

Project Evaluation Report

The Capacity Building of Egyptian NGOs to Implement
Beijing Platform of Action Project; with Special Emphasis
on Phase III

by

Appropriate Communication Techniques for Development (ACT)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings and conclusions of an end of project evaluation for the *Capacity Building of Egyptian NGOs to Implement Beijing Platform of Action* project, a project funded mainly by the Dutch embassy in Cairo, with contribution from UNICEF. The project under evaluation was initiated in 1997 to implement a number of development interventions that ultimately aim to build the capacity of selected NGOs—in seven Egyptian governorates—and enhance their potential for implementing the Beijing Platform of Action. The original project design envisioned a three-year period for implementing the desired interventions. However, after completing the planned interventions, an evaluation concluded that the project succeeded so far—at the time—in achieving its objectives effectively and delivered outcomes that were worthy of continuation. In response to the positive evaluation, the Dutch embassy and UNICEF extended the project for another phase (Phase II) with the aim of maintaining the previous good outcomes of Phase I, and pushing their achievements and momentum further.

Unfortunately, the implementation of Phase II was not completed because the umbrella NGO that was responsible for coordinating implementation activities withdrew from the project due to some disagreements. As a result, the project was stopped and its activities were halted for over a year. UNICEF and the Dutch embassy agreed to resume the project again with a third phase. Phase III was inaugurated to revive the project and continue the activities of Phase II, which were abruptly terminated as mentioned above. The third phase was envisioned to last until September 2003, but was later extended to December 2003. Because of the multiple extensions and renewals, this project, which was originally envisaged to last for three years in 1997, was extended over three phases that spanned the period from 1997 to 2003.

The objective of this evaluation was to identify outcomes of the project; to examine the effectiveness of the interventions, management practice, and implementation in general; and to investigate the potential for sustaining the activities that were implemented. The latter is an especially important aspect of the evaluation given that both UNICEF and the donor are phasing out their support for the project.

The evaluation is focused more on appraising the results and outputs of Phase III of the project, which officially lasted from May 2002 to December 2003 than on the earlier phases. Previous evaluations were conducted for the two early phases at the end of each one of them.

The methodology of the evaluation contains several components: review of existing project documents, consultations with key UNICEF and the umbrella-NGO staff, documents' review and interviews with key staff in local NGOs, field visits to pilot projects, focus group discussions. To assess the first two phases, the evaluation relied mostly on information included in the previous appraisal reports, some documents available from these phases, and discussions and interviews with participants of the project since its initiation, while for Phase III a detailed documentation review was made in addition to all other methodological techniques mentioned above.

The evaluation team concluded that the project did indeed create a general environment of cooperation between the participating NGOs, whereby they were able to network some of their activities to support women issues. As a result, this project helped create synergy between about 150 NGOs, a matter made possible only because of the project. This achievement has been built up since the initiation of the project in 1997, and remains the most important achievement of the project throughout. The project has as well enhanced the capacities of the participating NGOs, and some of their staff, to a point where they became able to handle women issues better. Furthermore, the project was able to deliver important services to poor women and girls, who directly benefited from the services offered by pilot projects in the areas of legal assistance, combating dropping out from school, and supporting the female child. Women and girls also benefited indirectly from the lobbying activities of the member NGOs both at national and local level, which contributed to the change of some regulations and official approaches towards women issues in various governorates.

Provision of quality services to the ultimate beneficiaries was most noticeable in cases of legal support pilot projects, which delivered a service that was much appreciated by the recipients. As well, the sub-project which targeted supporting the female child was also found to have had important positive impacts on its target group, including: enhancing their awareness, improving their self esteem, and developing their communication and dialogue skills. On the other hand, indirect benefit through lobbying was found to be less concrete. It is more difficult to measure the project's contribution to changes in legislation and administrative regulations especially at national level. To what extent did the Beijing network contribute to effecting legal and regulatory changes where many other factors, including, above all, commitment from the leadership of the National Council for Women, were of importance, is difficult to judge. The question of whether such changes on the national level would have easily occurred without the Beijing network cannot be answered with any certainty.

Unlike at the national level, several concrete cases of lobbying at a governorate level were noted that were clearly contributed by NGOs belonging to the project's network. Various network members were also able to establish good communications to spread awareness and disseminate information about their activities and about the women cause at large.

The knowledge and experience in different areas, in which the network NGOs acted, were documented through publishing of research findings, developing of manuals, guides, brochures, etc. The project also compiled a database containing detailed information for all NGOs, which can be used as a reference in future network activities.

Management of a project with such a big magnitude proved to be difficult and challenging, as it had to deal with a big number of issues and numerous stakeholders and implementing agencies. In addition, the project's management faced certain difficulties over its time-span, which was beyond the partner's control. On the implementing institution's side, after the withdrawal of the umbrella NGO due to some internal disagreements, identification and approval by the Government of another NGO to continue running the project took a long time. Not only has less time remained for implementation due to this reason. The change of the umbrella NGO disrupted the management process and affected the smooth continuation of project activities. It also caused losing part of the detailed information at NGO level regarding the initial stages

of the project implementation. Yet AHED, the umbrella NGO that acted during Phase III, managed to recuperate quickly the time lost, to improve coordination between the participating NGOs as well as documentation of activities, and to assure outputs' delivery.

On UNICEF side, the structure of the Country Program of Cooperation has changed between Phase I and Phase II, whereas the Gender related program has been discontinued. With regard to the project under evaluation, this program change resulted in reducing of UNICEF human capacity devoted to it.

While the project keeps records about participation in activities of various types, there is not good documentation regarding the follow up of such participation. Follow-up monitoring and documentation is particularly essential especially when refers to training. With the exception of legal support to women, the evaluation team was not in a position to assess the effectiveness of capacity building through training, which dominated all phases of the project, due to insufficient information on how such capacity was practically implemented afterwards.

At the phasing out of such a big project, the issue of sustainability is of great importance. This is even more so because of the big investments made in capacity building and the need to use this capacity efficiently. The issue of sustainability has not been paid enough attention to during the first and second phases of the project life. However, during Phase III, a discussion on sustainability was open. Some network members already took measures aiming at sustaining of activities, where they have comparative advantages and good capacity built during the project's lifespan. AHED is currently discussing with the CRC Coalition possible ways to join efforts for sustaining some of the project components such as girls' rights support groups.

The Evaluation Team

The evaluation was carried out by an external team of specialists from Appropriate Communication Techniques for Development (ACT), an external independent consulting firm. It was conducted in the period from 10-January-04 to 28-February-04. The team was composed of the following four members:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Azza Kamel: | Team Leader |
| Azza Shalaby: | Gender Specialist |
| Emile Charli: | Education Specialist |
| Magdi Anwar: | Social Activities and Community Mobilization Specialist |

1. INTRODUCTION

Organized international efforts that support the rights and aspirations of women have been increasing rapidly in the recent past. Since the early 1990s, several international conferences emphasized the need to take active measures to accentuate the rights of women and expound the effects of prevailing gender relations. Gradually, these conferences promoted initiatives, principles, recommendations, alternative policies, and platforms to strengthen the case for women rights, on an international scale. As a result, awareness of the need to take active measures to promote gender equality accumulated with time, from the Earth Summit on the Environment in Rio in 1992, to the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, to the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, to the Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development in 1995.

In these conferences, the effects of gender relations on the issues explored were highlighted, and as a result, the experience and aspirations of women were incorporated within important global policy issues. Such efforts culminated in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, which hosted participants from 189 countries. In this conference, women successfully exerted a great influence on global policymaking and women issues emerged as a significant determinant for shaping the future. The voice of those who believed that women's rights are human rights prevailed and dominated the conference, and thus complemented the gains that women had achieved in Rio, Vienna, Cairo, and Copenhagen.

Much of the gains accrued in Beijing, as well as the previous conferences, were to great extent attributed to the activities of the participating NGOs. These NGOs worked effectively to redefine and extend the meaning of human rights to encompass the specific experiences of women. Prior to the Beijing conference, in anticipation of the crucial role of NGOs, the UN prepared for the NGOs participation in the conference. This preparation contributed significantly to the NGOs effective role in the conference. The UN organized the preparatory activities in several international focal points, and selected Egypt to be one of the two focal points of the region. NGOs from all Egyptian governorates participated actively in workshops, studies, and networks to discuss the main concerns of the Beijing Platform of Action. In addition, a large number of Egyptian NGO representatives participated in the regional preparatory meeting in Amman and in the NGO forum in Beijing. UNICEF played a significant role in this respect as well. It supported the preparation and participation of the Government and NGOs in ICPD and Beijing Conferences. It also funded studies on women's issues and supported the production of NGO reports and participation.

Because of the crucial role played by NGOs in the Cairo and Beijing conferences, the Egyptian Government started to accept, and to some extent encouraged, an active role for NGOs to play in various development fields and in supporting marginal vulnerable groups of children and women. Consequently, a new era of direct relationships and dialogue between NGOs and donors ensued, whereby understanding of each party's perspective, regulations, and requirements was enhanced. This ultimately resulted in increasing funds provided to Egyptian NGOs by international donors, and in enlarging the potential for these NGOs' contribution in social development.

Realizing that both ICPD and Beijing Conferences generated a momentum that had to be maintained and accelerated, and that that required active participation from NGOs, UNICEF and the Netherlands Embassy in Egypt initiated a project to support NGOs role in this respect. This project—named *Capacity Building of Egyptian NGOs to Implement Beijing Platform of Action*—was initiated in April 1997 with the aim of establishing networks of local NGOs to participate in implementing and monitoring the Beijing Platform of Action. Initially, the project document envisioned two-year duration for the project. The main objective behind this networking effort was to integrate NGOs efforts and build their capacity to be able to work collectively on implementing the Beijing Platform of Action. Since then, the project has created various networking arrangements that networked around 149 NGOs (according to the project's database), which operated in seven different governorates, and worked in six different thematic coalitions. This NGOs network produced a work-plan for each of the six themes of interest:

1. Alleviation of poverty of female heads of households;
2. Female education;
3. Female health;
4. Equality before the law;
5. Combating violence against women;
6. Supporting the girl child.

The implementation of this project focused on strengthening the capacities of individual NGOs and networks with regards to advocacy and grass root mobilization for the rights of women. Moreover, the project assisted in the evolvement and implementation of alternative policies that are capable of responding to the needs of Egyptian women and girls, and that have an impact on community development in general and women in particular. The project as well implemented a group of pilot projects in the local communities of the network, which imparted developmental services to the women and female children of these communities. The needs addressed by these plans were identified through participation of NGO representatives, which targeted the development of six coalition work-plans of action.

From Phase I to Phase III, the project moved gradually from a sole focus on building the capacity of the NGOs and change agents that joined the networks and coalitions of the project, to delivering direct services to women and children via the networks built. However, the project still has a network building focus, and less of a service delivery one.

2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

As the project progressed with time, it adopted different specific objectives during its different phases. Nonetheless, all of the phase-specific objectives were in line with the main developmental objective mentioned in the above section. This section reviews the main objectives of each Phase.

2.1 Objectives of Phase I

Initially, it was envisioned that the project would last for three years. The overall objective of the project, as stated at the beginning of the project, was to (1) build the capacity of Egyptian NGOs in implementing the Platform of Action of the Fourth International Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, and to (2) implement a pilot project to alleviate poverty of female heads of households. This overall objective was divided in Phase I into four specific sub-objectives, as follows:

1. Build six networks of NGOs around specific concerns of the Beijing Platform of Action:
 - Combating poverty through creating employment opportunities and income generation activities, especially for female heads of households;
 - Female education;
 - Improving women's health;
 - Combating violence against women;
 - Increasing awareness on women's rights;
 - Equality for the girl child.
2. Support these six thematic networks of NGOs in arriving at a work-plan to achieve the objectives of each concern, in the communities in which they serve;
3. Initiate pilot projects, which will address the needs of female heads of households;
4. Provide technical and financial assistance in implementing and monitoring the NGOs work-plans.

