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" On the second issue ..we try to highlight efforts towards finalizing profiles of conflict around irrigation water .. Publishing key findings reached .."

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Editorial

On the second issue of Water & Stability News we try to highlight the efforts of project teams towards finalizing profiles of conflict around irrigation water in the four governorates of operation, publishing key findings reached through these profiles. We were pleased to have the conflict management advisor, professor at York university, Sultan Barakat, working with us during April on analyzing the findings of the profiles and facilitating the process for identifying root and proximate causes of conflict around irrigation water.



Highly concentrating on reviewing the findings: (from left to right) Nika Salvetti, Hazem Fahmy, Zoheir El-Shandweily; Alaa Abdin; Nahla Abo el Fotoh; and Samir Sedky

We also try to shed some light on project activities planned for the coming period.

We shall look deeper into the *findings* through the local com-

munities research teams which are currently being formed to conduct in-depth studies in 12 local communities across the 4 governorates.

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Reflections on Conflict By Prof. Sultan Barakat

Conflict over irrigation water is part of the fabric of rural communities in Egypt. Over the last few decades a variety of national and local trends - notably the ending of the agricultural rotations / cycles, the economic liberalization, major demographic shifts, the degradation of the water infrastructure in many parts on

the branch and tertiary canal levels due to transgressions and high maintenance costs; and this in spite of all the efforts undertaken, and the growing sense of inequity in the distribution of water resources, the government's move towards decentralization, and user participation in water management - are all factors

which have a significant effect, whether positive or negative, on the access and use of water resources, particularly in irrigation.

Considering the speed and magnitude of change, conflict over irrigation water is likely to be more frequent in the future, as individual farmers compete for ac-

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Editorial



Project manager, Samir Sedky offering a presentation on the preliminary findings from governorate profiles on March 26. (from left) Alaa Abdin, Nahla Aboel Fotoh, Foaad El-Shebeny; Samir Sedky; Catherin Galal; and Samia El-Guindy

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These research teams are designed to include community members with diverse backgrounds and different social strata including simple farmers.

The project will also collect and review best practices on both the national and international levels for water conflict management. The formed community research teams will consider these practices

along with their in-depth studies to recommend tailored conflict management mechanisms to be piloted on one local community in each governorate.

The project is also establishing an advisory committee with representatives from key project stakeholders. The committee will hold its first meeting end of May 07.

“Community research teams will include community members with diverse backgrounds .. including simple farmers.”

Staff Training

In preparation for the in-depth study, the project management held a two day training workshop for project staff on 11-12 April.

The main focus of the workshop was to analyze key findings in governorate profiles, train on methodology and strategy for the in-depth study, and get more oriented on water policies in Egypt.

The workshop was very life; as it saw active participation from all project staff. As project manager, Samir, puts it: “these workshops offer the staff the opportunity to share experiences and results thus increasing their knowledge base and

analytical capacity”.

The training was mostly facilitated by Prof. Sultan; but Dr. Alaa El-Din Abdin from SRU also gave a very interesting presentation on water policies, starting from the 19h century onward.



Dr. Alaa El-Din Abdin (SRU) offering project staff an interesting presentation on development of water policies.

Governorate Reports Completed

The project teams in Fayoum, Sohag, Aswan and Kafr El-Sheikh in sequence have completed their situational reports on conflict around irrigation water in their governorates. Many information gathering tools were used over the past three months: including workshops, conferences, individual and collective meetings with different stakeholders; in addition to secondary sources.

The project followed the case study methodology as it gives the necessary flexibility, the needed participation, and is convenient to achieve the objective in line with the available resources. The samples were selected based on the irrigation network not the administrative division. Diversity as one of the strategic options of the project was observed in selecting the samples: diversity in geography, crop pattern, existence of civil society organizations whether water user associations or community and agricultural development associations; and sociological composition. Project teams ensured participation of different key stakeholders. The teams validated the data collected through triangulation with different sources to ensure information accuracy and in realization of research norms.

On the causes of conflict, it was interesting to hear the perspective of the irrigation water users (farmers) vis a vis that of the irrigation departments concerned; as to the causes of conflict around irrigation water:

Farmers' perception of causes

- Low water levels
- The capacity constraint of the irrigation network and its inability to absorb additional water allocations
- Poor maintenance of the canalization system
- Unlined watercourses and seepage.

- Insufficiency of water intakes.
- Poor management by incompetent and unaccountable water engineers
- Power and dominance by influential owners and reclaimers of the new land areas
- Bribery and nepotism for the *Bahars*
- Brevity of irrigation time allowed per feddan
- Ineffectiveness of the fines imposed on unauthorized rice-growing
- Transgression by the fountainheads farmers against irrigation water

Official's perception of causes

- Acts of transgression by the farmers
- High rate of water waste by farmers
- Lack of awareness amongst farmers about availability of water and allocation systems and pollution control.
- Rapidly increasing rice-growing (illegal)
- Fragmentation of properties, increasing the number of stakeholders
- Change in farmers' life styles (rather watch satellite channels instead of irrigating their land during the night)
- Building bricks factories
- Waste disposal into canals and water contamination
- Increased unauthorized reclamation of land area, while the planned ones



Listening to Farmers' perception of conflict causes: Fayoum research team (Ahmed and Haidi) in the field.

“The project followed the case study methodology as it gives .. flexibility, .. participation, and is convenient .. in line with available resources”

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Governorate Reports Completed:

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are not observing the required irrigation techniques.

- Use of unauthorized water-pumping machines
- Passage of watercourses into the inhabitants' blocks.

