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Strengthening Resilience and Protection of Vulnerable
Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and the Egyptian Host Community
Country: Egypt
Project Location: Alexandria and Damietta

Executive Summary

Submitted to:
Caritas Egypt – Alexandria

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Executive Summary

The evaluation aimed to effectively capture lessons learnt and provide information on the nature, extent, and where possible, the potential impact and sustainability of the project. The evaluation assessed the project design, scope, implementation status and the capacity to achieve the project objectives. In addition, it collected and analyzed lessons learnt, challenges faced and best practices obtained during implementation.

The emphasis on learned lessons provides reflection and insights on what has and what has not worked as a guide for future planning. It assessed the performance of the project against the planned results. The results of the evaluation draw lessons that inform the key stakeholders of this evaluation.

Relevance and Quality of project design versus implementation

Overall, this project is in line with Caritas global strategic framework 2015-2019; “One Human Family, Caring for Creation”. Under the area of Objective three of this framework: promote sustainable integral human development, eradicate poverty by empowering people and change unjust systems, the project of “Strengthening Resilience and Protection of vulnerable Refugees, Asylum seekers, and the Egyptian host community” was designed and implemented to strengthen the resilience and wellbeing of refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, and the Egyptian host community. In addition, the project is also relevant to the SDGs; number 1 (No Poverty), number 5 (Gender Equality), number 4 (quality education), and number 8 (good jobs and economic growth).

Regarding legal awareness sessions, or the one to one legal individual counseling sessions, most of the beneficiaries mentioned that these sessions provided them with new information that enabled them to know their rights and Caritas also helped in renewing their cards and residencies which facilitate their children enrollment in schools, so they could feel safe and move freely in the city. Furthermore, the missions with a lawyer to Cairo have saved their money and time.

For the livelihood component, beneficiaries reported that the business trainings satisfied their needs, especially when they knew how to make a business proposal, to manage their finance and to market their products. However, some beneficiaries think the training lacked targeting practical topics such as the high competition they faced.

At all the beneficiaries level, the interventions were mainly directed to financial, and dietary/food support in addition to providing supplementary, at the adolescent and children level (unaccompanied minors) educational classes for those enrolled in schools. The participants mentioned that such a kind of support helped them to overcome COVID-19 situation and to buy some basic life needs.



These results are in line with the quantitative findings, since the sampled participants received 1080 services during the project life cycle. Out of these services, livelihood grants ranked the first with 23%, followed by Business management training by 22%, and food basket came in the third place by 22%.

The highest percentage (24%) of the beneficiaries reported they still need livelihood Emergency cash assistance in order to start a new project or expand a current one.

How did the context influence the project results (COVID-19)?

Although all refugees in the FGDs reported that the COVID-19 had a major, negative impact on their businesses, they could resist this impact with the support provided from Caritas to keep their business running up till now. After the breakdown, Caritas agreed with the Swiss embassy to relocate some of the budget items to the emergency fund, in response to COVID-19 situation. Caritas provided emergency cash, food, hygiene baskets and winterization cash support to help refugees overcome such a challenge. Moreover, they referred some of the cases for medical section in Caritas or other organizations who can provide medical support and other different services for refugees. In addition to the aforementioned support, Caritas case workers followed up with the beneficiaries to psychologically support them and motivate them to keep their businesses. These workers also encouraged the beneficiaries to use digital marketing and to safely package their products to gain their clients' trust.

Project Effectiveness

Beneficiaries reported that the project different interventions strengthened their resilience with variant degrees, based on the duration of their participation in the project and the services they received.

Outcome 1: Strengthened protection of vulnerable refugees and migrants through better access to basic services, such as legal services and assistance to unaccompanied minors and children".

An average of 31% of the sampled participants followed-up with legal advisor/attorney. Sample of the risks they usually face are the validity of their residency, driver license and temporary enrollment in schools for their children, which was especially challenging for fathers without valid residency (Males FGD in Damietta). Sample of the other risks are highlighted by the female refugees in Alex, who reported several kinds of risks, verbal bullying / harassment exploitation and discrimination against their children in schools. Other risks include the suffering of single mothers in attempting to prove their marriage, divorce and their children paternity. Here, the results varied totally, as the males reported that they had not benefitted from the legal interventions; however, the females mentioned they received legal assistance and psychological support.



Outcome 2: Improved self-reliance of vulnerable groups by providing access to livelihood opportunities.

85% of the sampled participants reported **being more self-reliant** after receiving the Business management training and/or livelihood grant. In the same context, **76%** of service recipients reported that they became more able to secure better income after receiving their grants.

Outcome 3: Refugees and vulnerable migrants affected by COVID-19 economic and health consequences are supported.

In general, the microbusiness of the beneficiaries were sufficient and having a positive impact on their lives, but due to COVID-19, almost all of them negatively affected. As detailed below.

All the beneficiaries and Caritas team agreed that the COVID-19 affected them negatively, like the whole world. **37%** of male and **29%** of female participants reported that their projects had been suspended due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

As mentioned above, in response to these circumstances, Caritas agreed with the Swiss embassy to reallocate some of the budget items to the emergency fund in response to COVID-19 situation. Caritas provided emergency cash, food and hygiene baskets and winterization cash support to help refugees overcome such a challenge. Moreover, they referred some of the cases for medical section in Caritas or other organization who can provide medical and different support for refugees.

Project Efficiency (project management, resources, monitoring and evaluation)

The monitoring system from Caritas side was efficient to a great extent, as it was clear from the coordinator's reports. However, a reviewed log-frame and a situational analysis study should be done from the beginning of the project, which should focus more on the qualitative method than quantitative.

