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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Expert Group Meeting on Adopting the Sustainable  
Livelihoods Approach for Promoting Rural Development  
in the ESCWA Region  
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## **EXPERIENCES OF SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH IN THE ESCWA REGION**

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## Experiences of Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in ESCWA Region

EGM on Adopting the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach for Promoting Rural Development in the ESCWA Region

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## Outline

### I. Introduction

### II. Global Experience

### III. Experiences of the ESCWA Region with the Adoption and Implementation of SLA

### IV. Adoption of SLA in an Urban Context

### V. Conclusion

## Rural Development Challenges

- Conflicts over access rights
- Pressure from changes and declining availability of the ecosystem services
- Marginalization from resource access
- Climate change
- Food Crisis 2008 (Insufficient food supplies)
- Exclusion

## Rural Development Challenges (Contd.)

- Devastation, overexploitation and privatization
- Unemployment and poverty
- Limited availability of clean water, electricity, basic health and education services in *some* rural areas
- Land degradation and low productivity of agriculture
- Return of expatriate Labor due to the current Financial Crisis



## Why SLA?

- Poverty is not just the lack of income but of *human development*
- SLA is a methodology and a concept to face the rural development challenges
- There is a need for:
  - A direct impact on poverty
  - More analytical understanding of the *complexity of poverty* and *the factors that affect poverty*

## What is SLA?

*“SLA is a method of understanding the experiences of people living in poverty and disadvantage.”*

*“It is also a **participatory approach** which is based on the belief that people experiencing poverty have **abilities and assets** that can be used to help them create a **sustainable livelihood** for them and their families.”*

(Oxfam Cymru, 2009 )

## SLA Principles

- **Normative**

*People-centered, Empowering, Responsive and participatory, Holistic, Sustainable*

- **Operational**

*Conducted in partnership, Strengths-based, Multi-level (micro-macro links), Long-term and flexible, Disaggregated*

(Khanya-aicdd, 2006)

## The SLA Framework

### A- Assets, Capitals, Strengths



### B- Vulnerability Context



## C- Policies, Institutions and Processes (PIPs)



## D- Livelihoods Strategies



## E- Livelihoods Outcomes



## SLA Global Experiences, an example on Livestock Services Story



## Pre-SLA Application

- Aim: Reduce Poverty
- Interventions:
  - 1- Provide livestock technology and modern knowledge to poor people with little land
  - 2- Supportive through Institutions, policies, good government and relationships
- Conclusion: The poor were not *exactly* reached



## SLA Application

- Examined functions and relationships and their connections to poor people ([Local-central linkages](#))
- Assessed the suitability of policies in the livestock sector in reducing poverty ([Holistic](#))
- Challenged the government about who it was serving
- Proved the benefits of policies and actions through participating with the poor ([Participatory](#))
- Embraced and Gave time for change ([Dynamic](#))



## Post SLA Application

- Reformed the Institution of the government's livestock services department
  - More aware and responsive to poor people and supporting their aspirations
  - Working with the private sector livestock industry ([Partnership](#))
  - More decentralised becoming a model of good governance for other departments
  - Founded on policies and institutions that are derived from an understanding of their impact on poor people
- A source of evidence for Policy makers
- Provided a communication tool and a learning generation for pro-poor change ([Sustainability](#))
- Created a Channel for poor people to influence power ([Empowering](#))

## ESCWA Regional Experiences

### Short Stories



## Syria

### ***Agricultural Development Project in the South***

Rural women playing an active role in agricultural production in the project area.

Their main responsibilities are land preparation, sowing, weeding, irrigation, fertilizing, spraying, and harvesting.



## Egypt

### ***Agricultural Development Project at El Minya***

An extension worker teaching farmers how to make butter using modern machinery



## ***Lebanon***

### ***Smallholder Livestock Rehabilitation Project at Barelies***

As a result of artificial insemination, farmers were able to increase their cattle holdings by twofold and initiate a Livestock Coop.



