a similar role as the supervisors in Fayoum by providing major support to the literacy facilitators. The literacy facilitators thus ranked them as more important than the monitors and mentors.

Depending on their location, some literacy facilitators state that the **mentor** serves a very important role in assisting them with teaching Arabic and math. In Fayoum they are considered as a bridge between the idaara and the supervisors in organizing regular meetings with the literacy facilitators concerning Arabic and math curriculum problems. These problems are quite frequent since the mentors feel that the fifteen-day pre-service training is insufficient for teaching such complex topics as Arabic and math as well as integrating active learning techniques with these subjects. The mentors also collect the final reports on student proficiencies in Arabic and math. In addition to these activities, the mentors in Abou Korkas meet with the local village council and village leaders to help enroll additional learners.

The mentors are supposed to visit each class at least once or twice a month. Due to the presence of only two mentors per idara, this is often an impossible schedule. For instance, in Abou Korkas there are 350 classes, which would mean daily visits of almost nine classes. They have tried to address this problem by having weekly meetings at the idaara and branch levels to discuss teaching issues. Similarly, in Fayoum the two monitors and two mentors have found it impossible to assist 386 literacy facilitators and classes. They have resolved this problem by in dividing the responsibilities between them and the 76 supervisors. Thus in Fayoum the supervisors provide some of the same inputs as the monitors and mentors by assisting with technical and administrative follow-up.

In Marg, however, the literacy facilitators said that since they normally only saw the mentor during the pre-service training of teaching Arabic and math skills¹⁴, they did not see them as important as the **idaara manager**. They said that they met every week with the idaara manager to discuss various issues including implementing strategies for attracting more learners, organizing publicity and media campaigns, accompanying them to the mosque to promote literacy classes, and resolving concerns about monitors and supervisors. Except for Marg, most literacy facilitators said that they only saw the **branch manager** if there were problems at the idaara level.

<u>Literacy Facilitator Rankings of Key Institutional Relationships (with ERP subtracted from rankings)</u>		
Marg	Fayoum	Abou Korkas
* Monitors * Supervisors * Idaara manager * Mentors and branch manager	* Supervisors * Monitors * Idara and branch managers * CDAs	* Supervisors (community facilitators) * Monitors * Mentors and idaara manager * CDAs * Village council * City council

¹⁴ In Marg the Literacy Facilitators can meet with the Mentor on the weekend if there is a problem and ask them to visit the class.

Appendix 9 contains Venn diagrams developed by the literacy facilitators in the three idaaras to illustrate their relationships with the different institutions and individuals.

Learning Summary

- * Pre-service and in-service training as well as ongoing (weekly and monthly) mentoring of literacy facilitators is critical to strengthening their skills especially in such “new” areas as active learning, phonetics-based approaches and supplementary materials.
- * Constant upgrading of the skills and knowledge of the literacy facilitators and those responsible for training and supporting them is critical to achieving and maintaining program quality and learner outcomes.
- * Due to limited funding and human resources, the monitors and mentors are unable to provide the required inputs so that supervisors (community facilitators in Minia) have assumed a much more prominent role. Given this situation, they should be included in any training sessions.
- * Wide dissemination of training manuals for those assigned to train and support literacy facilitators is critical to maintaining and expanding achievements.

2.4 Key Practice #3: Supplemental Literacy Materials and Teacher Training Guides

ERP and its partners have begun to fill critical gaps in materials by developing or providing critical supplemental materials and teacher training guides. These materials align with the AEA Chairman’s mandate to branch and idaaras managers to use whatever curriculum and materials they feel are useful in attracting students and increasing their ability to pass the exam.

The supplementary materials include four integrated literacy books with twenty lessons along with a teacher’s guide that cover topics in nutrition, reproductive health, maternal child health and environmental health. The materials were designed to be introduced after the learner’s fourth month so that they can strengthen existing skills and expose the learners to critical development topics.

World Education developed the materials prior to ERP to demonstrate an approach that integrates literacy with critical development topics. The health supplementary materials have since become part of ERP’s strategy to expose both the literacy facilitators and learners to different materials that can reinforce learning and new literacy skills. **The different stakeholder groups from monitors and supervisors to literacy facilitators and learners consistently rate these materials as an important reason for learners enrolling in and regularly attending literacy classes.**

ERP allowed their different offices to work with the literacy facilitators to select those supplemental health materials that they felt were most important. They then trained them to use the materials and the accompanying literacy facilitator’s guide.

“The learners loved the books of health messages; they may be more beneficial for them than the main curriculum.”

Monitor, Fayoum

Most literacy facilitators did not have time to introduce the entire four book series and instead selected two or three of them to introduce to their classes during their daily one-hour activity period.

At the El Shorafa Center (Marg) the literacy facilitator postponed introducing the supplemental health materials until the students had sufficient reading and writing skills to take advantage of the materials and how they can be used to reinforce newly learned literacy skills. In other areas, however, the literacy facilitators thought the topics were so important to the lives of the learners that they introduced during the first few months of the class.

The monitors and mentors in Fayoum felt that that the health messages were extremely important because they increased the literacy skills and health knowledge of the learners¹⁵. In response to a survey, all the classes demanded to have the health messages. The only problem arose when learners wanted additional information about the health topics and literacy facilitators were not equipped to provide additional inputs or answer technical health questions.

Many of the ERP offices decided to provide the environmental health (sanitation) and nutrition books and did not introduce the books on reproductive health. In Abou Korkas some of the

“We talk to each other now and tell the younger ones not to marry at an early age and not to have too many children.”

Learners, Abou Korkas

community facilitators (supervisors) felt that the supplementary materials on reproductive health were too provocative even though learners and literacy facilitators felt differently¹⁶. Twenty-three of the Abou Korkas literacy facilitators, however, felt that all the books were important including the book on reproductive health. In fact, they said that some of the most important lessons out of the four books were those on early marriage, pregnancy, FGM, breastfeeding, diarrhea and environmental health. Learners in Abou Korkas had a similar feeling and said that they thought the materials raised their awareness about many topics including early marriage and vaccinations. In addition, many of them said that they shared the information with their families. They added that the health materials were much more interesting than the AEA curriculum, which “does not always pertain to us.”

Out of 87 classes in Abou Korkas 19 received three books, 34 received two books and 34 received one book.

The cost to reproduce the supplementary materials is quite high since they are prototypes developed to test and promote integrated literacy methodologies. ERP had intended to reduce the printing costs by having each class have one large master copy in the form of flip charts or posters and inexpensive disposable workbooks printed on newsprint for the learners. This is still a possibility but in the meanwhile has supplied the supplementary materials to each of the governorate offices. The situation of printing costs for non-AEA materials is a continual

¹⁵ For information on the technical impact of the integrated health and literacy materials, refer to *Integrated Health and Literacy Research*. World Education and SRC/AUC. Cairo, December 2003.

¹⁶ The majority of community facilitators in Abou Korkas are men while almost all of the learners and literacy facilitators are women.

challenge and one that should be addressed by those looking to expand innovative literacy programs.

ERP along with its partner NGO and academic institutions also took the important step in reconfiguring the AEA literacy facilitators’ guide. They thus spent considerable time developing the new Minia literacy facilitators’ guide which integrates phonics, and reorganizes and expands lessons of the AEA curriculum, “*I Learn...I’m Enlightened*”. ERP, at present, is only piloting the Minia manual in Abou Korkas.

The new Minia phonetics-based literacy facilitators’ guide consists of nine units and thirteen lessons with each unit containing particular letters and sounds and skills development activities. Twenty-three of the Abou Korkas literacy facilitators trained to use the manual offered the following comparison between the manual and the AEA literacy facilitators’ guide and accompanying curriculum.

<u>Comparison Between AEA Literacy Facilitators’ Guide and New Minia Phonetic-based Literacy Facilitators’ Manual</u>	
AEA LFs’ Guide for Use with AEA Curriculum	New Minia LFs’ Manual for Use with AEA Curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The first lesson assumes that the reader knows how to read and write. * It concentrates on lessons and not on letters and sounds. * It just introduces letters. * It does not consider the time it takes for learners to learn the information. * It gives ten objectives for each lesson. * The LFs’ guide and curriculum are boring. * There are too many lessons (60). * The lessons in the curriculum are too long. * It assesses the learners at the end of every lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The letters and sounds are distributed through different units. * It helps not just with letters but sounds of different letters. * It revisits letters and sounds and reinforces them. * It gives one or two objectives for each class. * It has 13 lessons instead of 60. * It helps with time management of class. * It depends on quality not quantity of lesson. * It integrates topics. * It provides continual assessment of learners. * It provides places for innovation and creativity (“even a weak facilitator can use it.”) * It is practical so can apply training.

The literacy facilitators also made the following suggestions:

- * The math lessons do not include enough division exercises and examples;
- * There should be more information on Arabic grammar because it is very difficult.
- * It should include exercises to help students prepare for the exam.
- * It should include more information on educational aids to accompany the different lessons.
- * It should include more illustrations.

In Abou Korkas, learners strongly insist that the phonetic approach is much easier than just learning “the shape of letters”.

ERP has also developed a “qualifying” or gap curriculum for those learners that pass the exam and wish to go on to preparatory classes. They developed the curriculum in recognition that completion of AEA’s basic nine-month class and passing of the exam does not necessarily

prepare a learner to enter into preparatory classes. AEA insists that a pass on the exam is equivalent to completion of sixth primary but many feel this is not the case. For example, the literacy classes do not include such subjects as science, environment and history that are taught in primary school. ERP's Alexandria, Aswan, Cairo and Qena offices are piloting the curriculum but its Minia office has not yet introduced it. Some ERP offices feel that it fills an important need but is still too sophisticated for many of the learners that have just passed the exam. They feel it would be helpful to have more of a transition between the last AEA book and the new gap curriculum. This could take the form of introducing additional lessons to the beginning of the gap curriculum.

