



Meeting with the Minister of Social Solidarity and Visit to Ain el-Sira 3 February, 2008 Minutes

On February 3rd, a group of participants and presenters from the “Introducing Empowering Conditional Cash Transfers to Egypt: The Ain el-Sira Experiment” were received by the Minister of Social Solidarity (Dr. Ali el-Sayed Ali el-Moselhi) and his advisors to discuss the pilot. Speakers Drs. Maxine Molyneux, Mercedes Gonzalez de la Rocha, Marcelo Medeiros and Roberto Wagner da Silva Rodrigues provided abbreviated versions of their presentations to the Minister, who graciously opened the floor for a discussion afterward. The Minister began the session by supporting the targeting, monitoring and evaluation of the pilot, emphasizing that transparency and efficient use of technology were essential. The Minister felt pilot design was too premature to begin accounting for exit strategies for beneficiaries and stressed the necessity of providing adequate services for beneficiaries if the transfers will be conditional. The issue of inter-ministerial collaboration was addressed and Minister el-Moselhi explained that he would convene with other ministries and providing a summary of possibilities for working cohesively within a month. Minister el-Moselhi also suggested the creation of a working group to discuss the economic facets of the CCT pilot, incorporating Nasser Bank and micro-credit organizations into the coordinated vision. In addition, the Minister recommended utilizing the model of the Ain el-Sira experiment and establishing a package or portfolio of services for beneficiaries. The Minister closed the session by emphasizing his role as a proponent of the Ain el-Sira experiment.

After the meeting with the Minister, the group paid a visit to the Alashanek Ya Balady (AYB), a well-established NGO in the neighborhood of Ain el-Sira. Representatives from AYB explained the services available, ranging from micro-credit loans, cultural/health programs to and Ramadan packages (food and supplies provided during the month of Ramadan) for residents. AYB lends to both men and women, an average of 350-1000 L.E. and loans are accompanied by training courses specific to the project proposed. Loans are provided at no interest and the default rate is low as the staff of AYB has close relationships with loan recipients (fostering a high degree of trust). Participants from the workshop conversed with AYB beneficiaries, learning more about the projects they have undertaken with loans and their opinions and feedback concerning the various programs offered by AYB. Participants then briefly visited the youth center (equipped with various courts, a swimming pool, computer labs, etc.), the site for future integration of all AYB activities.