

Background and Purpose

The purpose of this project is to promote a common understanding of inclusive citizenship amongst particular marginalized groups in Egypt. Marginalized, disenfranchised groups in Egyptian society accumulate to the state majority. The main intent is to give voice to those who are excluded from the public discourse. Many groups of citizens in Egypt face difficulty being recognized as fully-fledged citizens when they attempt to claim their legitimate rights as citizens within the state. It should be noted that collective recognition does not necessarily emerge from a collective struggle, but rather from a political environment that does not eliminate differences. When promoting inclusive citizenship, there is a need to avoid the pitfalls of overly demarcating boundaries and long-standing binaries, as this is essentially counterproductive.

In Egypt, there are disadvantaged groups based on racial, ethnic, religious, sectarian, and sexual basis. Many of those lack any viable representation and face state sponsored marginalization from public space. In addition, there are many refugees and communities at risk living in Egypt with no recognition or clear status. Even the constitution does not guarantee rights to many of those citizens since it only recognizes monotheistic religions leaving out those who do not conform. Another problem is that many of the laws reinforce the idea of difference rather than inclusiveness.

This project starts with the assumption that there is a need to capacitate the underprivileged citizens and hand them over the tools with which they can later speak for themselves and present their narrative to a larger group of people. And that only these groups of citizens can best present their story and narrative.

In that sense, the project will work with several marginalized groups to assist them in assessing the challenges facing them. At the same time, the project will work with media figures, in an attempt to encourage them to highlight the challenges facing the marginalized groups and to allow these groups to voice their aspirations through the different media outlets available at their disposal.

A permanent platform for sharing the aspirations of these groups in different ways and presenting them to the wider public should be established.



Duration and Phases

- In a first phase, a need assessment will be carried out on two levels: a. first, the selected underprivileged group, together with the designated partner, will decide on the content and the way in which the project will be carried out; b. based on the results, the selected partner and media representatives will determine the tools to be used in order to implement the project - like storytelling, movie discussions, focal group meetings, publications, debates, graffiti, testimonies; both assessment results will be combined in an action plan.
- In a second phase, workshops will be conducted with media representatives in order to encourage them to shed the light on the suffering of the selected underprivileged groups.
- Finally, the media will be used, whenever possible, as a tool that can allow those groups of people bring their message across.
- In parallel, infographics will be developed, illustrating brief information on the living conditions and problems faced by these groups of underprivileged citizens. These can serve as an element of in-depth discussion or a publication on inclusive citizenship, minority rights and the normative constituents of citizenship at a later stage.

Target groups

- Selected underprivileged and marginalized groups.
- Local civil society organizations.
- Independent researchers.
- Political parties.
- Members of youth centers.

Partners

- Aswan Future Association
- Faculty of Mass Communication
- Relevant media outlets
- Faculty of Economics and Political Science

Phase	Time / Period	Step / Activity	Result and Use
Need Assessment	March-June 2015	Field work with selected target group, assessing their problems	Need-based action plan for the further implementation of the project
	June-August 2015	Meeting with local partner and media people, assessing suitable tools for portraying the groups concerns	
Gathering the media and the underprivileged group	August-October 2015	Roundtable discussions with media figures, encouraging them to address the concerns of the selected groups	Media people having a better understanding of the situation of this group and issues they could cover in their work
Field work	October-December 2015	Use the media and different tools that can allow those groups of people bring their message across	New narrative or more stories on the lives of those forgotten exposed to a wider audience

In 2015, the project focuses on the Ababda group in Upper Egypt. In the two following years, the same approach will be used, focusing on different marginalized groups.