In lieu of having the gap curriculum, some literacy facilitators and CDAs in Abou Korkas have begun to give private lessons for those intending to go on to preparatory classes. In addition, the community facilitators in Abou Korkas feel the qualifying or gap curriculum should be widely disseminated since they already have eighteen that plan to continue on to prep who could benefit from the new curriculum

Learning Summary

- * The AEA Chairman's support of different types of curriculum and literacy materials has provided flexibility for the branch and idaara managers to explore different types of learning resources.
- * The supplementary materials are an example of developing materials based on the needs and realities of learners' lives. Very few of the learners previously understood the topics and feel that the materials and accompanying class discussions have helped them to change their actions and attitudes.
- * The health materials were developed to demonstrate an approach that fully integrates literacy with critical development topics. Since they have yet to be mass-produced a disposable workbooks, printing costs are still quite high. The entire issue of printing costs of supplemental materials or materials that may be used in lieu of AEA's basic curriculum needs to be clarified.
- * Literacy facilitators and learners feel that the new Minia phonetics-based literacy facilitators' guide has made teaching difficult subjects such as Arabic language much easier and contributed to more learners that are successful.
- * It is imperative that the new Minia manual be more widely disseminated.
- * The qualifying or gap curriculum for preparatory classes promises to address a critical need for those attempting to continue on to preparatory classes. This curriculum, however, seems to fall half way between the support for literacy programs (since the students have already passed the official exam) and the formal school system since they have not yet entered into the preparatory classes.

2.5 Key Practice #4: Transfer of Capacity to Achieve Sustainability and Scale

ERP is attempting to ensure that local institutions engaged in combating illiteracy have the capacity to implement, adapt and expand key practices through transferring such practices and innovations to those institutions. The ultimate purpose of this capacity transfer strategy is to support the government's commitment to address issues of scale and sustainability of literacy

program interventions and positive learner outcomes. The strategy is the culmination of the adult literacy component's staging approach which provides ERP and its partners time to test and refine interventions and assess local institutions before transferring key practices to them.

ERP introduced its adult literacy capacity transfer strategy in mid-2006 when it decided to redirect its program from service delivery to systemic change at the branch, idaara and community institution levels. It began by assisting branch and idaara staff to develop and monitor strategic and annual plans. At present, ERP's capacity transfer strategy for its adult literacy component focuses on two inter-related activities: a) organizing and training cadres of AEA idaara and branch staff to train literacy facilitators who along with local organizations such as CDAs and local councils are the lynchpin of an effective adult literacy program; and, b) transferring capacity and lessons learned between an initial ERP idaara to other idaaras in the same governorate. AEA's Cairo branch is the first to introduce this outward expansion strategy and now has four idaaras engaged at various stages of implementing adult literacy best practices. Under the auspices of Cairo's branch manager, the four idaaras recently held a workshop to discuss challenges and learning to date.

ERP staff note that with planning and training systems and guides in place, the capacity transfer strategy could occur with any agency or group of institutions that have responsibility for wide-scale dispersal of adult literacy innovations and training and supporting literacy facilitators. For this to occur, in addition to the training manuals and systems, groups of lead trainers such as those found in experienced NGOs or perhaps in other local institutions would need to be mobilized. In such an instance, the capacity transfer strategy would become another example of devolution of responsibilities to local non-governmental partners and the planning systems and training cadres would be the initial steps for achieving a wider dispersal of innovative adult literacy programs as exemplified by the various institutional actors found in the four Cairo idaaras. ERP staff also recognize, however, that the three capacity transfer activities focused on planning, training, and internal dispersal of knowledge and systems would need to be complemented by a host of other interventions to address the long-term viability and effectiveness of a national literacy program in Egypt.

The Training Cadres

The training cadres are part of a strategy for moving along the trajectory from effectiveness to efficiency and expansion in the area of training and supporting literacy facilitators.

AEA has worked with ERP to select staff that hold the most potential be excellent trainers and form them into training cadres that can train the literacy facilitators. In Cairo, they have selected individuals from AEA regardless of their positions (idaara monitors, branch monitors, branch financial staff) that they feel would be excellent trainers. Fayoum has followed a similar approach by establishing eight-person training cadres in each idaara. The idaara manager and the two monitors are usually part of their idaara teams. In Minia 35 people, including branch and idaara staff, participated in training and workshops that included various topics:

- * training of trainers,
- * applying ToT to lesson planning and class management
- * effective educational supervision,

- * integrating active learning into the curriculum
- * integrated health materials,
- * overcoming difficulties in teaching Arabic and math,
- * strategic planning,
- * annual action planning
- * working with CDAs and community facilitators
- * using the new Minia phonetics literacy facilitator manual.

The Minia cadre representatives, however, said that it is important for them to develop an action plan to implement what they have learned. This action plan, like that in other governorates, may face bureaucratic rigidities concerning the restructuring of the pre-service and in-service training modules. The Cairo branch office has already taken such a step and could be a model for other branch offices in how to use lead trainers from the cadres to spread training innovations to other idaaras.

Learning Summary

- * The capacity transfer strategy builds on the Adult Literacy component’s staging approach which enabled the program to clarify effective interventions prior to transferring them to AEA and local institutions.
- * The capacity transfer strategy consists of three aspects: strategic and annual planning assistance, establishment of training cadres to train literacy facilitators who are critical for maintaining and expanding improved learner outcomes, and outward expansion to other idaaras. All three interventions contribute to sustaining program innovations but would need to be complemented by other inputs to achieve wider impact.

III. STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON BARRIERS TO AND REASONS FOR INCREASED ENROLLMENT, RETENTION AND PASS RATES¹⁷

3.1 Summary discussion of barriers to increased enrollment and retention

“I was not comfortable with the Literacy Facilitator. She repeated things that we did not understand.”

Learner in Marg that did not complete a previous literacy class

The barriers to enrollment and retention emerge from three main factors mentioned by the vast majority of different stakeholder groups.

Uneven quality of AEA literacy facilitators and the overall system

¹⁷ We are using the ERP definition of retention that refers to those learners that attend and complete the course rather than the AEA definition that refers to those learners that take the exam.

Limited quality control over the selection of literacy facilitators and little substantive training and on-going mentoring support contributed to poorly qualified and trained literacy facilitators and resulted in lecture-based, boring classes; unsympathetic and frustrated literacy facilitators; and, little hope that learners with different learning styles would be able to succeed in the literacy classes. There were also complaints in both Marg and Fayoum from communities and CDAs about the poor treatment by AEA monitoring staff of literacy facilitators and learners. In addition, the curriculum did not match students' needs or interests, and bad experiences by previous learners including those that attempted to take the exam, and those that passed the exam but did not receive their certificates for more than six months negatively impacted on enrollment and retention decisions.

According to PNGO staff, there seemed to be a lack of a coherent vision, direction and coordination from AEA branch and idaras managers concerning interventions that could contribute to increased enrollment and retention. All of these factors contributed to AEA classrooms having a poor reputation in communities.

Restrictive social and religious traditions and lack of awareness about the benefits of education

Learners said that many men remain unconvinced about the importance and benefits of education for girls. Social prohibitions thus exist that discourage enrollment by girls in formal schools, and girls and women in literacy classes. In Cairo, one of the learners hid her books under the floorboards so her husband would not find them. In addition, some men upon marriage forbid their new wives to continue to attend classes. There were also numerous instances where learners said that "their families and neighbors consider them to old to learn", and that "people make fun of older women attending classes."

Other learners said that they themselves were unaware of the importance of education until they saw television shows and advertisements about it and heard from the CDA in social mobilizing campaigns about how they could help their children and families by becoming educated.

Economic circumstances (poverty)

In Marg learners said that they needed to work in the market so that attending a nine-month course was very difficult. In Fayoum and Abou Korkas, in addition to the general dire economic situation of the households, the demands of the agricultural season had an impact on learner attendance. All stakeholder groups consistently listed poverty as a factor in men deciding which children to send to school.

Respondents also mentioned the following points:

- * As mentioned by learners in Minia and Fayoum, people become discouraged from enrolling when they hear that "even those with literacy certificates and some secondary school graduates cannot get jobs."
- * If a class is located at too great a distance from the learner's house or is in an area where they will attract notice from men, their families will not allow them to attend the class. Surprisingly,

classes held in formal schools after school hours can discourage some “older” women from enrolling since they say that they would feel foolish going to a school at their age.

Sample Responses Concerning Barriers to Increased Retention from Stakeholder Groups (Cairo/Marg)

<p><u>ERP/PNGO:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Poor Literacy Facilitator and monitor (major reason) * Bad treatment by AEA staff and monitors of literacy facilitator and learners * Inflexible classroom times * Location of classroom * class sessions of three hours too long <p><u>Learners:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Poor Literacy Facilitator (major reason) * Poor teaching methods * No respect from Literacy Facilitator * Math and Arabic curriculum too difficult * Class location * No social relations with other Learners in class * Literacy book is unrealistic * Household or job responsibilities * Husband refuses to let her continue. 	<p><u>AEA Branch and Idaara Managers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Poor literacy facilitators * Students not actively engaged in learning * Topics not always relevant <p><u>AEA Monitors and Mentors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Poor quality of literacy facilitator * Bad relationship with literacy facilitator * Bored (no active learning) * Social circumstances (husband may forbid her to continue; he is not interested in her becoming literate) <p><u>AEA Supervisors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Nine-month course is too long for many learners if it is not interesting * Many learners have a personal crisis in their family (economic, social) * If a friend or relative drops the class, they will be influenced by her decision
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3.2 Summary discussion of reasons for increased enrollment and retention

“We found out that women are ministers, and we want to be like them. Women and men are the same; there should be no discrimination.”

Adolescent learner, Abou Korkas

Increases in enrollment and retention primarily fall into three categories: social mobilization that resulted from public/private partnerships; improvement in the quality of teaching and learning that resulted from training and systems interventions; and, introduction of more relevant curriculum through the supplemental health lessons and new approaches to teaching through the phonetics-based literacy facilitators’ guide.