After the conclusion of Phase I, an assessment of the implemented activities (conducted in July 1999) concluded, among others, that the participating NGOs developed good abilities to work together for women issues. According to the assessment as well, positive group interaction evolved among these NGOs, which the evaluation report found to be a good mechanism that was worth the effort invested in its development, and thus should be continued and expanded. Accordingly, the donors approved to extend the project for another Phase. Thus, Phase II was initiated with suggested duration of three years (August 1999 to July 2002).

2.2 Objectives of Phase II

The overall objective of this Phase was to maintain the momentum of the project and deliver direct services to women and female children of the target communities by establishing groups of NGOs at national and governorate level, capable of:

- Implementing specific interventions related to the six concerns of Beijing Platform of Action, which were identified during Phase I;
- Influencing policies and legislation for increased gender equity and equality: including, changing of rape law and nationality law, and initiating new legislation that protects female agricultural workers, housemaids, and female heads of households.

This overall objective was divided in Phase II into four specific sub-objectives, as follows:

1. Assist in developing grass root pilot projects for the six thematic coalitions in the seven governorates to analyze the reasons for gender gaps and inequality, address women's rights, and follow up on the implementation of Beijing Platform of Action;
2. Strengthen the capacity of the geographic NGO coalitions in sensitizing local government agencies and decision-makers for better services for poor women;
3. Monitor problems that impede the fulfillment of women's rights' like girls drop-outs of school, women who do not possess identity cards, violence against house maids, etc.
4. Lobby through thematic NGO coalitions for more equitable legislation and for better services for women.

The Embassy of Netherlands approved the project proposal for Phase II, and provided financial support for the continuation of the project.

However, due to some management problems, the umbrella NGO that was implementing Phase II "Women's Association for Health Improvement" (WAHI) encountered disagreement and split among its board members, which led to its withdrawal from the project after only one year from the project's start. The project thus came to a stand still in September 2001. Because WAHI withdrew one year after the commencement of an originally planned three-year project, at the withdrawal of WAHI the activities intended for Phase II were only partially achieved. Thus, many of the planned activities were not implemented and unspent funds remained.

Because of these developments, there was a felt need to revise the project. Upon the request of the Dutch Embassy, a revised proposal was prepared and submitted in May 2002. Upon accepting this proposal, it was agreed to extend the duration of the project until September 2003—which was later extended until December 2003—instead of December 2002 as originally envisioned in the proposal for Phase II. In addition, both parties selected another umbrella NGO to replace WAHI and implement the designed

activities. Together, UNICEF and the Dutch embassy selected the “Association for Health and Environmental Development” (AHED) to implement Phase III of the project.

2.3 Objectives of Phase III

Phase III of the project was originally designed for the period June 2002–September 2003, and was later extended to December 2003. Its main objectives were virtually the same as those of Phase II. The project proposal requested, on top of the unspent funds, US\$ 65,993 in order to complete the assignment.

The project, through out this phase, formulated three major components:

- Networking: the following forms of networking were included in the project:
 - Thematic coalitions: six coalitions formed around the six main projects themes of the Beijing Platform of Action namely; Women's Health, Girl Child, Female Education, Equality before the Law, Violence against Women and Female Heads of Households.
 - Coalitions on the governorate-level: seven geographic coalitions of NGOs.
 - Networking with governmental and other individual non-governmental organizations as well as with the international agencies.
- Pilot projects (Pilot Projects): specific interventions were selected to build pilot projects around identified project themes that would become replicable models. These projects included:
 - Five Legal Aid Centers
 - Three systems for monitoring girls dropping out from basic education
 - Five centers for consultations in the area of violence against women.
- Capacity Building of member NGOs: during the project duration capacity of member NGOs was built in areas like needs assessment, research, awareness raising etc., mainly through a large number of training courses.

2.4 Target Beneficiaries

UNICEF selected a vast area for this developmental intervention; the area selected includes seven governorates: Cairo (and Giza), Alexandria, Minya, Assiut, Sohag, Qena, and Aswan. The target beneficiaries of this project were composed of at least two main groups. The first group is composed of NGOs that work on promoting women rights in the selected governorates, which received capacity building and networking support from the project. While, the second group is composed of women and female children at large—from the governorates selected—who received the benefits of the pilot projects and benefited as well from improved policies and regulations that the project was able to help alter. Naturally, the ultimate target beneficiaries of this project is composed of the latter, as supporting the first group is sought in order to enhance the services offered for the second.

2.5 Change of Focus with Time

It is clear from the previous accounts of the phase-specific objectives—given in sections 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 above—that the project experienced a general change of focus from Phase I to III. The following table summarizes this shift.

Table 1: CHANGE OF FOCUS ALONG PROJECT PHASES

| Phase | General Focus | Direct Beneficiary | Remarks |
|--------------|--|--|--|
| I | Initiating the networks; Building the capacity of network members; Producing thematic plans; Implementing pilot projects to support female heads of households. | Network members received most of the support in this phase; Female heads of households received some special attention in this phase. | The focus of this phase was to create the network and build its capacity. Documentation of the outputs of this phases are not available, including the six thematic plans; Some studies are available because they were reprinted in Phase III |
| II | Initiating pilot projects in the various thematic areas; Continuing NGO capacity building activities; Continuing networking activities. | Direct support shifted more towards women and female children in the selected area. | The phase was halted and some of its developmental investment failed to continue on its own. This mainly includes activities related to the pilot projects, which did not reach the beneficiaries at this phase in significant ways. |
| III | Same as above. | Same as above. | This phase was perhaps the most organized. Benefit was targeted to both, the network members and the women and children in the selected areas. |

As indicated above, the main shifts in the project focus—as per the changes in the objectives of the phases—were thus to move from a strong focus on building the capacity of the network members (the NGOs), to one that provides direct developmental support to the women and girls in the local societies covered by the network in conjunction with capacity building activities. That is, the project changed its focus from a sole focus on the developmental intermediary to one that includes the ultimate beneficiary with time. However, the support imparted to the beneficiaries is very little compared to the capacity building effort, which, even though it goes along with the main objective of the project, is still to be viewed with some reservation.

3. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The ultimate objective of this evaluation is to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the project implementation and the impact of its deliverables, and to study the potential for sustaining its current activities in the future. The sustainability issue is especially important given that UNICEF and the donor are phasing out their support for the project, and that less potential for sustainability than desired is foreseen for some of the project's activities, as will become clearer in later sections. In addition to the above objective, the evaluation report will be used in the discussion of UNICEF's mid-term review, which will be conducted later in 2004, and could help in formulating future UNICEF's strategies that address women's rights and gender concerns.

3.1 Objectives of the evaluation:

The main objectives of this evaluation, according to the ToR between UNICEF and ACT, are:

- To assess how effective and efficient were the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project, and how effective was the assistance of UNICEF.
- To examine the extent to which the collective work undertaken by NGOs coalitions (thematically and geographically), helped in better addressing gender inequality, the outcomes on the various stakeholders and the project's impact at large.
- To draw conclusions regarding project's strengths and weaknesses, and to recommend methodologies and strategic alternatives that will help in strengthening the NGOs coalitions and ensure sustainability of their activities (advocacy, grass root activities, etc.) after UNICEF's and donor's withdrawal.

3.2 Major Questions

The ToR contained a group of questions to guide the evaluation of the project. These questions were grouped into three categories: Questions related to process, to outcome, and to impact.

3.2.1 Questions regarding process:

- Were project objectives met through the different phases and across project components? Were they met on time as scheduled? What were the main project-management problems faced during each phase both by UNICEF and by the project implementing NGOs?
 - Evaluating the attainment of the objectives of Phases I and II relied mainly on previous evaluation reports and the memory of some of the participants.
 - Objectives related to quantitative outputs of Phase III were evaluated;

- Those related to impact were only evaluated in the cases of legal assistance and the “groups for supporting the female child”, because the team had access to the beneficiaries.
 - The impact of the capacity-building activities was difficult to determine with high certainty, except with the pilot projects in some respect.
- What were the criteria for NGOs to become members of the thematic coalitions? How many are the NGOs-members and how many remained behind the board? Is the structure of the 6 thematic NGO coalitions effective? Does it ease or hamper communication and information exchange? Are all coalitions equally potent in their functioning? Why?
 - Some of the criteria of selection were obtainable, but only for Phase III;
 - It was possible to partially evaluate some elements of this question that are related to Phases I and II;
 - What were the criteria for NGOs to become members of the geographic coalitions? How many are the NGOs-members and how many remained behind the board? How do the 7 geographic NGO coalitions function in order to involve more grass root NGOs in the project? Are the coalitions effective? Are they equally potent in their functioning? Why?
 - Same as above.
 - How efficient is the management of the NGO coalitions? Is it enough transparent, participatory, flexible and adaptable to the changing environment? What approaches and techniques are used to monitor the projects’ implementation - progress and constraints? Which of them proved to be successful and which failed over the projects’ duration? Does the management system lack of some standard tools for monitoring (e.g. record for each activity with details about participants, cost, feedback about the effect of provided services, etc.)?
 - Same as above.

3.2.2 Questions regarding outcome:

- How smooth was the process of elaboration of the 6 thematic work plans and to what extent do these plans reflect the main objectives to be reached in each area of concern? To what extent were the objectives, set in each work plan, achieved so far? Which expectations were not met? Why?
 - Most of the elements of this question were possible to evaluate in Phase III only. Plans developed in Phases I, the main plans developed in the project

were not obtainable. The coordinators of this phase promised to bring them soon.

- How effective was the grass root work? How many pilot projects were established and in which areas of concern? Why projects were not established in other areas? What is the mechanism of functioning of each type of pilot project (legal aid centers, monitoring systems of girls drop-outs of school, girls' rights support groups)? What is the cost of maintenance of each one of them? How many people from the communities benefited from the functioning of each pilot project? What type of service/advice did they receive?
 - Many of the elements of this question were possible to answer.
- How effective and efficient was the capacity-building component of the project in its two dimensions – capacity building of NGO staff and associates, and capacity building of the community members?
 1. How many training sessions were held for NGO staff - by years of implementation – topics, numbers of attendees, cost? How many NGO activists applied obtained knowledge in their practical work afterwards? How many people did they advise/refer to networking NGOs? What are the topics, which were originally considered but later on not covered by training (e.g. fund raising)? Why?
 2. How many lawyers were trained – by years of implementation - on what topics, at what cost? How many of them provided voluntarily consultations at the legal aid centers after being trained? How many people did they serve?
 3. How many training sessions were held for health staff – by years of implementation – topics, numbers of attendees, cost? What was the effect of these sessions in their practical work with women?
 4. How many training sessions were held for community members – by years of implementation – topics, numbers of attendees, cost? How many (what proportion) of the attendees improved their knowledge in the discussed areas? What proportion of them exercised their knowledge through seeking their rights via the consultation/advice/assistance provided by the project's mechanisms?
 - It was only possible to answer the quantitative aspects of these questions for Phase III of the project due to reasons mentioned above.

3.2.3 Questions regarding impact:

- To what extent did thematic coalitions influence policies and legislation changes aimed at empowerment of women? What concrete changes occurred during the evaluated period in the area of women-related government policy and legislation where NGO coalitions strongly advocated?