## ***Jordan***

### ***Agricultural Resource Management Project in the Governorate of Kerak***

Farmer fenced off the area to be used for olive plantation in the Kerak governorate. Fencing and Stone walls were employed to prevent sheep from eating seedlings and soil erosion.





*Contd.*

Also in response to drought, wells were built to collect rainwater and thus sustain the olive plantation.

**SLA for Assessing Sudan  
Rural Community Resilience to  
Climate Change  
(Elasha *et al.*, 2005)**

### Case Study of Sudan (Contd.)

- **Vulnerability Context:** drought poses substantial risks to people living in the Bara Province of North Kordofan State
- **Strategy Adopted:** Community development and sustainable livelihood environmental management measures built resilience and adaptive capacity to lessen the stresses of climate shocks (application of local and external knowledge)

### Case Study of Sudan (Contd.)

- **Livelihood Assessment:** analyzed the coping and adaptive strategies pursued by the community to understand the role and impact on enhancing and securing local people's livelihoods
- **Tools:** sustainable livelihood impact assessment methods for assessing project impacts on the community within an ecological agricultural system (data collection methods, qualitative and quantitative indicators and application of SLF)

### Case Study of Sudan (Contd.)

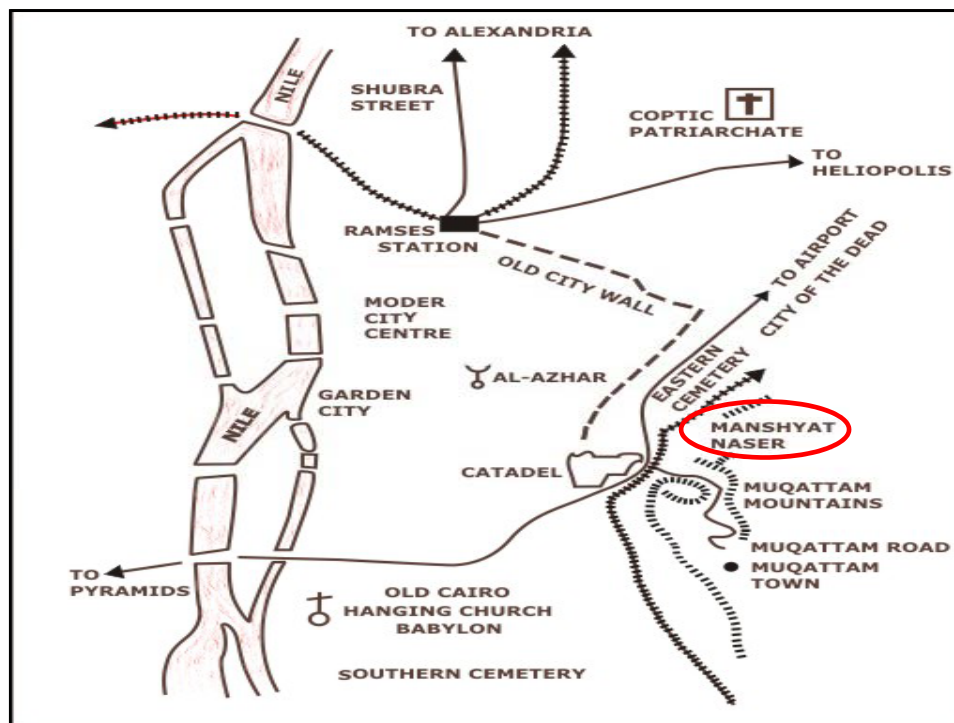
- **Outcomes:**

- Community institutional structure
- Rangeland rehabilitation measures (sand dunes revegetated, windbreaks sheltering, Livestock restocking)
- Community development (revolving fund, pastoral women's groups focused on livestock value-adding Activities, new irrigated gardens and wells, and a grain storage and seed credit program)
- Effectively combined participatory planning, capacity building and access to credit
- Diversified production system and established drought contingency measures
- An enhanced capacity of the community to withstand drought