Social mobilization

In the El Shorafa literacy class (Marg) thirty-eight percent of the learners said that they were encouraged to join the literacy class either by existing

Social Mobilization Strategies Promoted in Marg, Fayoum and Abou Korkas

- * The religious leader of the mosque provided a message to men to support women’s literacy;
- * CDAs announced that they and the literacy facilitator would assist learners to secure birth certificates and official identification papers needed to take the AEA exam;
- * Literacy facilitators made door-to-door visits to both recruit and follow-up on new students;
- * Monitors promoted literacy classes at local weddings;
- * CDAs and other institutions displayed posters and advertisements about literacy classes and organizing new learners;
- * Announcements were made at Friday prayer services at the mosque;
- * A community meeting was held with government officials to attract families with illiterate members;
- * CDAs sponsored health and cultural events where they promoted literacy classes;
- * Income generation classes were offered by the CDAs to students that enrolled in literacy classes;

students who praised the literacy class or from the literacy facilitator herself who with support from the CDA's social mobilization efforts encouraged them to attend the class. In El Sief (Fayoum), the literacy facilitator visited the homes of all the learners to encourage them to join the class.

Others from both the El Shorafa and Mroog CDA literacy classes said that they:

- * heard about it at the CDA-supported health center where they brought their children;
- * heard the announcement from a car and microphone that the CDA used to promote the classes in their area;
- * were brought by a relative; or
- * were encouraged by their husbands who read about the class from an advertisement posted on a building.

In all three idaras personal contact between the literacy facilitator and potential learners was a major social mobilization strategy. In both Fayoum and Abou Korkas the literacy facilitator visited each house and convinced husbands and fathers to allow the women to attend class so they could read medicine bottles, gain health skills and help their children with homework.

Commitment and Quality of Literacy Facilitators

It is clear from the responses that a competent, creative and sympathetic literacy facilitator is critical for attracting students to enroll in and keep attending literacy classes. Indeed, it is probably the most important factor in improving student outcomes especially in term of increasing enrollment and attendance (retention). In one group of learners in Marg, eighty-two percent (9) said that the literacy facilitator was what they liked best about the literacy class.

Literacy facilitators also:

- * independently developed posters showing positive health behaviors such as not smoking, eating more vegetables, increasing the time between pregnancies and the process for cleaning food;
- * made charts that indicated the numbers on a mobile phone, calculators and a clock.;
- * taught learners about text messaging on mobile telephones since almost one-third of the learners in the El Shorafa (Marg) class have husbands or sons living overseas or in other governorates;
- * taught learners how to prepare nutritious recipes.

There is a close relationship between the introduction of a systematic and quality driven selection process and training program, and the competency of the literacy facilitators. These two interventions are essential for ensuring that literacy facilitators have the basic skills to understand and provide the curriculum through a learner-centered active-learning approach while also recognizing the broader needs of the learners that could constrain learning.

Because of this approach, many literacy facilitators complemented their pedagogical skills with inputs well beyond those normally provided in literacy classes. Some of these inputs were actually incentives that encouraged students to enroll in and attend the literacy class. At El Shorafa Center (Marg), the learners expressed a strong need for income enhancement activities. The literacy facilitator and the supporting CDA thus made contact with a factory and received orders for tablecloths and other functional items. The literacy facilitator also taught them to make handcrafts for sale in local markets. The Mroog CDA actually provided those enrolled in its literacy classes a reduced interest rate on micro-loans through its micro-enterprise program and a

price reduction on medicine. The literacy facilitator in El Siefa (Fayoum) organized a trip for her students to the zoo and mosque in Cairo and helped learners to get their identification papers. The learners appreciated this but said that they would also like her to introduce income generating activities in the class. In Abou Korkas they organized celebrations for those learners that passed the exam and received their certificate.

As important as these inputs were to the learners, the personal sympathy of the literacy facilitator and her willingness to discuss and help resolve various problems was also a critical point constantly mentioned by the learners.

More Relevant Curriculum

Almost every stakeholder group mentioned the supplemental health lessons as a major reason for learners enrolling and consistently attending the classes. The learners found that the information contained in the materials pertained to their daily lives and contributed to class discussions concerning early marriage, FGM and other sensitive topics. Such discussions contributed to strengthening the social energy among the learners, and jointly resolving problems that normally they would have had to confront individually. Many of these social and economic issues may have previously caused them to drop out of the literacy class.

In Minia the literacy facilitators consistently mentioned that the phonetics approach has improved their ability to teach the curriculum and make even difficult topics and lessons more understandable to the students.

Comments from Learners in Marg about their Literacy Facilitators

“Miss Karima is the main reason we are all here. We love her. She is a good woman.”

“She treats us well; she respects us and treats us like a sister but in some schools teachers are not like Miss Karima.”

“She teaches in a simple way and considers our mental capacities. She helps each of us individually.”

“Our teacher explains everything and simplifies and repeats. She uses different approaches to help different individuals.”

“If our teacher Asmat was not here, we would not come to class.”

Sample Responses Concerning Increased Enrollment and Retention

ERP/PNGO (Minia):

- * Good literacy facilitator
- * Curriculum such as supplemental health lessons and literacy facilitators’ phonetics guide
- * Social mobilizing through advertisements, community mobilization
- * Opportunity for peer group and friends
- * Incentives from the Governor concerning IDs and from the Agriculture Ministry concerning agricultural extension services

Learners (Marg):

- * With a skilled literacy facilitator, they feel they can meet their learning goals.
- * literacy facilitators and others encouraged them to attend class.
- * Heard public announcements by CDA
- * Saw daily public service announcements on television about

AEA Branch and Idaara Managers (Cairo/Marg):

- * Qualified literacy facilitators including strong facilitation skills
- * Attracting learners by telling them that if they are literate they can help their children
- * Using religious figures to encourage women’s attendance at literacy classes and girls’ education
- * Provision of health messages, enterprise skills and health exams in classes
- * Making direct appeals at home

AEA Monitors and Mentors (Cairo/Marg):

- * Increased role of CDAs in recruiting literacy facilitators and identifying learners (most important)
- * Increased awareness about the importance of education and literacy through social marketing media and awareness campaigns
- * Positive relationship between AEA idaara and community

<p>the literacy classes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Wanted to learn more about the health messages (supplemental materials) <p><u>AEA Literacy Facilitators (Fayoum):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Skills of literacy facilitators * Supplemental health lessons * Awareness building about the benefits of education * Income generation activities * House visits by literacy facilitator * Encouraged by increased number of learners that pass the exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Incentives provides by CDAs including feeding * Positive relationship between literacy facilitators and learners * More timely delivery of certificates for those that pass exam * ERP qualifying curriculum to assist learners that pass exam to prepare for prep classes <p><u>AEA Supervisors/Community Facilitator (Minia):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Relationship between literacy facilitator and community * Increased awareness from social mobilization * Location of classes in houses or mosques * Directly encouraged by CDA * Contacted by literacy facilitator * Economic and life skills of handcrafts, income generating and recipes activities offered in class * New approach of phonetics and active learning
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3.3 Summary discussion of barriers to and reasons for increased pass rates

As seen in Section Two, there are numerous instances of successful learners that choose not to take the exam for personal reasons.

For those that fail the exam, the first set of reasons concerns poor preparation:

- * Learner not prepared for actual testing process and model;
- * There is too little math on the qualifying test;
- * Exam samples not practiced in class;
- * Dictation given to quickly;
- * The nine-month curriculum is too short for learners to prepare adequately for the exam.

The second set of reasons concerns the different abilities of learners and irregular attendance while the third set is a mixture of fear of the exam committee from Cairo and actual test taking. ERP Minia staff also mentioned the pass quota system as a reason for learners failing the test.

Successful learners that choose not to take the exam are an unusual category since previously many people had assumed that any learner that completed the course and passed the qualifying exam would continue on to take the exam. That, however, is not always the case.

In Abou Korkas, the ERP/PNGO staff felt that almost everyone that successfully completed the class took the exam. Others, however, such as the community facilitators felt that approximately forty percent take the test, another forty-five percent may or may not take it and that nine percent have no interest in taking the test. They said that some women that are above thirty feel they are too old to continue in school or their husbands forbid them to take the exam. However, the literacy facilitators in Abou Korkas who have the closest relationships with the learners said that anywhere from thirty percent to fifty percent of the learners that complete the classes do not take the exam. They said that the variation was

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Learners' Reason for Not Taking the Exam</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * We come to class to learn how to read and write and not for the exam. * I do not need certificate * The exam place is too far from my house. * I am afraid to take the exam. * Why should I take the exam when there is such a delay in getting the certificate?
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due to community differences and learner ages. They also mentioned that of those that take and pass the exam, approximately twenty-five percent to thirty percent continue on to preparatory classes.

The estimates provided from the Abou Korkas literacy facilitators are similar to those provide by Caritas staff. The Caritas staff felt that of their 2400 learners, the six percent (144) that were under fifteen would take the test, an additional forty percent (902) of learners aged fifteen and above would also take the test but that fifty-four percent (1263) of learners would not take the test. This high percentage may have to do with a number of factors including the number of Caritas learners fifteen years and above.

In order to take the exam the learners must have their birth certificate and identification papers. This had previously been a major issue but one that is now being resolved by CDAs, AEA and organizations such as the National Council of Women which are assisting learners with obtaining their official papers..

It is not surprising that the major reason given for increased pass rates were the high quality of literacy facilitators, active learning methodologies and encouragement from both the literacy facilitators and CDAs for learners to attend class on a regular basis.

IV. OVERVIEW OF CARITAS’ LITERACY PROGRAM IN MINIA¹⁸

Caritas is a registered Egyptian organization that receives major contributions from churches and other institutions in Europe and elsewhere. It opened its Cairo office in 1967 and since then has established offices in five other governorates including Minia where its office opened in 1987. It works in a number of different development sectors¹⁹ but along with other church-related groups has been a leader in developing innovative literacy programs based on a Pablo Frere approach of “literacy by awareness”. This approach includes some elements that are similar to learner-centered, active-learning methodologies.