Specifically, the project could efficiently utilize its resources. As in order to provide the livelihood grants, the project used to conduct case studies for the proposed projects. According to the case study result (6000 EGP as a ceiling amount), different amounts were determined. Notable, according to the study findings, **81%** of the female participants reported their satisfaction with Caritas case study compared to **68%** of male respondents. In addition, Caritas has achieved more than what the project targeted, which reflects the efficiency of utilizing the available resources.

Project Impact

100% of respondents reported a positive effect of the legal consultation services, vocational training, and supplementary educational classes. The rates of the other project services are **90%** and above, except for the refresher business management training and emergency cash assistance. In the FGDs with men in Damietta, they reported that the most valuable impact was the seed fund since it helped them start microbusiness. In the FGDs with adult women in both Damietta



and Alex, they agreed that the valuable impacts of their microbusinesses were to gain self-confidence and to start new things, as explained later.

Project Sustainability

According to the study findings, the participants were asked, "What services Caritas can provide for them in order to be self-reliant?". 27% of the participants' responses went to providing emergency cash assistance according, followed by providing livelihood grants in general by 23%, and providing advanced Business management training by 14%.

To some extent, the qualitative findings differ from the survey results. For example, in the FGDs with men in Damietta, they mentioned several strategies, that they followed, to ensure the sustainability of their projects, such as increasing marketing and ads, reducing revenues /profit share, and the expenditures to save the project capital. They also suggested that Caritas would provide them with advanced vocational training to increase their skills, which indicates a high level of self-resilience.

Caritas team in Damietta reported several measures that can ensure the sustainability of the project results, such as the continuous follow-up with beneficiaries, which would ensure that their microbusinesses are still running. Other measures include partially supporting the beneficiaries in advertising so that business can reach larger group of people. Moreover, Caritas Damietta team created a WhatsApp group with beneficiaries to update them with the current opportunities at Caritas, so they can be involved in activities supporting their businesses. These groups enable Caritas team to support the beneficiaries overcome the protection hazards, and risks which can hinder their business continuation. In addition, the beneficiaries send any queries via this group, and Caritas team provide them with the answers and advice, even after the project life. Caritas team also added that the training would play a major role in enabling the refugees overcome business problems.

Evaluation of gender mainstreaming within the project

The project succeeded in the gender mainstreaming as it could reach 51% females of each age group, and that was reflected in the sample we had for the final evaluation. Besides the success stories were most on the female side. Moreover, the livelihood grants helped empower vulnerable women to a great extent, as they reported in the FGDs in both Damietta and Alex. They agreed that the valuable impact of their microbusinesses was helping them gain self-confidence and starting new things, such as dealing with customers, satisfying family needs, having a life goal and even launching new businesses for their husbands. They added that their involvement with Egyptians enabled them to make networks of friends, who can provide support when needed. However, a little potential threat may arise out of women empowerment, when we met a case whose husband does not have a job and found his wife has her own business this resulted into jealous that led to violence. Although this was only one case, but should be an indicator to the project in case of replication, to take this into consideration and prepare a set of trainings about gender equality, gender based violence, and women's rights, to raise their awareness about. On the other hand,



the consultant met a case where her husband was helping her in the project and considered it as a family business not only hers.

It should be noted that, the positive impact and feedback from the female side, may be due to the concentration of the females, they really dedicate themselves for this project, and take as an opportunity that will not come again if they wasted it. On the other hand, the males, have other tasks to do in the same time, as the consultant met 2 cases who were working as microbus drivers, in the same time attending the project to start their own business and working on another job. They cannot be blamed for that; they did not trust the project and they have commitments to fulfill. Although, women have the same problems, but they reported that they devoted their time to this chance, when the consultant asked them why women have positive feedback than men.

Report on recommendations for future project follow-up and any suggested improvements to existing evaluation scope

- Provide PSS activities for the target group, especially the unaccompanied and separated children, with a specific focus on future planning and stress management, so they overcome the current situation. Notable, the modality of the mental health and psychosocial support intervention will depend on the project budget. Yet, it is recommended to implement both types (group therapy and individual sessions). However, the project can partner with other INGOs concerned with the MHPSS activities, so the flagged cases can be referred to them like PSTIC. Besides, request PSS manuals from the same organization to apply them to the beneficiaries.
- Provide advanced business management training in order to cover more topics.
- Provide training such as case management and mentorship program in order to support beneficiaries during the current situation.
- Provide online marketing sessions to the grantees to encourage them to use alternative options to market for their products and services.
- Increase the amount of seed fund to cover the expenses of launching microbusinesses and to make a guiding manual for the expected costs of different microbusinesses.
- Make a list of successful participants and hold meetings with them to share their experiences with new participants.
- Cover other geographic areas such Dakahlia and Port-Said, as the team in Caritas can handle this, with a high recommendation to increase the number of the staff and volunteers in Damietta. Also, more publicity will be needed.
- Regarding the amount of the livelihood grant and the certain types of business, sure it could not be enough amount for some projects to have 6000 EGP, but if Caritas made project classification and encouraged people who have same ideas to work together in the same project, then each one's amount will be his/her share in the project they can start a good business.
- Regarding the rent issue, it is highly recommended to have the project itself buy or rent a place like a mall, and then rent it directly to the beneficiaries.



Finally, the consultant team think that the protection unit is very important as 28% of the female respondents reported facing gender-based violence . Furthermore, it is very important in such circumstances to continue to support the vulnerable groups, especially the ones who were self-resilient, and want to expand their project (69%) and who had an idea and need fund to carry it out (8%).