- It was possible to note some changes in this regard. However they are due to many and complex factors, the contribution of the coalition cannot be clearly identified.
- Which are the issues, related to deprived women, which geographic NGO coalitions raised to local government agencies? Which are the issues, on which they obtained government's support with regard to poor women?
 - Same as above.
- What is the over all impact of the project? Does it make a real difference for the communities in the 7 governorates? In what sense? Did any effects not originally envisaged, both positive and negative, occur?
 - Some conclusions about this issue were made.
- How can sustainability of the project at large and of each component in particular be ensured after UNICEF's and donor's withdrawal? Is national capacity developed enough to administer it after the donor's and UNICEF's withdrawal? What were the weakest points in the course of the project's implementation that might hamper the continuation? Can the project be replicated in other geographic locations of the country and in other thematic areas?
 - Same as above.

4. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team examined the activities of a group of the entities related to the project, including:

- The Umbrella NGO;
- UNICEF staff.
- The Project's Coordinators;
- Steering Committee;
- All Governorates Focal NGOs, except Cairo;
- Representatives of NGOs Involved, except Cairo;
- All Pilot Projects, except Cairo;
- Beneficiaries of all Pilot Projects;
- The children who participate in the female child pilot project.

To evaluate the constellation of activities, outputs and organizations, of the project the team performed a number of tasks, including:

4.1 Desk review

The team acquired a large amount of the important documents that were generated along the lifespan of Phase III. Some documents related to the previous phases were also obtained, but they related more to the design of these phases and less to outputs and activities conducted. Studying these documents helped in formulating a picture of how the project was conducted, albeit a partial one of course, as it does not indicate some of the important qualities that are not reflected in documentary evidence. The documents surveyed included:

- Annual project plans of action for the time period of the evaluation;
- Project proposals for phases I, II and III of the project;
- Project agreements with the ministry of social affairs;
- Project agreements with umbrella NGO (AHED);
- Progress reports of UNICEF;
- Progress reports of AHED;
- Regular reports of the various focal NGOs;
- Minutes of meetings of the various geographic collations;
- Various management registers and log books of the different focal NGOs and pilot projects;
- Financial records maintained by AHED;
- Project files kept in UNICEF;
- Project Files kept in AHED.

4.2 Consultations with key UNICEF Officials and AHED staff

The evaluation team held an initial meeting with the relevant UNICEF Egypt staff, which includes the Senior Program Officer, Assistant Project Officer GAD, Project Assistant, and other involved staff. Moreover, the team was accompanied by Assistant Project Officer in several field visits, including visits to Assiut, and Alexandria. Finally,

the team conducted two meetings with the UNICEF staff to discuss the partial findings of the evaluation as the evaluation process proceeded.

4.3 Field visits to governorates focal NGOs

The team conducted field visits to all focal NGOs of the seven governorates (AHED is the focal NGO of Cairo as well as the Umbrella NGO of the project). In these visits, the team examined the project documentation, the NGO facilities, and interviewed the staff.

4.4 Field visits to all pilot projects;

The team conducted field visits to all pilot projects, except the one in Cairo for supporting girls dropping-out from school. The network in Cairo was not as cooperative as needed and could not settle their agendas as to schedule meeting with the evaluation team.

In these field visits, the team examined the project documentation, the NGO facilities, and interviewed the staff.

4.5 Focus groups

The team conducted several focus groups, which helped fill some of the information gap that the team faced when analyzing the documented information. Details of these focus groups are as follows:

4.5.1 Network members

Six focus groups were conducted with representative of the network members in each governorate—one focus group for each governorate. The team has not been able to conduct the focus group of the Cairo governorate yet due to lack of commitment on the part of the Cairo network members. The team invited all network members of a given governorate to attend the focus group of their respective governorate. The invitation was delivered to the members through the governorate focal NGO. However, a group of NGOs in every governorate was unable to attend the focus groups, as it conflicted with their obligations for the time. Details of the number of NGOs which attended these focus groups are provided in the table below.

Table 2: FOCUS GROUPS CONDUCTED WITH
GOVERNORATE NETWORK MEMBERS

| Governorate | Number of Gov. Network Members | Number of Focus group attendees | % of Gov. members |
|--------------------|---|--|--------------------------|
| Alexandria | 22 | 12 | 55% |
| Aswan | 24 | 15 | 63% |
| Minya | 22 | 9 | 41% |
| Asuite | 21 | 21 | 100% |
| Qena | 23 | 7 | 30% |
| Sohag | 23 | 10 | 43% |

4.5.2 Members of “groups for supporting the female child”

Seven focus groups were conducted with representative of the beneficiaries of the “groups for supporting the female child” in the various governorates. The team invited all beneficiaries (members of the groups for supporting the female child program) of a given governorate to attend the focus group of their respective governorate. The invitation was delivered to the members through the governorate focal NGO and the pilot project coordinator. However, some members of the girls groups were unable to attend the focus groups, as it conflicted with their obligations for the time. Details of these focus groups are provided in the table below.

Table 3: FOCUS GROUPS CONDUCTED WITH MEMBERS
OF THE GIRLS SUPPORT GROUPS

| Governorate | Number of Gov. Members | Number of Focus group attendees | % of Gov. members |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Alexandria | 22 | 8 | 36% |
| Aswan | 22 | 8 | 36% |
| Minya | 22 | 17 | 77% |
| Asuite | 22 | 13 | 59% |
| Qena | 22 | 10 | 45% |
| Sohag | 22 | 9 | 41% |
| Cairo | 22 | 9 | 36% |

4.5.3 Centralized management functions

Concerning centralized management functions, the evaluation team conducted two focus groups including:

1. members of the central steering committee;
2. members of the committee of representatives of pilot projects.

4.5.4 Beneficiaries of school dropouts

The team conducted two focus groups with the beneficiaries of the “supporting school drop-outs” in Aswan and Assiut (4 and 7 girls respectively). These girls were selected by the pilot project coordinators. They were selected based on their willingness to participate and the convenience of the timing of the field visits with their schedules. The team was unable to conduct the focus group of the Cairo governorate. Attempts to schedule a meeting with these beneficiaries were not successful.

4.6 Interviews with various coordinators and lawyers of the project

Several interviews were conducted with the various coordinators and lawyers involved in the project, including:

- All coordinators of focal NGOs;
- Lawyers from each legal support pilot project;
- Coordinators of the “groups for supporting the female child”;
- Coordinators of the “supporting school drop-outs”, except Cairo.

4.7 Case studies:

To assess the impact of the project on the beneficiaries of the legal assistance pilot projects and the benefits that they accrued from the project, the team resorted to case studies. The selection of the cases was performed by the pilot project coordinators in every governorate, as the team lacked access to a beneficiaries lists in advance, and because the beneficiaries generally considered coming to the pilot project in order to be interviewed to be cumbersome and not especially fruitful, in some cases embarrassing. The team was thus unable to conduct random sampling on the spot in the field, and had to leave the selection of the cases to the coordinators who knew best who would be willing to devote her time to attend interviews. Accordingly, the samples in this regard are biased and varied considerably from one governorate to the other, depending on the beneficiaries willingness to attend. Along this direction, some governorates found it difficult to convince beneficiaries to come for interviews, for example Sohag provided the team with only one beneficiary of its legal assistance program, which also happened to have been employed by the NGO, while Alexandria arranged for meeting seven cases.

The table below indicates the number of legal assistance beneficiaries for whom case studies were conducted in the various governorates. The team avoided to relate the number of the cases to the general number of support recipients, because the recipients are not homogenous. That is, they receive different services that vary from phone consultations to assistance in legal suits.

Table 4: NUMBER OF CASE STUDIES FOR
BENEFICIARIES OF THE LEGAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

| Governorate | Number of case studies |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Aswan | 3 |
| Sohag | 1 |
| Assuit | 5 |
| Minya | 5 |
| Alexandria | 7 |

4.8 Questionnaires

The team used several questionnaires to survey responses concerning the impact of the project. The questionnaires were distributed among samples of the network members, coordinators of all of the focal NGOs (except Cairo), and beneficiaries of the “groups for supporting the female child” program. Respectively, 81 NGO representatives from all governorates, except Giza, six focal NGOs, and 86 child filled questionnaires to evaluate the project.

However, the team used these questionnaires cautiously, because some of the answers indicate that the respondents misunderstood some of the questions, while other answers indicated that they did not take it seriously. Therefore, only some questions were accepted as indicative of the project status. (Copies of the questionnaires are attached.)

5. FINDINGS

This section presents the main findings of the evaluation in hand. Because of limitations imposed by the nature of the tools used for evaluation, lack of some type of data, and budgetary constraints that prevented the evaluation team from using different evaluation tools, some aspects of the project were not ascertainable. Naturally, given the variability in availability of the data needed for analysis, the confidence in the various findings mentioned below differed according to the type of findings, the tools used for assessment, and the data available, as will become clear below. The team thus tried to report only the findings that share a high level of confidence.

5.1 Initiating the Network

According to the project proposal for Phase II, by the conclusion of Phase I the project had already managed to create a national Network of 105 NGOs that work collectively for supporting various women causes. Currently, the NGOs included in the project database have reached 150, indicating an almost 40% growth in the number of NGOs registered in the network from the end of Phase I until the end of Phase III. These NGOs engage together in two different modes of cooperation. They engage in geographical cooperation, which maintains the cooperation between member NGOs within activities located in their governorates, and in thematic cooperation which groups NGOs working on a certain theme together on a national level.

Accordingly, the project created a national network of NGOs comprised of 150 NGOs that were grouped together into two different types of sub-networks. On a geographical level, these NGOs were divided into seven sub-networks, each in a different governorate: Alexandria, Aswan, Miniya, Asuite, Qena, Sohag, Cairo (and Giza). On another level, the same NGOs were also grouped in thematic coalitions that address the main themes of the project: 1) Alleviation of poverty of female heads of households; 2) Female education; 3) Female health; 4) Equality before the law; 5) Combating violence against women; and, 6) Supporting the girl child. Of these themes, ones related to poverty alleviation and violence against women received attention only until Phase II. Moreover, since then, there were little activities related to violence against women in Phase III—as indicated by the expenditures of the project and the cancellation of activities related to initiating violence centers—and none related to poverty alleviation. Thus, it is safe to conclude that when embarking on actual practical work in Phase III—in which plans that were previously developed in prior phases were to be implemented via practical activities—the network excluded activities related to two themes. It excluded activities related to violence because of lack of enthusiasm of the network members for the theme (for cultural reasons), and the theme of poverty alleviation because it was handled in earlier phases.

This structure of network organization (geographic-thematic) extends back to Phase I; the subsequent two phases maintained this structure but changed its emphasis from a thematic focus to a geographical one. By phase III, only one thematic meeting was

conducted, and the members affirmed the general lack of thematic activities in the focus groups.¹

Continuity is also observable not only in the structure of work organization, but in the members of the various sub-networks as well. The members of the networks at the end of the project belong mostly to NGOs that participated in Phases I and II, and only a very small segment (12% on the average) joined the project at Phase III, as reflected by the data in the table below.