The learners in the Caritas classes are similar to those in the AEA classes: most are from poor households and spend time engaged in agricultural activities or household tasks. In addition, many come from families that discourage girls’ education or are hesitant to send them to schools that are not located in what they perceive to be unsafe areas. Their learning goals are also similar to those of the AEA learners

As a member of the Ecumenical Committee for Literacy Programs, Caritas helped develop the well-known, phonetic-based basic curriculum, *Learn and Be Free*. They also

<u>First Phase Weekly Class Schedule (Caritas Minia)</u>			
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Arabic (2 hrs) Culture (1 hr)	Arabic (2 hrs) Health (1 hr)	Math (2 hrs.) Women (1 hr)	Arabic (2 hrs.) Health (1 hr)

¹⁸ Appendix 10 contains a timeline of Caritas’ literacy program in Minia.

¹⁹ The Minia office introduced in 1991 a child rights program and developed a booklet called *Child to Child*.

developed a number of supplemental materials and books for new literates to complement the basic curriculum.

The main course consists of two nine-month phases for a total of eighteen months. The first nine-month phase includes the basic curriculum, *Learn and Be Free*, supplemented by discussions on health, women's enhancement and culture (the government, being a good citizen). A coordinator (literacy facilitator) facilitates the supplemental discussions but there are no specific books to accompany these efforts. The second nine-month phase includes supplemental books on culture, health and women. The discussions and materials about women include sessions on violence against women and female genital mutilation (FGM). Classes normally run for three hours per day four days per week and there is on average a ten percent to fifteen percent dropout rate between the two phases. Some coordinators, however, said that the dropout rate depended on the location and that in some areas it could be as high as thirty percent between the two phases. In one class in Samalot, seventy-one percent (15) of the learners continued to phase two and fifty-seven percent (12) continued to phase three.

According to the coordinators, the Caritas curriculum is slower-paced than that of the AEA and has much information that is interesting to the students. They also feel that the phonetics approach makes it easier for new learners to become literate.

After the first phase, Caritas feels that many learners are capable of passing the AEA exam. However, they also contend that the literacy skills are at such a rudimentary stage that learners can fall back into illiteracy without additional inputs. The coordinators estimate that seventy-five percent of those that finish the first phase but do not continue on for the second phase still go on to take and pass the AEA exam since Caritas' first phase is probably more comprehensive than that of AEA's nine-month curriculum. They further state that approximately eighty-five percent of those that complete both phases and take the AEA exam pass it.

Caritas staff, like that of ERP, feel that the nine-month course whether provided by Caritas or AEA doesn't adequately prepare a learner to be successful in preparatory classes since there are many additional topics introduced during six years of primary school. Caritas' second nine-month phase addresses this gap similar to the way that the ERP "qualifying" curriculum prepares those that have passed the exam to enter preparatory classes.

In 1995, Caritas in Mina introduced a third phase targeted for those learners above fifteen years old. This phase uses the curriculum *Us to US* and was expanded in 2001 to include a new text, *The Sun is Rising*. The topics include all the subjects necessary to enter into preparatory classes including those in science and the environment.

In 2001 Caritas Minia introduced a post-literacy program that is based on learner-promoted community libraries and reading clubs. A few of these reading clubs have even transformed themselves into CDAs. Caritas normally provides the furniture and some of the initial reading materials.

"I told my mother not to circumcise my sister but my mother said that if she didn't do it she would be discriminating against me. I told her I would forgive her and not to think of it as discrimination."

Member of Reading Group, Samalot

In Samalot the library, which is in the coordinator’s house, began with 11 books and now has 433 books. The coordinator receives a small fee for each borrowed book and keeps a record of the borrowers and the most popular books. The coordinator said that the most popular subjects are on women even though borrowers also take out books for their husbands and children. Many borrowers say that they want larger print books with illustrations. A collection of materials for new literates would normally contain such books. The coordinator in Samalot also helped organize a reading club that meets every Sunday to read books, perform plays and discuss topics such as FGM. The reading clubs seems to be another example of the importance of women’s literacy groups as a vehicle for mobilizing women and enhancing the social energy of such a group.

Caritas works in eight idaras in Minia with a total of 5 area managers, 30 monitors, 120 coordinators (literacy facilitators) and classes, and approximately 2400 students. Each area manager thus oversees approximately 6 monitors who support 24 coordinators and 480 learners. In Samalot idara they have 26 coordinators and classes²⁰ covering three different phases of classes with 450 learners. Caritas also has established a number of post-literacy libraries and reading clubs and just in Samalot has established 4 post-literacy libraries.

Caritas in Minia conducts its own social mobilization activities including working closely with CDAs on promoting classes, inviting learners and coordinators to share their experiences and discussing incentives such as health visits with a doctor to attract new learners. They feel that the role of CDAs is very important in helping promote classes but that they do not have the technical skills to support the coordinators or learners.

<u>Barriers to Enrollment and Retention (continuing on to second phase) in Caritas Program</u> (Samalot Coordinators)	
Enrollment Barriers	Retention Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Bad experience with previous AEA literacy facilitator * Competition with other organizations to recruit learners * Cannot attend class for 3 hours a day * Location of class in youth centers which also has boys * Attitudes of community about value of education and women’s education in particular * Economic conditions * Some women feel they are too old and would be embarrassed to be seen with book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Husband does not want them to continue * Marriage or pregnancy * Agricultural season * Brothers don’t want sisters to attend class because of conservative social attitudes.

The Caritas **coordinators** receive the same salary as the AEA literacy facilitators (120-150 EGP per month) but they regularly receive it at the end of each month and 20% of this amount is not deducted until pass rates are calculated.

²⁰ AEA has 475 classes in Samalot.

Unlike AEA, Caritas has made a concerted effort since 1994 to select a cadre of distinguished learners to become coordinators and library helpers or help establish CDAs. Two of the 16 coordinators from Samalot that participated in the study had previously been learners. All applicants for the coordinator positions must take a test in Arabic and math and those that pass receive extensive training.

A few of the Caritas coordinators had previously worked with AEA and felt that the high drop-out rate was due to both the quality of the literacy facilitators who received very little training and the curriculum which was too difficult for those with no previous literacy skills. They also said that since the AEA curriculum does not integrate phonetics, the learners know the shape of the letters but cannot really pronounce words very well, “Everything depends on memorizing.”

The Caritas coordinators said that their main challenges included:

- * convincing the learners to accept the phonetics approach rather than just memorizing the alphabet;
- * getting the learners to sit in class for three hours even though many want to stay more than that amount of time;
- * learners coming late to class even though they jointly selected the time;
- * getting shy students to share in class; and,
- * older learners wanting special treatment from a young coordinator.

Caritas Coordinator Training Topics

- * Understanding the Caritas curriculum
- * Teaching Arabic and math
- * Dealing with illiterate and adult learners
- * Health and culture
- * Educational and environmental aids
- * Women’s enhancement including income enhancement and food processing
- * Women’s rights and legal issues including the rights of widows and unmarried women
- * Official documents

Based on these challenges a number of coordinators mentioned specific solutions. One coordinator in recognition of the “increased status” of the older learners, assigned special tasks to them such as helping the coordinator to keep the attendance record. Another introduced incentives in the form of income enhancement activities such as making and selling sweets and spices.

The Caritas **monitors** are similar to AEA’s supervisor and monitors. Most come from the community, which is similar to the AEA supervisor model. Unlike the AEA model, however, monitors must first serve as coordinators (literacy facilitators) before they can become monitors. In our discussions, the monitors said that this was important because having been coordinators they “knew all the problems so that they didn’t supervise as much as help the coordinators”.

Role of Caritas Monitors

- * Responsible for 4 to 5 classes;
- * Helps conduct community literacy assessments
- * Helps organize classes and recruit learners;
- * Provides training to coordinators;
- * Visits each class once a week;
- * Provides weekly technical support to coordinators;
- * Maintains good relationships with coordinators and learners;
- * Works with coordinators to solve problems of learners;
- * Provides adult learning techniques to coordinators;
- * Conducts home visits to learners’ home to encourage regular attendance;
- * Assists learners to get IDs and birth certificates;
- * Arranges health exams and other activities for classes.

The monitors receive training in all the topics necessary to train and support the coordinators. Their training includes sessions on technical content areas plus classroom planning, leadership, presentations and dialogues, reality analysis, and training of trainers.

Caritas' **area managers** are most closely equivalent to AEA's idaara managers even though there are many more of them, and they assume some different functions. The area managers develop strategic and annual plans, oversee financial and administrative tasks, plan for new classes, train and evaluate monitors, regularly meet with the monitors to discuss objectives and targets and conduct quarterly meetings with both the monitors and coordinators.

Until 2005 the Caritas program had almost no connection with AEA except for its learners needing to take the AEA exam to receive their official certificates. With the advent of new policies from the AEA Chairman concerning devolution of responsibilities for implementing literacy programs, AEA representatives in Minia met with a group of NGOs to discuss future activities. By 2007, NGOs including Caritas were coordinating with AEA on identifying locations to open new classes and getting assistance with obtaining birth certificates and identification papers. AEA is able to include the increased number of classes and learners in its official statistics. They also include Caritas test takers in their pass rate numbers, which is helpful since approximately 60% of those pass the test.

A major issue for the Caritas program is the continual need to raise funds to support its efforts. They estimate that the average class costs approximately 4000 EP (\$727) for 12 months but these figures should be viewed with caution since it is not clear whether they include all costs including administrative and management costs from Minia and materials printing costs.