The project has analyzed these and classified causes as root and proximate causes:

The Root causes identified were:

- ***the increased demand on water;***
- ***the weak water governance;***
- ***inefficient infrastructure on the branch and tertiary canal levels due to transgressions and high maintenance costs;***
- ***lack of farmers awareness;***
- ***eroding social solidarity and community organization.***

The Proximate causes were: *The uneven (unfair) distribution of water amongst farmers and between villages ; acts of transgression by the farmers; water/Economic insecurity; the gradual disappearance of al-Saqya and increased independence on individual pumps; increase ineffectiveness of local and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms; some farmers inability to 'dialogue' constructively and 'negotiate' effectively increases the opportunities for misunderstanding and thus conflict.*

As for the negative impact of conflict, the project clustered these under: social, economic, environmental, political and other effects.

The social effects include the negative impact on social cohesion and solidarity; the dwindling faith people experiencing in traditional mechanisms and leadership structures; negative increase in outward migration; dropping from schools (to guard water); and added burdens on wives.

The economic effects included reductions in production and productivity per drop of water; negative impact of transgressions adding to the aging of the irrigation network and costs of maintenance; increasing vulnerability of small landholders, with the risk of debt accumulation; and the cost of lost opportunities, e.g. time, efforts wasted on disputes.

As for the environmental effects; it was found that conflicts drive farmers to use drainage water –even though highly polluted- with serious hazards to health of humans and land.

The political effects included farmers scepticism about the Government's ability to deliver on promises; disenfranchising people from political participation. Also among the effects of conflict were the weakening of decentralization efforts and delays to privatization; weakening MWRI agenda on integrated water management. A revival of tribal and family allegiances was also noted.

The project also identified other effects; e.g. the general feel of insecurity, the psychological pressure often reflected at family members, the difficulty in implementing restorative justice, the doubts against the fairness of procedural justice; and the wasted opportunities.

These findings will be further studied towards developing pilot conflict management mechanisms.

“The political effects .. farmers scepticism about the Govrnmnt’s ability to deliver on promises; and disenfranchising people from political participation.”

Reflections on Conflict :

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cess to water; socially defined groups perceive themselves as having incompatible interest; those poor farmers who are dependent on water, but unable to participate in planning or monitoring its use feel marginalized. Furthermore, when entities external to established rural communities, such as industrial zones, urban centers or the communities of the

newly reclaimed land, are able to pursue their interests, while ignoring the needs and imperatives of local people conflict is more likely to arise between parties of very uneven power.

Things are made worst by the inability of local traditional practices to manage conflict as and when it surfaces in an effective and legitimate way.



CMA; Prof. Sultan offering an introduction to the in-depth analysis, during staff training on 11-12 April

Launching the In-depth Study

Having completed the governorate profiles; the four project governorate teams started each forming 3 community research teams; with members representing local communities and key stakeholders. The objective of these community research teams is to further conduct an in-depth analysis of water conflict management systems on both the institutional and popular levels; and assess the impact of these systems on the community.



Thinking, talking, debating to reach agreement and common understanding towards better solidarity. (photo taken during a preliminary workshop for the formation of community research team)

As the Conflict Management Advisor, Prof. Sultan, puts it: "the in-depth study involves building up a picture of the nature, needs and resources of a community to manage conflict with the active participation of that community. As profiling the community will reflect the conflict analysis but in more depth, especially in terms of the root and proximate causes of conflict in daily life; and will also help establish the degree of vulnerability to conflict and seasonal trends. The in-depth study is a major step towards setting up experimental pilots".

The project shall continue to realize diversity in the formation of these community research teams.

Teams would include irrigation/district engineers, WUA members, simple farmers, members of local popular councils, natural leaders, and members of National Council

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Where
the end of poverty begins

“.. community research teams would gain the experience on how to deal with community problems, manage these; .. ensuring sustainability to project idea”

Implementing Partners in Lines

CARE Egypt is a non profit organization that was founded in 1954 and works with the most vulnerable and marginalized communities, facilitating economic opportunities in agriculture and micro finance sector; advancing girls' education; capacity building and development for civil society; promoting Rights-Based Approaches; and Governance .

Recent achievements include the building and furnishing of 70 schools, training 1500 teachers and facilitators on active learning methods and the use of technology. Provided 15000 households with sanitation connections, solid and liquid waste dislodging, and 10000 families with water connections. Provided agricultural production and marketing technical assistance to over 12000 Upper Egyptian farmers, increasing their incomes by an average 126%.

The Strategic Research Unit

(SRU) represents the main entity within the National Water Research Center responsible for carrying out practical strategic research for the direct support of the decision makers in drawing national sustainable integrated water resources management policies. SRU is staffed by qualified researchers experienced in the fields of water resource management, irrigation, water quality, and skilled in the application of strategic modeling tools (simulation, optimization, predictive, routing). SRU's innovative approach is in keeping with integrative approaches to water policy management.

SRU plays a critical role in; synthesizing knowledge generated by various research institutes; analyzing water resource issues; initiating new multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary research that supports water resource planning; identifying priority areas for research; and contributing to enhance public awareness on the importance of water management.

Launching the In-depth Study

of Women. It is also recommended to include students into these teams, in an attempt to disseminate/create awareness among this sector of the community.

One of the primary objectives behind forming such teams is to establish / train cadres from within the community who would gain the experience on how to deal with community prob-

lems, manage these; especially after the project ends; as one means of ensuring sustainability to project idea.

Though “Water & Stability” is funded by Royal Netherlands Embassy in Cairo; but views expressed herein can not be taken to represent or reflect the Royal Netherlands Embassy views.