Table 5: DISTRIBUTION OF A SAMPLE OF THE NETWORK MEMBERS BY PHASE OF JOINING THE PROJECT (SAMPLE BASED ON THE MEMBERS WHO ATTENDED THE ENDING CEREMONY)

| Governorate | Sample Size | NGOs from Phase I | % | NGOs from Phase II | % | NGOs from Phase III | % |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Cairo | 7 | 6 | 86 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 14 |
| Alexandria | 7 | 3 | 43 | 3 | 43 | 1 | 14 |
| Aswan | 14 | 8 | 57 | 4 | 29 | 2 | 14 |
| Minya | 13 | 5 | 38 | 4 | 31 | 4 | 31 |
| Asuite | 10 | 5 | 50 | 5 | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| Qena | 13 | 8 | 62 | 4 | 31 | 1 | 8 |
| Sohag | 17 | 9 | 53 | 7 | 41 | 1 | 6 |
| Total | 81 | 44 | 54.3 | 27 | 33.3 | 10 | 12.4 |

The table above shows the results of surveying the representatives of member NGOs for the members who attended the final celebration ceremony. It was not possible to construct a similar distribution for the actual whole network, because such data was not readily available. The current network data has been compiled in the form of a list of members and a description of their characteristics, which does not show when they joined the project, and does not include older members who left the project prior to Phase III. Therefore, it was not possible to rely on the database to derive a picture of the aging of the network. The data in the table above however can serve as a good approximation, because it includes data of surveying 81 members out of 150 in total. Accordingly, it is a large sample of that represents almost 55% of the total network population.

Based on the sample above, it is clear that slightly more than half of the network's members engaged in this project from its beginning. Another third joined the project in Phase II, and only 12% joined it in the last Phase. In light of this, it is clear that some members, almost half the network, were involved in the practical implementation in Phase II, and III without passing through the network building stage of Phase I. This shows flexibility on the network's part, as it manages to expand and incorporate new

¹ The network members mentioned in the focus groups that they complained about the lack of governorate based activities in Phase I, and the project management responded in Phase III by conducting most of the activities in governorate arrangements, see discussion below.

membership with time. Such distributions were also valid on a governorate-by-governorate basis as reflected in the table above.

5.1.1 Members' Selection Criteria

Concerning the selection of the network members, the team was not able to obtain specific documents related to the selection of the members in Phase I. In Phase III, selection criteria for the focal NGOs and the participants of various events were utilized and disseminated to the members before each event. This is clear from the files of AHED, as well as from the project files of the various focal NGOs. For example, AHED followed a specific system in selecting the focal NGOs of the governorates—the ones that were responsible for coordinating the activities of the various NGOs in a given governorate—which was composed of two main components. First, identifying a group of NGOs that would be nominated for this role, and secondly electing one of the NGOs that nominated themselves. The criteria set for the governorate umbrella NGO was as follows.

I. Administrative and financial criteria:

1. Being legally registered;
2. Possessing adequate premises that are easy to commute to;
3. Having an accountant to carry out needed accounting and finance activities;
4. Having a secretary that can carry out the needed activities of communication;
5. Possessing a computer, phone, and fax.

II. Criteria pertaining to previous experience:

1. Previous experience in project management and networking;
2. Previous experience in implementing projects related to women issues;
3. Good relations with official bodies as well as with other NGOs.

Several NGOs that satisfied the criteria were elected by their respective governorates representatives in the planning meeting of Ain Sukhna, one in each governorate.

In addition, similar selection criteria were developed for the selection of the children that participated in the “groups for supporting the female child”, and in the selection of the recipients of the various types of centralized training, which was supervised by AHED on a national level. Selecting the beneficiaries of either of these two activities was conducted via a relatively well-documented process. Usually, according to this process, AHED sends a notice for the governorate network via the focal NGO, and then the network collectively nominates a number of participants to be chosen for the event or activity. After this, AHED chooses—from among those nominated by the governorate—the ones who satisfy best the previously set selection criteria.

5.1.2 Intervention Focus

The main achievement of the project remained in the area of building the capacity of its members to network, and less in the area of using this network. Even though some of the pilot projects and lobbying activities indicate that the investment in building the

capacity of the NGOs began to bear fruit, it is in our opinion that what it achieved was somewhat less than what might be expected.

5.1.3 Activity Level

The second aspect of the networking that should be mentioned here relates to the level of activity of the network members. This was not possible to measure for the first two phases, but it was possible to solicit the members' opinions of the level network activity in Phase III. In Phase III, the network started in Ain Sukna with 127 members, which gives rise to an average of 18.1 members per governorate sub-network, and gradually built up to 146 members with time. In some governorates, the number of members fluctuated as Phase III progressed with time, as some NGOs did not participate in the network activities or withdrew from it, while others joined in later on. The level of commitment and activity of the members varied from one member NGO to the other, and in the pilot projects from one program to the other. Though this issue is hard to validate, but, as an approximation based on the opinions expressed in the focus groups that were conducted in the governorates, the evaluation team would suggest a 60-70% relative active participation of the network's members, and 30-40% either withdrew formally, or informally by attending monthly meetings and not participating actively in other project's activities. The activity level stated above is the most agreed upon level that was expressed by the members.

5.1.4 Thematic versus geographic focus

The general network was found to have fluctuated from a thematic focus in Phase I to a geographic one by Phase III. In Phase III, it has been almost geographically focused and not that much thematically focused. The focus groups and the available documents show that member NGOs of each governorate met on geographical basis, they were regularly followed up by the geographical coordinators, and rarely in thematic meetings. Only one serious thematic meeting, for every theme, was conducted in this project, and one thematic planning session for each theme in the start of the project together with one in the end. Moreover, NGOs were contacted and followed up on thematic issues by their respective geographic coordinator, not by the thematic coordinator. The members generally complained from the lack of attention to the thematic coalition in Phase III, versus a lack of attention for the governorate based activities in Phase I. Thus, concerning the originally envisioned thematic-geographic focus matrix for the network, as per the design of the project, it is evident that the network forsake the thematic focus for a geographic one with time, and did not work in a mode that balances both enough. It operated in an either or mode of operations. The shift from the thematic to the geographic focus can be partially attributed to the high cost of the thematic meetings because they entail big travel cost as all members travel to one city from all over the country to attend the meeting.

5.1.5 Knowledge of Objectives

When asked by the evaluation team, representatives of member NGOs were generally able to discuss and explain the objectives of the project, the activities of their NGOs, as well as those of the network at large. This was observed among the representatives that attended the focus groups that were conducted by the evaluation team, which normally included representation of over 50% of the governorate network members, with the

exception of the network in Cairo, which did not convene upon contact from the evaluation team. In addition, the majority of the responses to the questionnaires that were distributed among the representatives who attended the final ceremony stated that they knew the objectives of the project. Only a small segment mentioned that it did not, as demonstrated in the table below.

Table 6: KNOWLEDGE OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES²

| Governorate | Sample Size | Knows Objectives | % | Does not Know Objectives | % |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|----------|
| Cairo | 7 | 7 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Alexandria | 7 | 7 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Aswan | 14 | 14 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Minia | 13 | 12 | 92 | 1 | 8 |
| Asiut | 10 | 9 | 90 | 1 | 10 |
| Qena | 13 | 13 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Sohag | 17 | 15 | 88 | 2 | 12 |
| Total | 81 | 77 | 95 | 4 | 5 |

However, this is not applicable for Phase I, and II. It is not clear whether the members understood the network's objectives then.

5.2 General Management Practice

The assessment of the project management bears in mind that the project has faced a number of structural difficulties over its time-span, beyond the control of implementing institutions and UNICEF.

On the implementation side, after the withdrawal of WAHI due to its internal disagreements—WHAI was the umbrella NGO of phase II—identification and approval by the Government of another NGO to continue the implementation of the project took a long time. Not only has less time remained for implementation due to this reason, but as well the change of the umbrella NGO disrupted the management process and the smooth continuation of the project activities. It also caused losing part of the detailed information at the NGO level regarding the initial stages of the project implementation.

On UNICEF side, the structure of the Country Programme of Cooperation was changed between Phase II and Phase III, according to which the Gender related program had been discontinued and gender streamlined throughout the Country Programme. This resulted in reduction in UNICEF human capacity dedicated to the project under evaluation.

Geographical meetings, which are the main vehicle for maintaining the network, were regularly held in Phase III. The evaluation team was able to establish (from the focus groups) that all governorates' NGOs conducted regular geographic meetings. All

² This table is based on surveying the NGOs representatives who attended the final ceremony. The sample size represents 55% of the network population.

governorates focal NGOs keep records of minutes of such meetings, and all of them had a relatively high rate of meeting.³ The majority of them conducted six meetings, other than the initial planning meeting. This gives an average of almost a meeting every month and a half. The meetings were therefore regularly conducted, with the exception of an occasional month or two, usually in Ramadan.

Ideally, the system desired, as per the consensus of the representatives interviewed, that each of these meetings were to be preceded by a governorate planning meeting where an elected committee that represents the governorate network meet and decide upon the agenda in cooperation with the geographical coordinator. This activity was however not consistently conducted. Some governorates did indeed conduct most of the planning meetings, others, such as Alexandria for example, conducted as low as two planning meetings and transferred the planning function to the geographic meeting. Moreover, the planning committee varied in size and vigor from one governorate to the other.

5.3 General Financial Analysis

The financial analysis of the project will be broken down into two different domains. The first, which is the one explored in this section, relates mainly to the general analysis of the financial performance of the project. It traces the break down of the main components of the project's investments and their relative weight, as well as to the general management expenses of the project. The other domain of financial analysis relates to analysis of specific aspects of the project, such as training and pilot projects, and will be handled in the sections dedicated for each of the main activities, starting with section 5.4 below.

5.3.1 Main Impediments

The umbrella NGO has been changed over the life span of the project, as described above. In addition, the system of financial reporting in UNICEF has been changed in the late 1990s. Due to these reasons, the evaluation team was provided with aggregate financial data only for Phase I and II, based on the information in the project agreements and donor's reports. However, more detailed financial data was provided for phase III.

5.3.2 Analysis of the General Performance

Because of such difficulties, the evaluation team was unable to analyze in details the financial performance of Phases I and II. However, the team was able to analyze the financial aspect of Phase III, because the financial records of the umbrella NGO were well maintained and enabled such activity. Nonetheless, the team still faced some difficulty in this regard because the financial data required for analysis had to be compiled from many different records and bills. AHED helped significantly in this regard, but required significant time to do so.

On the most general level, the project in Phase III can be viewed to have been composed of three different types of expenditures:

³ We were not able to validate this for Cairo, because the team was unable to assess their files as they did not respond to the team's requests.

- expenditures related to the general management of the network;
- expenditures related to the pilot projects that were implemented by the network; and,
- other expenditures which do not fit either and which include mainly training as the most important of such expenditures.

The following table shows how the actual expenditures of these three categories compare to each other⁴—noting that all of the financial data presented here and in subsequent sections:

- Are for Phase III;
- are in Egyptian pounds (EGP); and,
- represent the latest budget figures after adjusting for all amendments.

Noting that AHED has kept files for all its expenditures, and demonstrated proper book keeping, and that it maintained a well documented tracing of all amendments of the budgets, the expenditures of this project were all in line with UNICEF approved budgets. All of the activities implemented were performed as per UNICEF's supervision and directing. In other words, judging by AHED's financial files, as well as those of the focal NGOs, the evaluation team was able to establish that AHED's expenditures were in line with those stipulated by UNICEF's project coordinator.