Learning Summary

- * Caritas have wisely identified different types of learners and developed curriculum to meet the needs of those learners.
- * As a non-governmental parallel program, Caritas is under constant pressure to raise funds to support its literacy programs and, in particular, its printing costs.
- * Its staffing and support structure needs to be reviewed and compared with that of AEA and other literacy programs in terms of cost-effectiveness.
- * Their emphasis on moving learners to become coordinators and coordinators to become monitors is an innovative approach that others may want to consider.
- * Under the new AEA mandate, AEA classes can introduce some of the Ecumenical Committee's compendium of literacy materials if the printing cost issue is resolved.
- * There is no need at this point to develop new literacy materials. Rather the emphasis should be on reviewing and integrating the existing materials with AEA's basic curriculum and the Minia literacy facilitators' guide.
- * A focus on reading and literacy clubs helps reinforce post-literacy and generate demand for literacy classes.

V. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

Public-private partnerships provided the foundation for social mobilization that directly contributed to increased coverage²¹ and enrollment of those that receive literacy services. The public-private partnerships also contributed to community-based organizations such as CDAs working with literacy facilitators to encourage learners to remain in class and, if appropriate, take the exam. The public-private partnerships, however, would not have been possible without the government's commitment to devolve responsibility to a range of institutions and the provision of targeted organizational development and training services by ERP to CDAs and other local bodies.

“Community participation and social marketing training needs to be provided to AEA since many in AEA still feel that they should identify the literacy facilitators and open class rooms.”

The quality of teaching by the literacy facilitators was a major factor in learners choosing to enroll and remain in classes and, in the event that they choose to take the exam, passing it. Increases in AEA **enrollment, retention and pass rates** were thus the result of public-private partnerships that contributed to the enrollment and support of learners, improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, and the introduction of new and more relevant materials and teaching methodologies.

Policy and management changes in the form of institutional mandates were critical to catalyzing branch and idaara managers, local government bodies, CDAs and other community entities to work together to address literacy concerns. They also provided the opening for ERP to implement its capacity transfer strategy that contains some preliminary actions but also raises critical issues concerning the future of Egypt's national literacy program.

As mentioned by ERP staff, the capacity transfer strategy will not actually address the problem of **the limited time and resources for monitors, mentors and supervisors to provide consistent technical mentoring** of the literacy facilitators. Such mentoring is critical for the literacy facilitators as they attempt to apply active learning techniques to a variety of topics within the classroom and with students with different learning styles.

Another challenge mentioned by ERP staff will be **to clarify which practices should devolve to civil society, the private business sector and communities and which should remain within an official body**. Whatever the decisions concerning specific practices and interventions, civil society institutions such as larger NGOs and community-based entities such as CDAs, local councils and private businesses, in “new” idaaras and governorates, will need orientation and training to support innovative practices that contribute to improved learner outcomes.

Bureaucratic rigidities may also arise concerning the introduction of different types of basic and supplementary curriculum and budgets to support such materials. As shown by Caritas and others, a plethora of effective basic and supplementary literacy materials exists within Egypt. At

²¹ ERP 1's intermediate results are as follows: improved quality of teaching and learning (22.1), increased equitable coverage of underserved population (22.2) and strengthened management and governance (22.3). These in turn are intended to contribute to improved learner outcomes in the areas of enrollment, retention and pass rate.

this point, action needs to match words and resources need to be provided to support such an undertaking.

Achievement in learner outcomes, however, does not address the issue of long-term dispersal and sustainability of program innovations or indeed the retention of skills by new literates through their participation in post-literacy activities. For these issues to be addressed, those concerned with improving literacy in Egypt will need to learn from both their past challenges and successful innovations, of which there are many, and seek creative partnerships to pursue a dynamic new course.

To support such an undertaking, key players may want to pursue two major next steps: The first would entail holding high-level discussions with key decision-makers concerning the future of Egypt's efforts to combat illiteracy. The purpose of such meetings would be to set the groundwork for quickly convening a working group to map out a possible design and new institutional arrangements for future literacy efforts. The second step, which could overlap with working group meetings, would be to investigate key issues that could affect future literacy efforts. These include:

- * clarifying those areas that may benefit from being centrally housed such as exams, MIS, national media campaigns, and materials printing and distribution and those areas that would do best through devolution to governorates and different types of public and private institutions such as institutional and literacy facilitator training and mentoring, selection of basic and supplementary materials, post-literacy activities, social mobilizing, and local resource development campaigns;
- * clarifying current and future program costs and budgetary arrangements and decision making;
- * examining the optimal mix of public and private institutions to support literacy efforts in the different governorates; and,
- * examining other areas of literacy program innovation in Egypt so that any new program design can learn from such best practice innovations.

It is clear that the Government of Egypt has committed itself to reforming its current literacy program. This commitment is critical to moving forward on building innovative institutional partnerships and securing the human and financial resources necessary to increasing and sustaining learner improvements.

APPENDICES

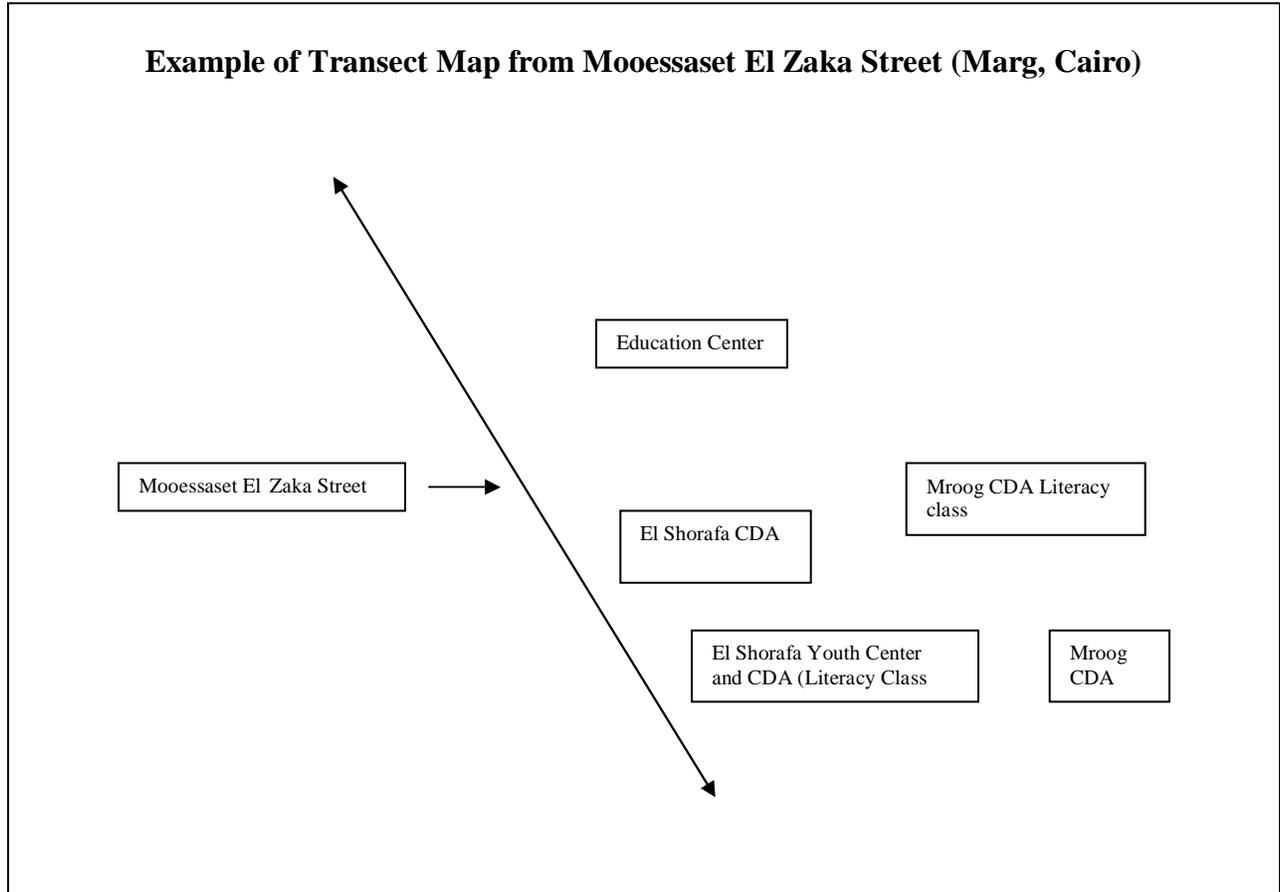
Appendix 1

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- * *Obstacles of Illiteracy Eradication in Fayoum and Kalyoubia Governorates*, Social Research Center/AUC, Cairo, 2003.
- * Integrated Literacy Baseline Data Survey Form. ERP. Cairo.
- * Integrated Literacy Monthly Monitoring Format. ERP. Cairo.

Appendix 2

Example of Transect Map from Moessaset El Zaka Street (Marg, Cairo)



Appendix 3

AEA Learner Outcomes in Targeted Idaaras

	2005 /06			2006 / 07			% of Increase between 05/06 : 06/07		
	E	R	P	E	R	P	E	R	P
Minia Abou Korkas	4,347	2,218	1,246	9,627	6,229	3,644	121%	181%	192%
Fayoum	6,427	4,228	2,845	8,892	6,175	4,795	38%	46%	69%
Cairo Al Marg	670	529	481	1,510	1,232	1,025	125%	133%	113%

Year	2005/2006			2006/2007		
	E	R (Tool Exam)	P	E	R (Took Exam)	P
Minia Abou Korkas	4,347	2,218	1,246	9,627	6,229	3,644
Fayoum	6,427	4,228	2,845	8,892	6,175	4,795
Cairo Al Marg	670	529	481	1,510	1,232	1,025

	R/E	P/R	P/E
Minia Abou Korkas	51%	56%	29%
Fayoum	66%	67%	44%
Cairo Al Marg	79%	91%	72%

R/E:	% of who attend the final exam from who enrolled
P/R:	% of who passed the exam from who attended the exam
P/E:	% of who passed the exam from who enrolled

Appendix 4

Discussion Guide for Literacy Study Data Collection and Analysis

Stakeholder Group Categories

- I. ERP Adult Literacy and Partner NGO (PNGO) staff
- II. Learners
- III. Literacy Facilitators
- IV. AEA Branch and Idaara Managers
- V. AEA Monitors and Mentors
- VI. AEA Supervisors
- VII. Other

Purpose of the Study:

To document and disseminate a set of “practices in play” or in use that contribute to the success of AEA literacy initiatives.

