Provision of social services by FBOs in Egypt – what we know

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• FBOs - A brief background
• FBOs in Egypt
• A case study of the role of FBOs in one of Cairo’s informal areas
• Research gaps
What is an FBO?

• FBO: “any organisation that derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith’ (Clarke 2007:6)

• In Egypt: religious NGOs, mosques, churches, governmental FBOs (e.g. NSB, M. of Awqaf), Islamic banks, etc…
Islamic and Christian Charities/NGOs

- Islamic charities/NGOs
  - Phenomenal Growth: since the 1980s
  - Why? State withdrawal from welfare provision + the Islamic revival
  - Growth in sources of income: zakat, Islamic banking, funds from oil rich Arab states

- Christian charities/NGOs
  - Active since a longer time than Islamic NGOs, many in the form of foreign missions in developing countries
Assessing FBOs

Appreciation
- Concerned about the poor
- The poor trust them
- Sometimes they are the only providers available
- Sensitive to the poor’s needs

Concerns
- Gender equity, women’s rights
- Proselytization and taking advantage of the poor’s vulnerability to spread ideology
- Religious discrimination
- Same weaknesses raised about NGOs: efficiency, transparency, accountability,
FBOs in Egypt – The data deficit

- Religious NGOs
  - Official Data: Unreliable
  - Limited rigorous research has been critical of NGOs
  - Research focus: Political Islam and the organisations

- Mosques
  - Sharp increase since the 1970s
  - Contradictory figures: In 2009, 77,000 mosques (CAPMAS)
  - NSB: 1999/2000 supervised 5,000 zakat committees

- Churches
  - Coptic church: growing role with the poor since the 1960s
  - Evangelical, Catholic and other denominations?
Growing Government Support

Average no NGOs established/year

0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900

Trends: Islamic and Christian NGOs

- Islamic NGOs
  - rapid growth since 1980s
  - Most are charitable, aim to teach Islam, in urban areas, most important type of NGO for the poor

- Christian NGOs
  - Declining in importance since the 1970s as the Church has taken on many of their roles.