Table 7: THE MAIN EXPENDITURES OF PHASE III

| Activity | Budget (EGP) | Expenditures (EGP) | Balance | % of total Phase III expenditures | Remarks |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| General Management | 1,146,155 | 903,987 | 242,168 | 42% | |
| Pilot projects | 1,222,340 | 1,035,076 | 187,264 | 48% | Mostly consumed in one pilot project; see discussion on pilot projects |
| Other expenses | 224,730 | 217,170 | 7,560 | 10% | Includes training delivered to network members |
| Total | 2,593,225 | 2,156,234 | 436,991 | 100% | |

The table above demonstrates that the project spent almost 2.2 million EGP and consumed most of its allocated budget, only 436 thousand EGP remained. The bulk of these expenditures were almost equally spent on the management of the project and the pilot projects. Management expenses include costs associated with the meetings of the

⁴ The data provided in all of the financial analysis to follow are all based on computation from AHED's financial records.

network (the main networking activity), AHED's expenses, the salaries of the various coordinators, travel expenses, operating costs etc. Other than the two main categories, other expenses were maintained at 10%. This category was dominated mainly by training expenditures.

5.3.3 Analysis of General Management Expenditures

Concerning the general management component of the expenditures, the team compiled details of these expenditures from AHED's records; the table below details some of the main sub-categories of this component.

Table 8: EXPENDITURES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT

| Activity | Budget | Expenditures | Balance | % of total management cost | Remarks |
|---|---------|--------------|---------|----------------------------|---|
| Initial Preparation and Planning | 54,465 | 4,786 | 49,679 | 1% | |
| Documentation of the project | 8,850 | 8,850 | 0 | 1% | |
| Geographic meetings of NGOs in Aswan, Qena, Assiut, Minya, Alexandria governorates | 196,800 | 131,676 | 65,124 | 15% | 36 meetings conducted almost every 2 months |
| Geographic meetings of NGOs in Cairo governorate | 33,760 | 13,991 | 19,769 | 2% | 6 meetings |
| Thematic coalitions meetings of NGOs - national level (2 days) | 334,800 | 261,564 | 73,236 | 29% | 8 meetings, 1 per theme, and opening meeting, and a closing meeting |
| Cost of consultants for thematic groups | 50,400 | 36,895 | 13,505 | 4% | |
| Steering committee meetings | 28,800 | 22,094 | 6,706 | 2% | 6 meetings |
| Information and resource unit | 56,780 | 46,937 | 9,843 | 5% | |
| Monthly salaries for other staff 6 full time NGO project coordinators, IT management, 2 accountants, 2 | 294,400 | 305,007 | -10,607 | 34% | |

secretaries, office
boy, and governorate
level focal points

| | | | | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|---|
| DSA/ travel expenses for project staff | 54,600 | 40,624 | 13,976 | 4% | 4 coordinators and 2 accountants |
| Other Expenses: Partial coverage of NGO's telephone, fax, and electricity bills and renting space from AHED | 32,500 | 31,563 | 937 | 3% | For 14 months |
| Total cost | 1,146,155 | 903,987 | 242,168 | 100% | |

The above table shows that the majority of the management expenditures were consumed in the monthly salaries for the project coordinators and other project staff members, geographic network meetings, and the thematic meetings. It is also noticeable that the thematic meetings, which, even though they were almost only one meeting per theme, yet, this item contributed to 29% of the management cost on its own. This high cost justifies why the project managers resorted to less thematic emphasis and focused more on the geographic one.

5.4 General Attainment of Outputs

This section investigates the main outputs of the project. Because the confidence in the results and conclusion mentioned here differs from Phase I and II, on the one hand, and III on the other, the section was divided into two main parts, as clear below.

5.4.1 Phases I and II

Concerning the main outputs of the project, as per the project proposals, it was not possible to establish the outputs of Phases I and II of the project due to insufficient documentation, for the reasons mentioned before. The evaluation team conducted focus group discussions with the NGOs to obtain more information about these phases. It is clear from the members' responses in the focus groups that Phase I was mainly consumed in:

1. creating the network and the various plans of the various sub-networks: both thematic and geographical;
2. building their networking capacities;
3. undertaking several research studies by commissioned consultants, which tackled specific women related issues in each thematic area.

Of these outputs, only the creation of the network and undertaking the researches were validated. As for the plans stipulated by the project design, the team has not been able to obtain them from the members of the network.

Concerning the impact of the undertaken research, the members mentioned in the focus groups that they increased their awareness of women issues, but they generally failed to mentioned concrete cases where they used them.

Outputs of Phase II were not significant, as the phase was terminated too early when most outputs were still being built.

In addition to the focus group discussions, the team distributed a questionnaire among the focal NGOs of the network to survey their opinions about the project's phases. However, AHED (the focal NGO of Cairo) was excluded from this process because it was also the umbrella NGO of the whole project, and hence could have biased opinions about the third phase, in which it coordinated the overall implementation.

The questionnaire was composed of five questions that request the person filling the questionnaire to determine:

1. The three most important achievements of Phase I;
2. The three most important achievements of Phase II;
3. The three most important obstacles that emerged in Phase I;
4. The three most important obstacles that emerged in Phase II;
5. The main aspects of change between the three phases.

Responses to the first four questions will be analyzed in this section, while the last question will be analyzed separately in the following section. The following table demonstrates the responses of the focal NGOs concerning Phase I.

Table 9: MEMBERS' OPINIONS ABOUT MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND OBSTACLES OF PHASE I

| Governorate | Main achievement | Main obstacles |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Alexandria | The research that was conducted to study "violence against women"; The "legal equality" research; The project's database. | None |
| Aswan | Identifying the main problem and the target beneficiaries; The participant NGOs adopted women cause in their normal activity; Formulating strategies to deal with the main issues of the project. | The network members were selected haphazardly; The time between meetings was very long which led to laxness; The performance of the steering committee was very poor. |
| Minia | Exchange of experience, cooperation, | Lack of a clear selection |

| | | |
|--------|--|---|
| | and coordination between participating NGOs; Specialized training (esp. gender; negotiation skills); Understanding new issues related to the women cause (esp. violence; discrimination) | criteria for choosing network members; Focusing on building the people, not on building the NGOs; Financial payments for members was too high. |
| Asuite | The participants became more aware of the women cause, and adopted it in their normal activity; Networking the participant NGOs; Exchange of experience, between participating NGOs; | Lack of a selection criteria for choosing network members; Some of the issues explored by the network were difficult to explore for cultural reasons; The project was not communicated well to the local communities. |
| Qena | Not received. | Not received. |
| Sohag | Building the capacity of 105 NGOs so as to be able to work together on gender issues; The project's database; The two-day conference which grouped official decision makers with the NGOs. | Centralization of work; Training was not enough; Lack of pilot projects. |

It is clear from the table above that the main achievements of Phase I was that the activities conducted in this phase allowed the NGOs to cooperate and exchange experience, know more about women cause, and adopt activities related to such causes. Responses seem also to value the creation of the database at this stage. This phase however seems to have been also characterized by being slightly vague, criteria for the selection of members were not clearly identified, and work was generally lax.

The Responses about Phase II, which are listed in the following table, show that the members considered it to have been generally more tangible than Phase I, but not very well managed.

Table 10: MEMBERS' OPINIONS ABOUT MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND OBSTACLES OF PHASE II

| Governorate | Main achievement | Main obstacles |
|-------------|---|--|
| Alexandria | The legal assistance pilot project; | Halting the funding |
| Aswan | Initiating the geographical network and supporting it; Having practical outputs and activities; Technical support via training. | Activities related to the female child and combating violence were weak; Poor link between the plans and actual implementation; |

| | | |
|--------|--|---|
| | | The halting and termination of the Phase. |
| Miniya | Increasing the network size to 25 participants; Training of trainers; workshops and meetings with official decision makers; Thematic outputs and activities; | The project lacked sustainability mechanisms; The umbrella NGO (WAHI) was not flexible enough; Focusing on thematic coalitions and ignoring governorate activities. |
| Asuite | Democratizing decision making; Establishing a specific criteria for selecting the network members, which led to excluding some of the older members and introducing new ones; Networking members activities. | Split between thematic and geographic activities; Termination of the project; |
| Qena | Not received. | Not received. |
| Sohag | Inaugurating the legal assistance center; Instigating partnership between NGOs, media, and officials; Knowing more about female heads of households and those most in need. | Changing coordinators and delaying funding; Conflicts in the management of the project; The training was not enough. |

From the table above, it is clear that concerning Phase II, the responses seem to indicate that the members were happy with the fact that the objectives became more tangible, and activities were practical; they also appreciated the pilot projects, as they also indicated for Phase III. In addition, they valued the type of training given in this phase, which was more in the direction of building the individual capacity of the network members, and focused less on developing general group skills, such as building networking and lobbying capacities, as was introduced in the previous phase. The main obstacles of this phase seem to center around bad management and accusations against the umbrella NGO (WAHI) and the project coordinators. In addition, the sudden termination of funding emerged as a negative aspect of the phase, and the split between the thematic and the geographical activities was also noted as an important obstacle.

5.4.2 Phase III

The story of Phase III is different from the picture drawn above for the first two phases. The documentation of Phase III was much better than the other two phases, which enabled to the team to validate many of the outputs, though not the impacts. The main outputs of this phase were compared to the network plan for the phase, which was developed in an initial planning session that was conducted at the beginning of the phase in Ain Sukna. The following table summarizes the findings of the team:

Table 11: ATTAINMENT OF PLANNED DELIVERABLES
OF PHASE III

| Activity | Findings |
|---|--|
| Seven geographic networks, one in each governorate; | Achieved, the network was carried over from the previous Phases. |
| Six thematic networks; | Not Achieved. Only one thematic meeting was conducted, and the members complained from lack of thematic activities. |
| Five centers for providing consultation and assistance to female victims of violence against women; | These centers were cancelled due to resistance from the network members, who resisted this theme for cultural reservations. |
| Five legal assistance centers; | Six were implemented; details of which are discussed below. |
| Five training modules in the area of violence against women, legal assistance, and gender awareness for providers of health services; | Only two were developed and conducted at the end of the phase (legal assistance, gender awareness for providers of health services). |
| Improved gender awareness among providers of health services; | Two workshops for 80 participants, from the seven governorate; Application of training not possible to qualify due to lack of follow-up data of the attendees. |
| Expertise capable of supporting women needs in the areas of violence against women made available within various NGOs; | Two workshops were conducted for 73 trainees; Application of training not possible to qualify due to lack of follow-up data on attendees. |
| Lawyers in the local communities capable of providing support for poor women; | 97 lawyers were trained for providing legal support; 146 lawyers, including the 97 above, received refreshers training; 18 of the total trainees work in pilot projects; the rest are members of NGOs that do not provide legal assistance, which used the training to enhance their awareness of legal assistance; Application of training in areas that lie outside pilot project was not possible to qualify. For an assessment of the application in the pilot projects, see discussion below. |
| Documenting female dropouts from school; | System not well documented, as per NGO files in the field. |
| A manual of available services for the female heads of households; | A manual was produced by the end of the Phase III; Submitted to network members in the final ceremony. |

| | |
|--|---|
| End of project conference to secure official and donor support; | conference lacked the presence of donors; This caused much resentment among members. |
| Plans for maintaining the performance of the project in the future and securing financial support; | Project proposals were compiled at the end of the project; Discussion with the coalition for joining efforts to sustain the girl's rights support group in progress. |
| Final report that includes the activities and results of the project. | Not performed yet. |

5.4.3 Training

Concerning training, the team obtained information on the training conducted in Phase III only. In Phase III training manuals were used by NGOs in draft format. The final versions of the manuals were printed and distributed towards the end of this phase. It remains possible that the members of the network use the training material that was developed under this project in the future. The following table compares the actual activities that were implemented with the ones planned.

