

## Background and Purpose

The purpose of this project is to open space and create momentum around alternative economic policies. While the aftermath of the revolution has failed to push in the direction of more social justice and the state seems to work along the same lines of earlier failed policies, there is a pressing need to adopt alternative economic policies that will break away from state hegemony. Many studies have indicated that cooperatives are a step in the direction of more social justice. Not only do cooperatives push in the direction of more democratic participation, they also promote inclusive development in areas in which the state does not have a strong presence and delivery.

Cooperatives offer a model that gives ownership of economical and developmental issues back to those directly affected by them, which is a trigger to work on creating sustainable change. Given the background and historical chronology of cooperatives in Egypt, it seems that two matters need to be ensured. One is that the target group is closely consulted to better arrive at an understanding as to what their needs, fears and aspirations are exactly. The second is that there needs to be a unified vision that is both formulated and shared by all.

The basic drive for this project is that cooperatives carry a lot of potential since they provide individuals a means to improve their livelihood when it is impossible otherwise with the limited resources and low competence of the public administration. Democratically-governed cooperatives have fostered solidarity between members of society, particularly in times of polarization. In a country that still suffers from neo-liberal economical policies that have carried strong socio-economic repercussions, cooperatives can stand as a viable alternative. However, any work on cooperatives should be presented within the larger context of alternative socio-economic policies.



## Duration and Phases

The project is carried out during a three-year period, starting in early 2015.

- In a first phase, lessons learnt from the history of cooperatives in Egypt, their successes and shortcomings, reasons behind the failure of local cooperatives to provide sustainable solutions have been assessed. Based on this, recommendations on the way forward have been formulated and a training manual on the successful setup of cooperatives developed.
- The second phase concentrates on media training: Media campaigns and media literacy programs, using the developed manual for producing different media and multimedia outputs in order to promote the concept and idea of cooperatives.
- This is followed by a phase of consultations and capacity building sessions. Working on grassroots level with the target groups, meaning, importance and social impact of cooperatives will be explain and pilot projects initiated.
- The project concludes with a policy phase, involving decision makers and representatives of the relevant administrations, in order to attract their attention to the importance of cooperatives and push for a better regulatory framework.

## Target groups

- Existing structures related to the cooperative movement in Egypt
- Civil society organizations
- Media outlets
- Policy makers
- Think tanks
- Government officials

## Partners

- Ministry of Education
- Faculty of Political Science and Economics
- Faculty of Mass Communication
- Women Development Forum
- Local civil society organizations (related to the governorates in focus)
- Cooperative High Board Committee
- Existing cooperative structures
- Aswan Future Association
- Ta'aoun movement

Phase	Time / Period	Step / Activity	Result and Use
Assessment and development of training material	March-November 2015	Creation of a training manual and tool-kit with background information on the use and structure of cooperatives	Basis for the introduction of the idea of cooperatives training format for capacitating different target groups
Media training and production	August-December 2015	Media production based on the training manual  Awareness campaign targeting media outlets	Movie clips, infographics, and other tools used to explain the idea of cooperatives.  Media people using their outreach to introduce the idea and need for cooperatives to the wider public
Consultation, awareness and capacity building	May-September 2015	Awareness campaign for school children, targeting the social development specialists in schools	Small cooperative projects set up in a number of schools within the framework and regulations of the ministry of education
	2016-2017	Workshops and trainings for different youth groups with potential on setting up successful cooperatives	Creation of more successful, functional cooperatives in selected areas
Policy work	Late 2016 and 2017	Policy-level discussions with political parties, to attract their attention to the importance of cooperatives	Pressure exerted on decision-makers to push for a better regulatory framework governing cooperatives