### Case Study of Sudan (Contd.)

*The SLF can be a **useful tool** in understanding the impact of sustainable livelihood measures in increasing communities' resilience to climatic stresses from local people's point of views*

## Rehabilitation & Upgrading of the Manshiet Nasser Informal Settlement in Egypt (*El-Gebaly, 2009*)





## The Case of Manshiet Nasser, Egypt (Contd.)

### Objectives

- Improve the living environment of 0.5 million inhabitants
- Provide access to affordable housing options and finance
- Mobilize resources of residents towards sustained livelihood systems
- Maintain the social capital of residents



## The Case of Manshiet Nasser, Egypt (Contd.)

### Vulnerability Context

- Occasional collapse of rocks coming down from upper parts of the Muqattam mountains due to terrestrial movements
- Lack of basic infrastructure services, health and social care facilities, and access roads for emergency services



## The Case of Manshiet Nasser, Egypt (Contd.)

### Adopted Strategies

- Transparent dialogue
- Effective community participation
- Public and private partnerships in financing and managing services
- Enhanced community organization
- Institutionalized and innovative entity of participatory urban management
- Socio-economic survey conducted earlier to planning, using participatory methods of research

## The Case of Manshiet Nasser, Egypt (Contd.)

### Major Outcomes

- Affordable housing options to the poor
- Empowered civic engagement at early stages of decision making
- Institutionalized a long-term participatory urban management
- Maintained and enhanced livelihood systems of inhabitants
- Preserved *Social Capital* of original residents
- Sustained socio-economic development

## The Case of Manshiet Nasser, Egypt (Contd.)

### Lessons Learned

- Gradual development of TRUST between the society and the state is possible through transparent and constructive dialogue and demonstrated credibility of government agencies
- Empowerment of local inhabitants to participate in decision making can reduce the scope of conflicts and enable mobilization of resources for effective implementation
- Political support and Will are a must for introducing participatory urban management
- Coordination among government agencies, civil society entities and external support program, although challenging, is necessary for effective and sustainable urban development
- Gradual progress towards **Attitude and Behavior Changes** of senior executives is more effective than raising slogans of good governance
- Importance of utilizing modern techniques in data acquisition, processing and analysis (GIS)
- Availability of **Accurate and Comprehensive Database** of demographic and socio-economic features of the area was critical in upgrading and proper planning

## The Case of Manshiet Nasser, Egypt (Contd.)

### Recommendations

1- In case of Replication, the initial survey should:

- Collect information about people's assets to understand the residents' potentials as partners and beneficiaries and enable better knowledge about livelihood systems of inhabitants
- Gather more gender sensitive data to help make subsequent strategies, objectives and programs more gender-balanced and aware

## The Case of Manshiet Nasser, Egypt (Contd.)

### 2- Innovative mechanisms:

- Involve government agencies, interested international support programs and religious leaders in the area
- Establish an in-situ coordination office to 1) organize public consultations with residents, 2) disclose relevant information, and 3) prepare meetings of the partners group
- Create an NGO that represents the local inhabitants to take an active role in communication, implementation and management of the project
- Enable private and popular sectors to participate in the project
- Empower private sector and local NGOs to participate in urban management

## SLA Added Value ?

- The ability of SLA to link Macro Policies to Micro Realities
- Understanding of livelihood groups and their assets
- Predicting responses to different policy options
- Managing cross-cutting issues
- Highlighting the long-term
- Building the capacity of local actors to participate in planning processes
- Promoting a more decentralized approach
- Setting targets and monitoring them
- Providing a checklist to assess Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

## *The way forward*

- 1) Provide support to dryland development processes
- 2) Emphasize on mainstreaming land tenure reform and local governance of natural resources
- 3) Build partnerships and making markets work for poor of the drylands
- 4) Promote knowledge management in support of sustainable livelihoods and natural resource management in drylands