I. ERP STAFF/ PNGOs

Basic Respondent Information

Background

Stakeholder Group Category: _____

Location: Governorate: _____ Idaara: _____

Date/Time Meeting: Date: _____ Time: _____

Meeting Type: Focus Group: _____ Individual: _____

Respondent (Individual)

Name: _____ Gender: _____ Age: _____

Years of Education Completed: _____

Position (if AEA, ERP, Partner NGO or CSO staff) _____

Discussion Points

Introduction: Provide Introduction to Study

	IR/Outcomes
1. ERP/PNGO For how many years have you worked with the ERP literacy program?	quality
2. PNGOs What is your organization’s history of supporting literacy classes in terms of experience, number of classes, numbers enrolled, locations?	coverage, quality
3. PNGOs What type of training or orientation did you receive from ERP. Which was the most useful sessions	
4. We want to discuss what really works and what does not work in the following categories. We’ll be starting with community mobilization and working with local CDAs. : 4a. Mobilizing CDAs or other community groups to participate in the AL program 4b. Supporting community-level social/literacy mobilization. 4c. Assisting CDAs and others to identify and recruit LFs. – • Who identifies LFs. • Was it difficult for CDAs to recruit LFs? • Did the LFs take a qualifying test? 4d. Assisting CDAs and LFs to enroll students.	coverage, quality, management

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Was it difficult to enroll students? · If so, what were the main issues? <p>4e. Direct training of LFs : <i>Probe details of training in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>class management,</i> · <i>student needs assessments,</i> · <i>active learning,</i> · <i>basic curriculum,</i> · <i>supplemental materials,</i> · <i>revised materials and other pre-service and in-service training.</i> <p>4f. If you needed to eliminate or combine different training sessions which one would you choose. (Name)</p> <p>4g. Coordination with AEA branch and idaara staff</p> <p>4h. Conducting a technical assistance training needs assessment of AEA branch and idaara staff and results.</p> <p>4i. Technical assistance training of AEA branch and idaara staff in the following areas. Please provide a list of training sessions that you conducted.: (<i>Probe details</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Supervision and monitoring (including standardized monitoring format)</i> * <i>TOT</i> * <i>Effective lesson planning,</i> * <i>Community participation</i> * <i>Arabic and math skills,</i> * <i>Educational training for new teachers</i> * <i>Active learning</i> * <i>Needs assessments for LF and students</i> * <i>Producing classroom aids from the local environment</i> * <i>Media and social marketing</i> * <i>Post-literacy supplementary materials,</i> * <i>Strategic planning and implementation plan development</i> * <i>Supplementary or new materials</i> <p>4j. If you needed to eliminate or combine different training sessions which one would you choose. (Name)</p>	
<p>5. Please comment on the different basic, supplemental materials or training materials including the Minia facilitator’s manual..</p> <p>5a. In your opinion, are there any other problems with these materials including those that would stop them from be distributed to AEA literacy classes throughout the country?</p>	quality
<p>6. What were the issues or challenges working with the AEA branch or idaara levels and CDAs?</p>	management
<p>7. Please discuss the recent emphasis of ERP on ensuring that AEA mainstream activities directly to LF and classes.</p> <p>7a. In your opinion, what should be the role and responsibilities of AEA branch and AEA idaaras?</p> <p>7b. What should be the role of PNGOs, CSOs and BOTs in literacy?</p>	management
<p>8 Please discuss any issues concerning AEA class monitoring and supervision.</p>	management

9 Please discuss any other issues and possible solutions concerning AEA and their providing literacy services.	management
10. What do you think the reasons are for increased or decreased enrollment rates? Please discuss.	Outcomes: enrollment
11. Please discuss why you think some students do not complete the literacy class? (<i>retention</i>)	Outcomes: retention
12 Please discuss why students that have completed the class don't take the test?	Outcomes:
13. Why do you think that students that have completed the class don't pass the test?	Outcomes: pass
14. What are the reasons for increased pass rates in your idaara?	Outcomes :pass
15. What would be your suggestions about expanding from your Idaara to other Idaaras	
16. Please discuss if there are certain cultural, social or religious conditions that make it more difficult to have high E, R and P rates in certain idaaras?	
Conclusion	

II. LEARNERS

Basic Respondent Information

Background

Stakeholder Group Category: _____

Location: Governorate: _____ Idaara: _____

Date/Time Meeting: Date: _____ Time: _____

Meeting Type: Focus Group: _____ Individual: _____

Respondent (Individual)

Name: _____ Gender: _____ Age: _____

Years of Education Completed: _____

Position (if AEA, ERP, Partner NGO or CSO staff) _____

Discussion Points

Introduction: Provide Introduction to Study

	IR/Outcomes
1. When did this literacy class begin?	
2. Before attending literacy class, had you ever attended school? 2a. If so, for how long? 2b. Did the Literacy Facilitator check to see if you had attended school or could read and write?	coverage, management
3. If you did not attend school or dropped out, please explain why.	coverage
4. How did you hear about the recent literacy classes? 4a. word of mouth, 4b. facilitator 4c. awareness campaign 4d. others	coverage, management

<p>5. What was the most important reason for you joining literacy class ? Was there another reason ? (AI ranking with cards)</p> <p>5a. <i>official certificate/job</i> 5b. <i>official certificate/prep</i> 5c. <i>new materials (please identify the particular materials)</i> 5d. <i>teacher</i> 5e. <i>opportunity to be with other women and girls</i> 5f. <i>other</i></p>	coverage
<p>1. How did your class decide when and where to hold the literacy classes?</p>	coverage, management
<p>2. What do you like best about the literacy classes? (AI ranking with cards)</p> <p>7a. <i>materials</i> 7b. <i>teacher</i> 7c. <i>facilities (clean, toilets)</i> 7d. <i>safe</i> 7e. <i>timing, schedule</i> 7f. <i>additional activities such as health exams</i> 7g. <i>atmosphere in class</i> 7h. <i>other</i></p>	quality outcome: retention
<p>3. Do you feel comfortable sharing or discussing topics in class or not? Please explain.</p>	quality
<p>4. If you have the ability to change things in literacy classes what would you do ? (ranking?)</p> <p>9a. <i>materials</i> 9b. <i>teacher</i> 9c. <i>facilities (lack of toilets)</i> 9d. <i>safety</i> 9e. <i>timing, schedule</i> 9f. <i>atmosphere in class</i> 9g. <i>other</i></p>	Quality
<p>5. Why do you think people don't complete the literacy course?</p> <p>10a. <i>family or health crisis</i> 10b. <i>no time</i> 10c. <i>family didn't support</i> 10d. <i>didn't like class</i> 10e. <i>time not convenient</i> 10f. <i>distance</i> 10g. <i>too difficult</i></p>	quality; Outcome: retention
<p>6. Do you plan to take the official test?</p>	quality, management, outcome: pass
<p>12. If you pass the test, what do you plan to do?</p>	

III. LITERACY FACILITATORS

Basic Respondent Information

Background

Stakeholder Group Category: _____

Location: Governorate: _____ Idaara: _____

Date/Time Meeting: Date: _____ Time: _____

Meeting Type: Focus Group: _____ Individual: _____

Respondent (Individual)

Name: _____ Gender: _____ Age: _____

Years of Education Completed: _____

Position (if AEA, ERP, Partner NGO or CSO staff) _____

Discussion Points

Introduction: Provide Introduction to Study

	IR/Outcomes
1. For how long have you been an AEA Literacy Facilitator?	Quality
2. How did you come to be a literacy facilitator <i>2a. recruited by CSO/CDA .</i> <i>2b. recruited AEA</i> <i>2c. literacy mobilization campaign..</i> <i>2d other</i>	Coverage
3. Did you take a written qualifying test?	
4. What type of support did you get from the following: (USE AI Venn Diagram to indicate relationships and rank importance) * AEA mentors * AEA monitors * Supervisors * CSO/CDA * ERP * Other	Quality

4- Did anyone conduct a needs assessment of your training needs?	Quality
5. What training did you receive? (brainstorm and 3 card ranking) <i>(Have you used active learning approaches?)</i>	quality
6. What were the most useful training sessions and what were the least useful training sessions? (AI ranking with cards.)	quality
7. Did the learners receive any supplemental materials? 7a. What are the most popular the supplementary materials ?	
8. How do you think the supplemental materials contributed to the success of the literacy classes? * <i>attracting students to enroll in literacy classes,</i> * <i>helping students learn,</i> * <i>keeping them interested in the class,</i> * <i>ensuring that they regularly attend class,</i>	Quality
9. For Minia only: Did you use the new Minia Literacy Facilitators guide? 9a. What were its pros and cons?	
10. What are the reasons for increased enrollment rates? Please discuss. <i>(Use Cards/ Ranking)</i> 10a. What are the most effective strategies for increasing enrollment?	coverage; outcome: enrollment
11. Please discuss why you think some students do not complete the class?	quality; outcome: retention
12. Please discuss why students that have completed the class don't take the test? If possible, provide %.	Outcome: retention and pass
13. Please discuss the students that continue on to prep classes.	
14. Why do you think that students that have completed the class don't pass the test?	outcome; pass
15. Please discuss if you feel that there are certain cultural or social conditions that make it more difficult to have high E, R and P rates in your idaara?	outcomes

IV. AEA Branch and Idaara Managers

Basic Respondent Information

Background

Stakeholder Group Category: _____

Location: Governorate: _____ Idaara: _____

Date/Time Meeting: Date: _____ Time: _____

Meeting Type: Focus Group: _____ Individual: _____

Respondent (Individual)