Table 12: TRAINING CONDUCTED IN PHASE III

| Training | Planned | Actual |
|---|--|--|
| Training of trainers | 2 workshops | Three workshops were actually conducted based on members' demand for the training. |
| Training legal support lawyers | Training for lawyers in all governorates | Training for new lawyers (120 trainees); refresher course (146 trainees). Training included six governorates (all but Cairo). |
| School dropouts | 3 Trainings for coordinators | 3 trainings in three governorates (90 trainees) |
| Gender awareness in women health sector | 7 trainings for the governorates | Two workshops; 80 participants from all governorates. |
| Violence against women | 5 trainings | Two workshops (73 attendees); from all governorates. |
| Thematic training modules | Violence against women, documenting girls' dropping out from school, services available for female heads of households, gender awareness in the health | All modules were delivered to the members except the "Violence against women module". All modules were delivered at the end of the project in the final meeting. |

sector, legal assistance.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---|
| Supporting the female child | Not planned | Booklets that document the cases of the various groups for supporting the female child were developed for all governorates, one for each. |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---|

The outcome of the training and the utilization of the training material in actual activities by the recipients could not be ascertained. The members found difficult to give concrete examples as to how they used the training that they received in their work. The majority also did not write examples of the trainings and how they used it in the questionnaire that was distributed among the 80 member NGOs that attended the final ceremony. In addition, it has generally been noted that the lawyers training surpassed the needs, in quantitative terms, of the network by far, as clear from the table above.

Table 13: TRAINING BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES FOR PHASE III

| Activity | Budget | Expenditures | % of training expenses | Balance | Output |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------|------------|
| Training of trainers | 55,440 | 71,164 | 56% | -15,724 | 3 workshop |
| Training Module on violence against women | 20,560 | 17,650 | 14% | 2,910 | 1 Booklet |
| Training Module for legal aid centers | 25,020 | 11,369 | 9% | 13,651 | 1 Booklet |
| Preparation of training module on gender sensitization for NGOs health care providers | 18,810 | 11,750 | 9% | 7,060 | 1 Booklet |
| Preparation of training module for monitoring system for girls dropping out of schools | 18,810 | 14,822 | 12% | 3,988 | 1 Booklet |
| Total | 138,640 | 126,755 | 100% | 11,885 | |

The table above shows that the only item that surpassed the budget allocated for it was the training of trainers (ToT) item, which consumed close to 60% of the training expenses by itself. Such a distribution is consistent with a tendency to concentrate training investments, and little diversification. This was due to the enormous popularity by which the ToT training was met by the network members, as expressed in the focus groups. The members intervened with UNICEF to increase the numbers of sessions allocated for this item from two to three.

In addition, it is also important to note that the ToT is especially important in spreading the learned capacity of the network because it equips the network with self-expansion mechanisms, as members become able to train other members, and so on. However, this does not justify the reduction in diversity experienced in this activity.

5.4.4 Pilot Projects

The pilot projects were the main achievements of Phase III. The project implemented three main pilot projects, as follow:

- centers for supporting girls dropping out from schools;
- legal support centers;
- groups for supporting the female child.

A fourth pilot project, which originally planned to establish five centers to combat violence against women, was cancelled. AHED's management cited resistance on the part of the network's members to the idea of this pilot project, because of cultural reasons, as the main motivation behind the cancellation. The network members who participated in the focus groups showed indifference at the idea of erecting such centers, which supports AHED's affirmation.

Of the three that were implemented, the one related to "groups for supporting the female child" was not initially planned in the project document of Phase III. It was introduced later along the project life, and was incorporated based on a suggestion of UNICEF and NCCM as a response to the Year of the Girl Child, launched by the First Lady. Two meetings of the Steering Committee have discussed and agreed that the girls-related activities within the project's scope were weak, and such pilot project would enforce them. The budget allocated to it has not affected other projects' priorities, as activities for this project have been conducted using additional funds.

Table 14: EXPENDITURES OF THE VARIOUS PILOT PROJECTS OF PHASE III

| Activity | Budget | Expenditures | Balance | % of total | Remarks |
|--|---------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Counseling Centers to support & rehabilitate women / girls subject to violence | 51,980 | 0 | 51,980 | 0% | Not conducted |
| Legal aid centers for women | 180,140 | 195,682 | -15,542 | 19% | 6 centers |
| Monitoring Girls Dropping-out From Elementary Schools | 144,460 | 108,209 | 36,251 | 10% | 3 centers |
| Girls rights support groups | 845,760 | 731,185 | 114,575 | 71% | 8 groups |

| | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Total | 1,222,340 | 1,035,076 | 187,264 | 100% |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|

A. Girls Dropping Out From School

For the monitoring girls dropping out from school, other than the training booklet and publications that were produced on a centralized level, several tangible and positive outcomes were noted on governorates level, as detailed in the table below.

Table 15: OUTPUTS OF THE PROGRAM FOR GIRLS
DROPPING OUT FROM SCHOOL

| Governorate | Cases | Remarks |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Aswan | 48 returned; 106 poor girls were granted fees scholarship by their schools upon intervention from the program. | Other deliverables included: conducting awareness sessions for parents; paying fees for dropouts; providing school uniform; (however these activities were neither quantified nor documented). |
| Assiut | 106 returned to their schools in 5 schools; 6 children were provided with teaching support (educational tutoring) to improve their level. | Same as above, in addition to studying the dropout phenomenon in Assiut |

Case studies conducted for some of the beneficiaries shed light regarding the importance of this pilot project.

Case: Asmaa Returns to School

After losing both parents, Asmaa lived with her grandfather. The grandfather faced many difficulties in providing for Asmaa and taking care of her. Because of financial problems, Asmaa was forced to leave school by her third grade. The program for supporting girls dropping out from school identified Asmaa's drop out and communicated with the school headmistress to obtain information about Asmaa. In cooperation with the school, the program developed a plan to solve some of Asmaa's problems to help her return. They passed regularly by Asmaa before school and accompanied her to school every day. They also provided her with clothes and education support, as well as paid school fees. Asmaa now loves to read and enjoys her school time. She aspires to become a school teacher one day when she grows up.

Concerning the cost of this component, other than the cost of the preparing the training booklet that was mentioned above in the section on training, which cost 14,822, several activities were noted. Details of the main cost elements are listed in the table below.

Table 16: BUDGET AND ACTUAL EXPENDITURES OF
ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE GIRLS DROPPING OUT
FROM SCHOOL PROGRAM

| Activity | Budget | Expenditures | % from total | Balance | Remarks |
|--|----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|--|
| Refresher Training for volunteers (community, social workers & teachers) on monitoring girls drop - out from schools | 19,980 | 20,609 | 19% | -629 | 3 meetings in Giza, Aswan and Assuit |
| Exchange of experience between NGOs on monitoring girls drop out schools | 8,000 | 6,789 | 6% | 1,211 | 2 meetings to exchange experience between the NGOs of Aswan and Assuit |
| Costs of part - time staff | 27,000 | 8,180 | 8% | 18,820 | In 3 NGOs, Giza, Aswan and Assuit |
| Meeting with parents and local administrative education departments | 24,300 | 30,311 | 28% | -6,011 | 27 meetings in the governorates above |
| Training: gender sensitization for NGOs working in health care provision | 32,590 | 22,127 | 20% | 10,463 | 2 centralized trainings |
| Training of NGOs and communities on concepts of violence against women & girls | 32,590 | 20,193 | 19% | 12,397 | 1 centralized |
| Total | 144,460 | 108,209 | 100% | 36,251 | |

The distribution of the expenditures show that 36% of the investment went to direct benefits for the final beneficiaries (Costs of part - time staff; and meeting with parents and local administrative education departments), while the rest went to building the capacity of the pilot projects. This seems to be a sound investment choice when the project sustains in the future, it can help the centers operate in the future.

B. Legal Support Centers

Concerning the legal support centers, other several tangible and positive impacts were noted as detailed below. The focus groups that were conducted with the beneficiaries of this component showed that they greatly appreciated the service provided.

Table 17: OUTPUTS OF THE PROGRAM FOR PROVIDING
LEGAL ASSISTANCE

| Governorate | Legal Papers Issued | Consultations and Legal suits | Public Awareness Sessions |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|
| Minya 3 lawyers | 215 Ids were issued; 17 Birth Certificates | 205 Consultations; 16 Legal suit; 17 Legal cases solved in a friendly manner | 18 sessions. Impact not possible to determine; no attendance data. |
| Aswan 3 lawyers | 67 Ids were issued. | 51 Consultations; 33 Legal suits. | 17 sessions. Impact not possible to determine; no attendance data. |
| Assiut 3 lawyers | 185 Ids were issued. | 210 Consultations; 17 Legal suit. | 20 sessions. Impact not possible to determine; no attendance data. |
| Sohag 3 lawyers | 120 Ids were issued. | 19 Legal suit; Consultations number was not given. | 12 sessions. Impact not possible to determine; no attendance data. |
| Alexandria 3 lawyers | 286 Ids were issued; 7 Birth Certificates; 10 power of attorney documents issues. | 237 Consultations; 35 Legal suit; | Evaluation team did not record the number of sessions. |
| Qena 3 lawyers | 275 Ids were issued; 23 Birth Certificates; 3 death certificates. | Consultations performed but not recorded; 28 Legal suits. | 70 sessions. Impact not possible to determine; no attendance data. |

The case studies conducted for the beneficiaries of this pilot project indicates that the service provided is much appreciated, as shown below.

Case: A woman from Aswan

After losing her husband 13 years ago, her father asked her to come back and live in the family house. Because of many difference with her father, and because she has six kids, her relationship with him developed into an uneasy one with time. To solve this problem, she built an apartment in her father's house, but the father refused to grant her

a rent contract, even though she built the apartment. She also has many other problems, as she is now 36 years old with six kids and has cancer, which requires much medication. The program helped her file a legal case to obtain an official contract from the father, and eventually won the case for her. The program also referred her to another NGO to support her with medication.

Concerning the cost of this component, the team was able to identify several costs associated with several budgetary items, which are outlined in the table below.

Table 18: BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES OF ACTIVITIES
RELATED TO THE LEGAL SUPPORT CENTERS

| Activity | Budget | Expenditures | % from total | Balance | Remarks |
|--|----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|---|
| Training of local cadres of lawyers on raising awareness of women / girls about their legal rights | 24,180 | Not conducted | --- | 24,180 | Not conducted |
| Refresher training workshop for local cadres of lawyers the 5 legal aid centers | 42,960 | 105,562 | 54% | -62,602 | 10 meetings |
| Cost of initiating 6 legal aid centers | 18,000 | 13,660 | 7% | 4,340 | In the 6 NGOs that participated in this program; from: Alex, Minya, Assuit, Sohag, Qena, Aswan |
| Issuing Ids | 36,000 | 22,280 | 11% | 13,720 | In the 6 NGOs |
| Cost of purchasing legal resources / books to support libraries at legal aid centers | 5,000 | 4,980 | 3% | 20 | In 5 NGOs; All but Aswan |
| Part time lawyers | 54,000 | 49,200 | 25% | 4,800 | In the 6 NGOs |
| Total | 180,140 | 195,682 | 109% | -15,542 | |

The table above demonstrates that the centers did not consume the entire budget allocated for the various activities. For example, they only issued Ids that were worth 60% of the allocated budget. This was due to the short time allocated to the implementation of Phase III as explained above.

It is worth mentioning that the investment in direct services to the beneficiaries (the salaries of the lawyers and issuing Ids) was 36% of the total expenditures. The program focused much of its effort on indirect gains, such as training more than 100 lawyers on

women issues (over 56% of total cost), even though the project enrolls the service of 18 only. The rationale behind this strategy is that the trained lawyers would eventually benefit the women of their society with their new skills, and thus provide indirect gains for these women.