Name: _____ Gender: _____ Age: _____

Years of Education Completed: _____

Position (if AEA, ERP, Partner NGO or CSO staff) _____

Discussion Points

Introduction: Provide Introduction to Study

	IR/Outcomes
1. There are a lot of discussions about literacy in Egypt , what your opinion about this matter? 1a. How do you translate this vision into effective action at the branch and idaaaa levels? 1b. What has been the change in your idaara ?	management
2. What services and inputs (training, materials, monitoring, budget, testing, etc.) does the branch provide to the AEA idaaaras? Please be very specific. 2a. What are the issues or challenges that you have had in providing these inputs?	quality, management
3. Based on the data, why do you think certain idaaaras in your branch have better E, R and P rates than others? Please provide the number of classes and students.	
4. Please discuss if you feel that there are certain cultural, social or religious conditions that make it more difficult to have high E, R and P rates in your branch or in certain idaaaras?	
5. Do you have sufficient monitors, mentors and supervisors? Do you have sufficient funds to purchase supplemental or new curriculum and materials for your current classes or your expanded classes?	quality, management coverage
6. What are the resources for scaling up ? 6a. What should be the role of CDAs in delivering and expanding literacy services? (<i>what is the role of private sector in providing resources</i>)	
7. Do you have any suggestions for other idaaaras ?	outcomes

V. AEA Monitors and Mentors

Basic Respondent Information

Background

Stakeholder Group Category: _____

Location: Governorate: _____ Idaara: _____

Date/Time Meeting: Date: _____ Time: _____

Meeting Type: Focus Group: _____ Individual: _____

Respondent (Individual)

Name: _____ Gender: _____ Age: _____

Years of Education Completed: _____

Position (if AEA, ERP, Partner NGO or CSO staff) _____

Discussion Points

Introduction: Provide Introduction to Study

	IR/Outcomes
1. What is your role as a monitor or mentor?	
2. What is the role of the Supervisor?	
3. Did ERP and/or the Partner NGO conduct a training needs assessment of your technical assistance needs and, if so, what were the results?	quality
4. Please discuss any training you receive from ERP and the partner NGO. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * <i>Supervision and monitoring (including use of standardized monitoring formats)</i> * <i>TOT</i> * <i>Effective lesson planning,</i> * <i>Community participation</i> * <i>Arabic and math skills,</i> * <i>Educational training for new teachers</i> * <i>Active learning</i> * <i>Needs assessments for LF and students</i> * <i>Producing classroom aids from the local environment</i> * <i>Media and social marketing</i> * <i>Post-literacy supplementary materials,</i> * <i>Strategic planning and implementation plan development</i> * <i>Supplementary or new materials</i> 	quality
5. What training would you recommend to another idaara as the most useful? (Later do AI ranking with cards)	

<p>6. Who recruits the LFs?</p> <p>6a. Do the LFs need to take a qualifying test? Please explain.</p>	Quality
<p>7. How did you decide what types of training and other support to provide to the LF, and CDAs?</p>	
<p>8. What type of support/training do you provide to the LFs and CDAs ?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Social/literacy mobilization</i> b. <i>Recruitment of LFs</i> c. <i>Training of LFs</i> (<i>class management, student needs assessments, active learning, basic curriculum, supplemental materials,</i>) d. <i>Materials</i> e. <i>Monitoring (including use of standardized monitoring formats)</i> f. <i>Supervision</i> g. <i>Budget (salaries, etc.)</i> h. <i>Testing</i> i. <i>Other</i> 	management, quality, coverage
<p>9. What are the issues or challenges that you have had in providing these inputs?</p>	management
<p>10. What do you think the reasons are for increased enrollment rates?</p>	Coverage; outcomes: enrollment
<p>11. Why do you think some students do not complete the class?</p>	Outcomes: retention
<p>12. Why do you think that people who take the test don't pass it?</p>	Quality; Outcomes: pass
<p>13. What are the reasons for increased pass rates in your idaara?</p>	Outcomes; pass
<p>14. Please discuss if you feel that there are certain cultural, social or religious conditions that make it more difficult to have high E, R and P rates in your idaara?</p>	

VI. AEA Supervisors

Basic Respondent Information

Background

Stakeholder Group Category: _____

Location: Governorate: _____ Idaara: _____

Date/Time Meeting: Date: _____ Time: _____

Meeting Type: Focus Group: _____ Individual: _____

Respondent (Individual)

Name: _____ Gender: _____ Age: _____

Years of Education Completed: _____

Position (if AEA, ERP, Partner NGO or CSO staff) _____

Discussion Points

Introduction: Provide Introduction to Study

	IR/Outcomes
1. What is the role of the Supervisor?	
2. Do you visit the classes daily?	quality, management
3. To whom do you report?	management
4. How did you get hired as a Supervisor?	management
5. What type of training did you receive?	quality
6. What are the biggest challenges you face?	
7. Who provides you salary and how much do you get paid?	management
8. What are the reasons for increased enrollment?	Outcomes: enrollment
9. What are the reasons for students dropping out or completing the class?	Outcomes: retention
10. Why do you think that people who complete the class do not take the exam?	Outcomes: pass
11. Why do you think people don't pass the exam?	Outcomes: pass
12. What are the reasons for increased pass rates.	Outcomes: pass
13. What is something that you are proud of that you have done as a Supervisor?	
14. What is one thing you have learned from your work as a Supervisor?	

Appendix 5

Respondent Categories and Numbers

Respondent Categories	Cairo (PNGO: Egyptian Association for Comprehensive Development)	Fayoum	Minia	Total
ERP/PNGO staff	5	6	6	17
Learners	65	44	34	143
Literacy Facilitators	35	12	23	70
AEA Branch GM, Idaara Managers, Branch staff	1 Branch GM, 2 Idaara Managers	1 Branch GM, 1 Manager, 7 Branch staff	1 Branch GM, 2 Idaara Managers, 8 Branch staff	23
AEA Monitors and Mentors	10	3 Monitors 1 Mentor	7	21
AEA Supervisors (Community Facilitators in Minia)	8	6	7	21
NGO Technical Director			1	1
NGO Literacy Program Area Manager			1	1
NGO Monitors and Mentors			8	8
NGO Learners			47	47
NGO Literacy Facilitators			16	16
Totals:	126	81	161	368

Appendix 6

Field Schedule

Date	Location	Respondent Category or Task
November 4	Cairo ERP office	Meeting with ERP AL staff
November 5	Cairo (ERP AL Office - Basateen)	
	AM	3 ERP and 2 PNGO staff
	AM/PM	General Said Branch GM
	PM	2 mentors, 12 monitors
	PM	25 supervisors
November 6	AM Marg	learners 24
	AM	learners 30
	PM	literacy facilitators 20
	PM	literacy facilitators 15
	PM	learners 11
November 7	AM Fayoum	3 ERP and 3 PNGO staff
	PM	3 monitors (1 B. monitor) ,1 mentor
	PM	20 learners
	PM	24 learners
November 8	AM Fayoum	12 literacy facilitators
	PM	1 branch GM, 1 idaara manager, 7 branch staff
	PM	6 supervisors
November 9/10		Initial organizing of notes and framework
November 11	AM Minia office	3 ERP and 3 PNGO staff
	PM	75 monitors, 1 supervisor, 1 mentor
	PM	7 supervisors/community facilitators
November 12	AM Minia (Samalot idaara)	Caritas: 8 monitors, 1 area manager, 1 technical director
	PM Abou Korkas	23 literacy Facilitators
	PM Abou Korkas	19 learners
	PM Abou Korkas	15 learners
November 13	AM Samalot	Caritas: 16 literacy facilitators
	AM Samalot	Caritas: 23 learners
	PM Samalot	Caritas: 13 learners
	PM Samalot	Caritas; 11 learners
	PM Minia	Abou Korkas and Samalot idaara managers
November 14	PM Minia	1 branch manager, 8 branch staff
November 15-17	Cairo	Report writing and
November 18	AM/PM Cairo	Discussions with adult literacy staff and development of presentation.
November 19	AM Cairo	Presentation on preliminary findings
	PM Cairo	Discussions with ERP 1 COP ERP and others.

Appendix 7

ERP/PNGO Training Topics for AEA Staff

- * Team building and communication skills
- * Arabic and math skills including designing simple resources for teaching Arabic
- * Active learning
- * Classroom management
- * Effective lesson planning
- * Producing classroom aids from the local environment
- * Community participation including reaching out to mosques, churches and other community bodies and training CDAs.
- * Adult education
- * Media and social marketing
- * Monitoring and supervision
- * Integrating health messages
- * Training of trainers including preparing and qualifying technical staff
- * Developing Mentors and their relationship with Monitors and Supervisors.
- * Conducting needs assessments through PRA
- * Computer training
- * Strategic and annual planning
- * Managing the plan and raising resources.

Appendix 8

(AL Monitoring Format for Month.....)

Village:.....Center.....Governorate

Facilitator's name:.....

Mentor's/Monitor's name:.....Lesson:..... place:.....

No of learners/classroom:.....

Absents#:.....Attendees#:.....