C. Girls' Rights Support Groups:

This intervention started on June 2003 and began its activities on August 2003. It represents the shortest of all project activities, even though it is the single most intensive one.

The main outputs of this program were:

- Establishment of eight groups of school girls and boys in the seven governorates plus one in Giza. Each group contained about 20 girls& boys on the average per group;
- The objective of creating these groups was that these groups were to act as change agents in their local communities, concerning girls rights issues;
- These groups were trained on girls rights issues, and their general awareness in this regard was raised by using new and creative techniques; such acting, drawing, singing, etc.
- One workshop for all groups members was conducted in Ismailia where all of kids shared their experiences and met with decision makers.
- Two workshop and a refresher training were held for 50 coordinators and facilitators of the eight groups.
- Meetings, booklets (one for each group), meetings with officials in each governorates, and one meeting with top leaders of the National Council for Women (held in Cairo).

The focus groups that were conducted with the boys and girls of this component revealed the following:

1. The beneficiaries (both boys & girls of the various governorates) improved their knowledge about, awareness of, and ideas about girls' issues and rights (FGM, early marriage, etc.).
2. The project developed their self-confidence, and their ability to communicate with others (families, parents, friends, etc.).
3. Empowerment was effected only on the level of the children, not on the community at large. As result, concerning some issues, the children were not equipped with means to influence their environment and thus felt frustrated.
4. The activities were compacted in a short time, and some of them were determined and planned by the facilitators and coordinators, not by children (songs, some of the sketches, booklets, etc.)
5. The children found the timing of the program problematical, as it conflicted with their schools and examinations activities. Thus, parents were inclined to resist some of its activities.

Table 19: BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES OF THE GROUPS
FOR SUPPORTING GIRLS RIGHTS

| Activity | Budget | Expenditures | % from total | Balance | Remarks |
|---|---------|--------------|--------------------|---------|--|
| Recruitment of girls and boys of the groups in the different governorates | 96,000 | 96,700 | 13% | -700 | Conducted in all NGOs; Composed of financial assistance to the kids |
| Training of coordinators & facilitators of the girls rights support groups on pedagogy methods | 60,100 | 60,052 | 8% | 48 | 1 meeting |
| Training coordinators and facilitators of girls' rights support groups on concepts of discrimination/ gender equality and violence against girls (4 days) | 71,530 | 70,690 | 10% | 840 | 1 meeting |
| Follow - up & monitoring meeting for coordinators (facilitators of girls' rights) | 12,840 | 17,626 | 2% | -4,786 | 1 meeting |
| Collective meeting for members of all groups (3 days in Ismailia) | 134,060 | 108,937 | 15% | 25,123 | 1 meeting |
| Focus group discussions w/ the girls' rights support groups w/ governorate level officials | 80,160 | 57,803 | 8% | 22,357 | 23 meetings |
| Preparatory meetings of the girls' rights support groups w/ the governorate team | 68,400 | 63,627 | 9% | 4,773 | 96 - Meeting |
| Production, printing and distributions of booklet | 45,600 | 40,044 | 5% | 5,556 | 8 - Booklet |
| National forum for governorate level girls' rights support groups- 2 days | 75,200 | 56,091 | 8% | 19,109 | 1 - Meeting |

| | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Production and publication of simplified booklets on raising child's awareness on legal and reproductive health rights/ education | 12,100 | 12,542 | 2% | -442 | 2 - Booklet |
| Raising awareness workshops on legal/ reproductive health rights (2 days) | 94,960 | 69,689 | 10% | 25,271 | 15 - Meeting |
| Collective raising awareness workshop of GRSGs w/ decision makers (3 days) | 50,010 | 41,980 | 6% | 8,030 | 1 - Meeting |
| Recruiting artists | 28,800 | 21,480 | 3% | 7,320 | 16-Artists in all NGOs |
| Purchasing artistic materials/ paints | 16,000 | 13,925 | 2% | 2,075 | 2000 pound in one NGOs |
| Total | 845,760 | 731,185 | 100% | 114,575 | |

Leaving the children that participated in the project without a phasing out plan would amount to raising their expectations rapidly and then suddenly eliminating it. The project thus should continue, otherwise it will have an adverse impact on the children who participated. In fact there are currently discussions with the Children's and Adolescents Forum for merging the Girls Rights Support Groups project with it.

5.5 Opinions about comparing phases

Response to the question of "how the three phases compare and relate to each other" in the questionnaire that was distributed among the focal NGOs of the various governorates indicate at least two important aspects that were quite common between respondents. First, there is clear appreciation of the role played by the umbrella NGO of Phase III (AHED) in the last phase as compared to the management practices of the previous phases and the previous umbrella NGO (WAHI). The majority of the respondents also stated that Phase III was better than the other two. Second, it is possible to link their appreciation of Phase III with tangible activities of the pilot projects, even though their costs were somewhat high. The following table lists the responses of this question.

Table 20: MEMBERS' OPINIONS REGARDING THE CHANGES BETWEEN THE PROJECT PHASES

| Governorate | Response |
|-------------|---|
| Alexandria | In Phase I the project was not clear, its objectives became clear in Phase II, and it managed to fulfill its objectives by Phase III. |
| Aswan | Phase III witnessed the best performance for the steering committee; |

| | |
|--------|--|
| | <p>Linking thematic strategies to geographical activities; Developing training manuals to help the members in their future activities; The umbrella NGO was best in Phase III.</p> |
| Miniya | <p>Identifying the activities to be conducted in specific terms in Phase III contributed to the success of the phase; All phases lacked a clear vision for sustainability; AHED's cooperation and flexibility contributed to the success of Phase III.</p> |
| Asuite | <p>Geographic activities gave the project more credibility with the local communities; The achievements of Phase III were caused by the activities of Phases I and II, however, Phase III was much more accomplishing than the other two phases.</p> |
| Qena | Not sent. |
| Sohag | <p>Phase I was very centralized; Phase II was geographically decentralized and its activities were conducted mainly on the governorate level; Phase III included new activities.</p> |

The results of this survey were also validated by the focus groups findings for the focus groups that were conducted with the various geographical networks in the field. They too noted Phase III to have been the best managed of all three. However, as noted in the section on training above, they found it difficult to specify how the training, which they highly valued, was of benefit to them in a practical way.

5.6 Lobbying

In general, the team was able to obtain some information about lobbying during its field visits to the various governorates, in the focus groups conducted with the network members, the interviews with the various project coordinators, and from the various documents available in the different network focal NGOs which document lobbying gains.

In assessing the lobbying activities, it is important to differentiate between two general levels of lobbying activities which the NGOs network has undertaken: lobbying on the national level and on the governorate level.

On the national level, many of the members cited the establishment of various organizations related to The National Council for Women, changes in the nationality law, and improvements in women status in the judiciary as examples of the network's lobbying achievements. While such achievements are a result of the efforts of various players at policy level, it is expected that the NGOs network has contributed to the process.

On the other hand, concerning lobbying on the governorate level, the evaluation team was able to validate some concrete effects of lobbying that could be contributed to direct active lobbying by the network members, as follows:

- Most of the network members, in fact all but Sohag and Cairo (which was not evaluated) have demonstrated that they were able to establish good relations with public officials to further the network goals. These relationships were mostly used to:
 - o acquire premises to conduct various events (as in Qena and Assuit),
 - o help in facilitating various activities which need the input of official organizations (such as the ministry of social affairs, health authorities, education authorities, etc.),
 - o secure the attendance of representatives of these authorities in the events of the network.
- Two girls who have graduated from the combating illiteracy program (an independent program; not included in this project) were enrolled in schools after being refused enrollment before, only because the network in Minya pressed for their enrollment;
- The network in Assuit lobbied to secure that Zinab AL Toni (one of the members of the network) wins the union elections; the success of this effort motivated the network to decide to repeat this lobbying in the future and in other types of elections;
- Some of the network members established good relations with the media. This was the case in Alexandria, Qena, Assuit, Aswan, and Minya. Such relations helped spread the news of the network and helped beneficiaries identify the services of the network.

Even though these achievements are generally considered minor, in quantitative terms at least, they nonetheless are better viewed as preliminary activities for more lobbying effort that is to come in the future, if the network persists. Thus, the network's lobbying could still improve later in the future, and in this regard, the main lobbying achievement of this project could well be that it managed to initiate a momentum for future lobbying success.

5.7 Sustainability

The team was able to validate that the members of the network undertook some measures to assure the sustainability of at least some of the project's activities. These measures were however found to be still less than required to assure the sustainability of the majority of the project's activities.

The most apparent measure that was undertaken by the project management staff in relation to this issue was that they trained the member NGOs on drafting proposals. In application of the training that they received, each governorate network drafted a proposal for a collective activity for their governorate network. However, they only started focusing on this issue at the very end of the project.

The members' perception about sustainability that the team encountered in the focus groups indicates that they expect that much of the network's activities will not sustain if funding stops, even though some members will always remain in connection. Already some pilot projects have stopped offering some of their services with the end of funding (for example issuing IDs for women by the legal support centers).

In general, the members mentioned several possible measures to assure the sustainability of the project's activities, as follows:

- They can proceed with the regular meetings on voluntary basis;
- They can do fund raising;
- Acquire other donor funding;
- Establish various official unions so that they have a legal status.

Already some members undertook some sustainability measures, as follows:

- The network in Aswan established a formal governorate union (a formal status) to create a formal entity that would help the network, or at least part of it, sustain in the future, if funding were provided.
- The network in Qena acquired an approval from the Ministry of Social Affairs to create a formal union that would help the network acquire the needed legal status to sustain in the future, if funding were provided.
- The girls support groups project was formally adopted by the focal NGO of Assuit, which vowed to provide for its continuation.
- The focal NGO in Qena extended the project database to include other NGOs working in Qena that were not included in the project's database. This was undertaken in order to extend the realm of cooperation between the various NGOs and coordinate between them and external donors. Until now, this particular network was the only one able to secure funding from external donors for such collective projects. Two projects, which will be implemented only by a portion of the network members, have been approved for funding.
- The network in Minya agreed to continue some of the activities of the project, within the capacity of their voluntary means, and have already prepared a plan for next quarter.

The activities and strategic orientations of the members about sustainability indicate that some of them will be able to maintain their meetings on voluntary basis, and a few would perhaps secure external funding for portions of their network to remain active. However, none of these activities can generally supply the network with the means to sustain the activities of the pilot projects, capacity building, or training. Moreover, it seems very difficult to secure sustainability on the national level of the network. Accordingly, it seems that the network members will still need to secure external donor funding to be able to maintain the main activities related to the project's goals if they are to achieve goals that extend beyond maintaining voluntary geographic meetings.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The section above presented the main findings of the project of evaluation that was conducted for evaluating the “Capacity Building of Egyptian NGOs to Implement Beijing Platform of Action Project”. The project under evaluation was ultimately initiated to build the capacity of a group of selected Egyptian NGOs that operate in seven different Egyptian governorates, in order to enable them to work for implementing the Beijing Platform of Action. It was implemented over three Phases which extended over the period 1997-2003.

The evaluation was conducted to identify points of strengths and weaknesses of the project and recommend alternatives. From this viewpoint, based on the project information available additional information collection activities during the process evaluation, the team was able to identify important aspects of this project that are of value.

The project was found to have indeed managed to create two types of networks of the selected NGOs which grouped these NGOs together geographically and thematically. Thus it created an environment of cooperation between the participating NGOs, and motivated them to work together to support women issues , which would not have been possible before. Pursuing this achievement was the main motive behind initiating the project in 1997, and thus the project did achieve this aspect of its goal.