Lesson preparation

notes	V. good 4	good 3	Mid 2	Week 1	Item
					clear lesson objectives
					different activities to achieve the lesson objectives
					Suitable learning methods to achieve these objectives
					Educational materials that match with the activities
					Variety of evaluation methods for learners
					Total Degrees

Class performance

					Suitable preparation for learners
					Different techniques for implementing the activities
					Encouraging the learners for active participation
					Active interaction between the learners and the facilitator
					Interaction between the learners each others
					There is an opportunity for learners to express themselves
					Applying some of the active learning strategies
					Using suitable presentation skills (standing, sound, movement)
					Teaching methods that takes care of the individual differences
					Using the community events in the lesson explanation
					Total Degrees

Classroom management

					Organizing the students and their sitting inside the classroom
					Dividing the learners in work groups
					Managing the class time suitably
					Adherence to work regulations
					Total degrees

Educational methods

					Using suitable educational methods
					Learners participate in designing Educational materials from the environment
					Total degrees

Educational materials

					Accurate and clear presentation for information
					Benefiting from the learners experiences and connecting it with the new information
					Connecting the previous lessons' experiences with the current ones
					Total degrees

Learners testing

					Regular follow-up on all the written work
					Support the writing with a good hand writing
					Recording all the positive behavior changes
					Applying various evaluation techniques
					Good preparation for the files (5 degrees for behavior, visits, learners evaluation)
					Follow-up on the progress happens in reading writing and math.
					Total degrees
					Final degree

Points for improvements (previously agreed upon it with the facilitator)

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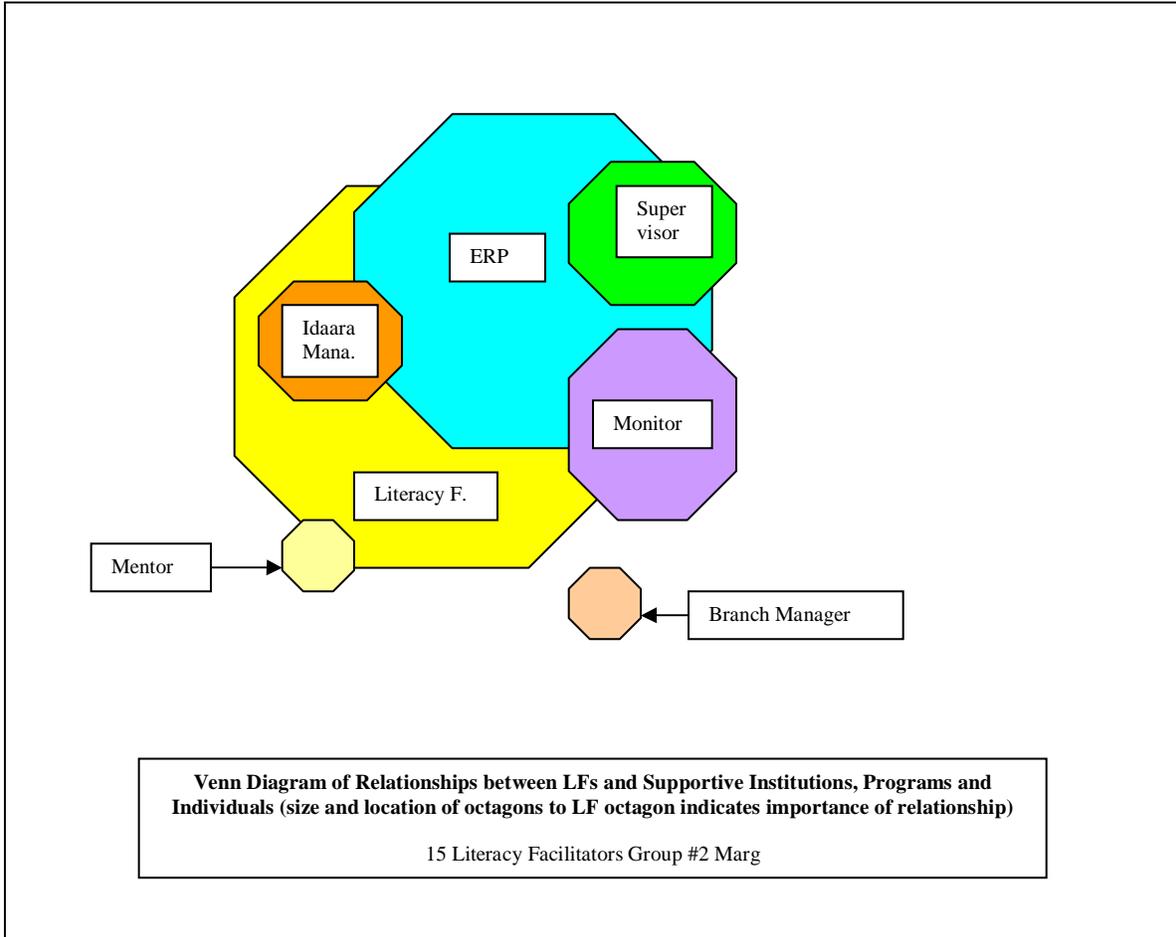
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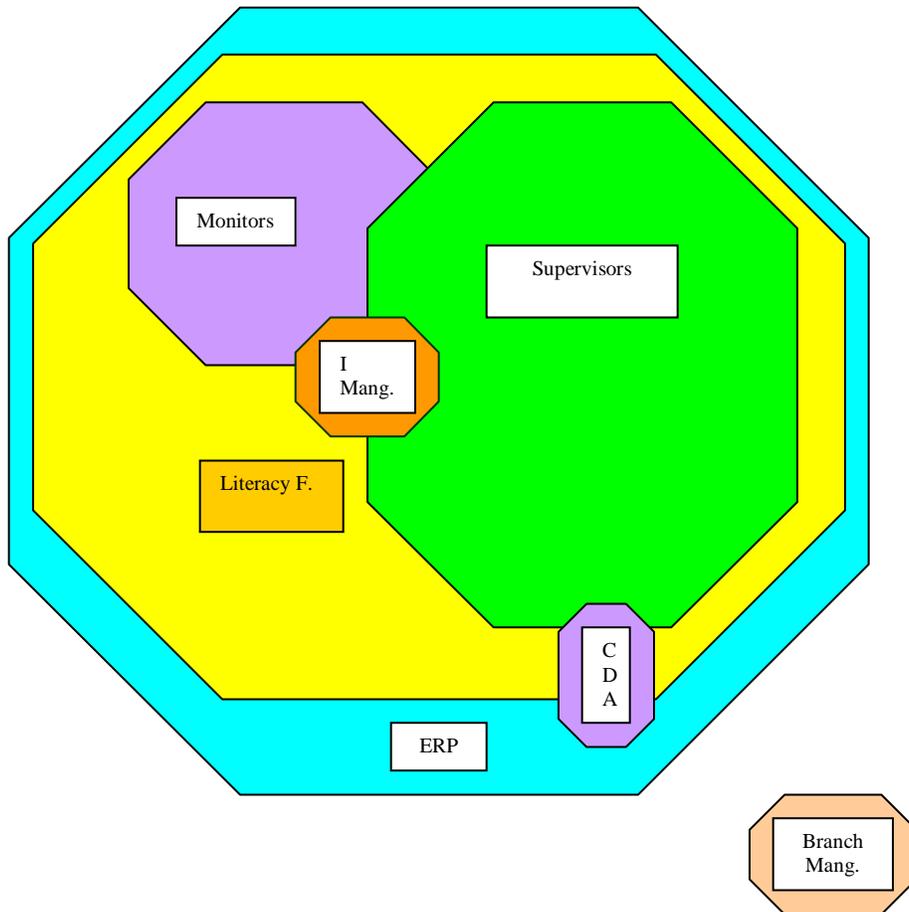
Monitor's signature

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Appendix 9



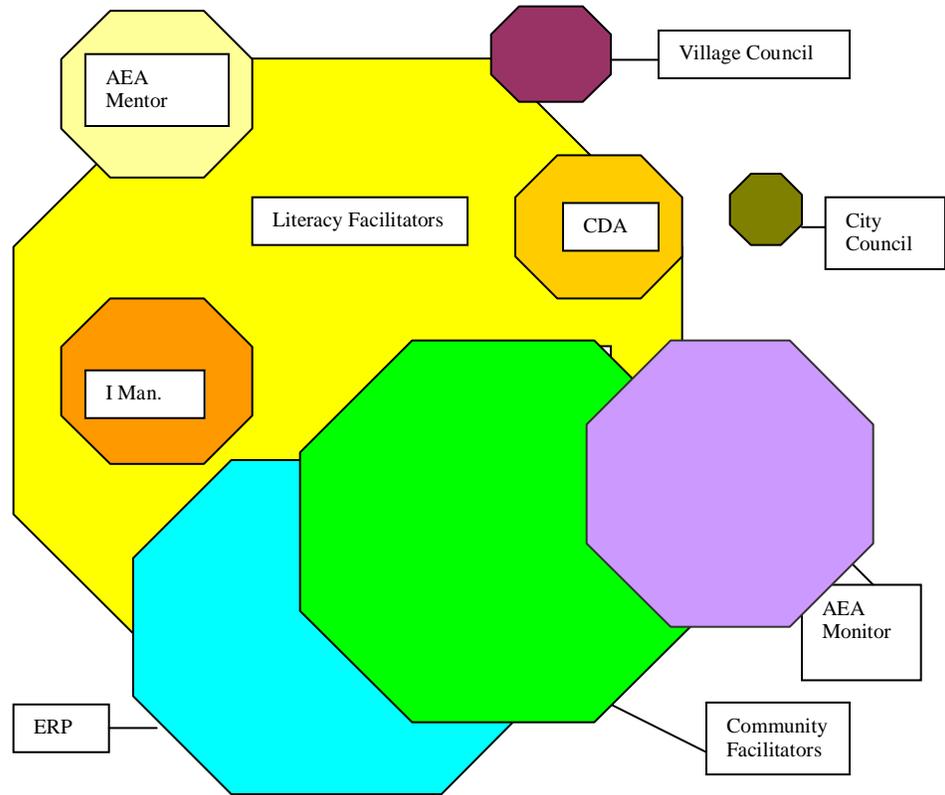
Appendix 9 (continued)



Venn Diagram of Relationships between LFs and Supportive Institutions, Programs and Individuals (size and location of octagons to LF octagon indicates importance of relationship)

12 Literacy Facilitators Group Fayoum Idaara

**Appendix 9
(continued)**



**Venn Diagram of Relationships between CFs and Supportive Institutions, Programs and Individuals
(size and location of octagons to LF octagon indicates importance of relationship)**

23 Community Facilitators Group Abou Korkas Idaara

Appendix 10

Caritas Minia Literacy Program Timeline