A Major effort through the project’s life span was made to build the capacity of NGOs to implement the Beijing Platform of Action. This has been achieved mainly through training of NGOs members acting in diverse women/girls related areas and various types of professionals – lawyers, health-care providers, associated to NGOs and supporting them in their operational activities. Thus, a significant potential has been created in the area of advocacy for and support to women who face different types of problems and constraints in their every-day life.

In addition, the project was able to deliver important services in Phase III, through its pilot projects, for poor women and girls. The beneficiaries of these services benefited greatly from these services and appreciated it largely. This was especially the case in the areas of legal assistance, combating dropping out of school, and girls’ rights support groups.

Moreover, the project was able to create the nucleuse of a lobbying entity that was able to reach decision makers and obtain some gains for the beneficiaries and the network, especially at local level.

The knowledge and experience in different areas, in which the network NGOs acted, were documented through publishing of research findings, developing of manuals, guides, brochures, etc.

The project compiled a database containing detailed information for all NGOs, which can be used as a reference in future network activities.

As the project progressed from Phase I to Phase II, the management of the project shifted more towards geographic networking and depended less on thematic networking of activities, which was found to be more practical.

Management of a project with such a big magnitude proved to be difficult and challenging as it had to deal with a big number of issues and numerous stakeholders and implementing agencies. In addition, the project's management faced certain difficulties over its time-span, which was beyond the partner's control. On the implementing institution's side – after the withdrawal of the umbrella NGO due to some internal disagreements, identification and approval by the Government of another NGO to continue running the project took a long time. Not only has less time remained for implementation due to this reason. The change of the umbrella NGO disrupted the management process and affected the smooth continuation of project activities. It also caused losing part of the detailed information at NGO level regarding the initial stages of the project implementation. Yet AHED, the umbrella NGO that acted during Phase III, managed to quickly recuperate the time lost, to improve coordination between the participating NGOs as well as documentation of activities , and to assure outputs' delivery.

On UNICEF side – the structure of the Country Programme of Cooperation has changed between Phase I and Phase II, whereas the Gender related programme has been discontinued. With regard to the project under evaluation this programme change resulted in reducing of UNICEF human capacity devoted to it.

While the project keeps records about participation in activities of various types, there is insufficient documentation regarding the follow up of such participation. Follow –up monitoring and documentation is particularly essential especially when refers to training. With the exception of legal support to women, the evaluation team was not in a position to assess the effectiveness of capacity building through training, which dominated all phases of the project, due to the lack of information how such capacity was practically implemented afterwards.

At the phasing out of such a big project, the issue of sustainability is of great importance. This is even more so because of the big investments made in capacity building and the need to efficiently use this capacity. The issue of sustainability has not been paid enough attention to during the first and second phases of the project life. However, during Phase III, a discussion on sustainability was open. Some network members already took measures aiming at sustaining of activities, where they have comparative advantages and good capacity built during the project's lifespan. AHED is currently discussing with the CRC Coalition possible ways to join efforts for sustaining some of the project components such as girls' rights support groups.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the evaluation results, the following recommendations can be proposed that might help in addressing similar nature project/event.

- 1) As the project has reached, among some other things, strong points in terms of capacity building of NGOs of the lawyers, health providers, and NGOs members, the future implementing NGOs would develop a coalition among them as to make use of their relative advantage.
- 2) As for the Girls' Rights Support Group that positively change the attitudes of both girls and boys, the coordinating NGOs should foster this programme and find means and ways to extend this activity. Continuation of the discussions for merging the project with the Children's and Adolescents Forum are essential in this regard.
- 3) Because of the diversity of the project's activities, in addition to its big magnitude, it would have been more efficient should the members of the coordinating and umbrella NGOs were trained on filing and documentation, as to keep timely the achievement and progress of the project.
- 4) Although the project developed and documented a wide range of publications, including reports, manuals, database, etc. yet the umbrella NGO should timely release them as to make use of them efficiently and more precisely on the monitoring and evaluation aspects.
- 5) As to ensure sustainability of this project, the umbrella NGO should take the initiative to call for a forum for all the coordinating/ implementing NGOs, and any interested groups to formulate a sustainable mechanism strategy.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT ONE

Translation

Opinion survey
NGO Network Member
Beijing Platform Project

Name of institution:

Governorate:

| No | Question | Choice |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | NGO representative | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Male- Female |
| 2 | Your NGO has been participating in this project since which phase? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Phase I- Phase II- Phase III |
| 3 | Are you familiar with the project objectives? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Yes- No- Somewhat |
| 4 | In case you answered yes in the previous question, in which phase have you become familiar with the project objectives? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Phase I- Phase II- Phase III |
| 5 | Why did your NGO join this project? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Because of convictions about the women cause- To join a group of NGOs- To become familiar with new trends- To implement a funded project- To promote the image of the NGO- Other----- |
| 6 | What did the project add to you on a personal basis? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- New Information about the issues explored- Improved relations with other NGOs' representatives- New skills- Nothing |
| 7 | What did the project add to your NGO? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The NGO adopted women related issues because of this |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | | project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project provided new opportunities to work in women related activities - Supplies and equipment - Skills improvement for various members of the NGO - Cooperation opportunities with other NGO - Opportunities to enhance the image of the NGO among other network members - Researches and publications - Nothing - Other----- |
| 8 | How did you NGO participate in this project? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning for one of the phases - Formulating criteria - Electing focal NGOs - Electing members of thematic coalition - Investigating or researching various issues - Received some of the training delivered by AHED on a national basis - Received training in one of the pilot projects - Other----- |
| 9 | Did you obtain any of the following project outputs? | |
| | Films | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No |
| | Reaches? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No |
| | Books? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No |
| | Reports? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No |
| | Database? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No |

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| | Training Manuals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No |
| | Other? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No |
| 10 | Where these materials useful? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very useful - Useful - Average - Mildly useful - Not useful |
| 11 | How did your NGO benefit from the financial and technical assistance imparted by the project? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved the effectiveness of its members which received the training - Those who received the training transferred their new skills and knowledge to other members of the NGO - Improved communication with other NGOs - Improved management efficiency - Introducing new programs and activities - Acquiring supplies and equipment - My NGO did not benefit from the support provided by the project - Other----- |
| 12 | The monitoring and follow up system employed in this project was characterized by: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It was clear and enhanced the quality of work - It enhanced good communication - Promoted interaction between the members of the governorate network - Enhanced the pilot projects - Helped the members adopt women issues - It was unclear - It was conducted in a haphazard manner |
| 13 | Where is monitoring and follow up conducted? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Within the NGO - Outside the NGO |
| 14 | If some monitoring activities are | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The name of the entities that |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | conducted by entities outside your NGO, please mention: | perform monitoring----- - The number of times this entity contacted you for follow up----- |
| 15 | In light of the fact that the project aimed at adopting women issues and improving public opinion about these causes, has it been able to achieve this? | - The project succeeded in achieving this in my governorate - This was difficult to achieve with the given resources - The project design did not facilitate achieving this objective |
| 16 | In case you answered that the project achieved in the above task, please give examples for that. | ----- ----- ----- |
| 17 | Did the network succeed in influencing decision makers via lobbying? | - Yes - No |
| 18 | If your answer above is yes, please give examples | ----- ----- ----- |
| 19 | How do you classify the relationship between the various member NGOs in your governorate? | - Competition - Conflict - Cooperation - Indifference |
| 20 | How does the implementation of the project compare to the plans set in AIn Sukhna workshop: | - Implementation activities corresponded to the plan - The implementation was not related to the plan - The implementation was somewhat related to the plan |
| 21 | In your opinion, what will happen to the network of your governorate after the funding ends? | - The NGOs will maintain the networking in the main issues - The NGOs will network together in new issues - The network will cooperate together to obtain collective funding - The network will end with the end of funding |

22 What were the main benefits of networking in the thematic coalition?

23 What were the main benefits of networking in the geographic coalition?

24 In your opinion, what is the main benefit of this project?

25 Did your governorate network propose that the project implements particular types of pilot projects in Phase III?

| | | | |
|-----|--|----|--|
| Yes | | No | |
|-----|--|----|--|

26 If your answer above is yes, please mention the type

27 What are the pilot projects that are being implemented in your governorate?

28 Why were other projects not implemented, if any?

29 What is the role that your NGO performs with regards to the pilot project?

30 What issues did you network raise with government officials?

31 What training did members of your NGO receive in this project?

| Training | Number of trainees from your NGO | Duration | Place of training |
|----------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| | | | |

32 What training did members of the pilot projects receive in this project?

| Training | Number of trainees from your NGO | Duration | Place of training | Pilot Project |
|----------|----------------------------------|----------|-------------------|---------------|
| | | | | |

33 What are the main elements of strength of this project?

34 What are the main elements of weakness in this project?

ATTACHMENT TWO

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviewee: AHED's Project Coordinator

1. What was the main difference between the three phases with respect to the following:
 - Project Design;
 - The management of the project;
 - The Role of The Coordinators;
 - Outputs of Each Phase;
 - Planning;
 - Level of NGOs Participation;
2. What are the main reasons behind AHED's assuming the role of coordinating the project in the last Phase, given that the project's time was compacted and the activities planned were many?
3. What are the main points of strengths and weaknesses of the project?
4. What are the main differences between the three phases?
5. How do you expect the project to progress in the future?
6. What roles can AHED perform to help in maintaining the future sustainability of the project?
7. What roles can the network members (NGOs) perform to assure the future sustainability of the project?
8. What roles did AHED perform in:
 - a. Preparing for the project;
 - b. Implementation;
 - c. Monitoring and follow up.

ATTACHMENT THREE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviewee: Project coordinators

1. What were the main objectives of Phase III, which of these objectives were achieved and which were not achieved? Why?
2. How to you compare between this project and other developmental projects that are equally reliant on networking?
3. How were the technical and institutional needs of the members determined, prior to their delivery by the project?
4. What are the main elements of strengths and weaknesses of this project?
5. What are the main challenges that face this project?
6. How did the NGOs react to the project? Did they accept to join it easily? Did they participate in its activities? If not, why?
7. How were the objectives of Phase III formulated? Did the NGOs participate in setting these objectives? How?
8. Were the activities of the various networks and themes coordinated? How?
9. What were the main roles performed by the NGOs?
10. What activities performed by the NGOs demonstrate working for partnership, if any?
11. Did the project instigate changes among the member NGOs and the individuals involved in the project? What were these changes if any?
12. What were the outcomes anticipated for this project? Which of them were fulfilled? Which of them were not fulfilled? Why?
13. Which type of networking received more attention in the last phase: thematic or geographic activities? Why?
14. In your opinion, what are women related issues of highest priority? How can the NGOs be prepared to handle these issues?

ATTACHMENT FOUR

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Group: Members of Steering Committee

1. What were the main objectives of Phase III, which of these objectives were achieved and which were not achieved? Why?
2. How to you compare between this project and other developmental projects that are equally reliant on networking?
3. What are the main elements of strengths and weaknesses of this project?
4. How did the committee participate in the project? What roles did it perform?
5. How did the committee promote networking and NGOs' partnership?
6. How did the network members benefit from the project?
7. What were the main decision that the committee took?
8. What was the main contribution of the committee? Was the committee necessary to the project? How would its absence affected implementation?
9. Why did the project shift from a thematic focus to a geographic one?
10. In your opinion, what are women related issues of highest priority? How can the NGOs be prepared to handle these issues?