



Egypt

Fact File

Country Name	Arab Republic of Egypt
Population	76,054,112 (Jan. 2009)
Land Area	1,001,450 km ²
Official Language	Arabic
Currency	1 Egyptian Pound = 100 piaster
Main Cities	Cairo (Capital), Giza, Tanta, Alexandria, Shubra el-Khema, Port Said, Suez, Mahalla el-Kubra, Hurghada, Sharm el-Sheikh

Improving the Living Conditions of the Poor in Manshiet Nasser

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Cairo, the capital of Egypt.

Commonly known as 'Garbage City', Manshiet Nasser represents one of Cairo's largest informal settlements. The area among the foothills of the Mokattam mountains has been developed since the late 50s and early 60s by rural migrants from Upper Egypt. Since then, more and more impoverished people had been driven out of central Cairo – a megacity with an estimated current population of around 17 million people – into districts such as Manshiet Nasser in the wake of rapid urbanisation.

Today, Manshiet Nasser is home to between 800,000 to 1 million people. While still a very poor district of Cairo, the former slum has grown so much over the past years that it

is now almost located in the city centre. Within the dynamic urban quarter even a little industrial area has evolved generating income from recycling and traditional handicrafts; in between the multistory buildings small enterprises, shops and teahouses shape the street scene. The community of Manshiet Nasser is beyond doubt working towards its own future, nonetheless, settlement of the government-owned land mostly took place without any authorisation, land titles and construction plans – simple dwellings being erected along the Autostrada, slowly extending uphill to the east as more migrants arrived. As a result the urban development is quite haphazard and entirely lacking any legal basis and proper administrative infrastructure. People have limited



Manshiet Nasser: From informal settlement to legalised district.

access to basic services such as drinking water, sanitation and electricity or other social services such as education and health provision.

After the Egyptian government had abandoned its initial plan to demolish the squatter settlement in 1997, and decided instead to turn Manshiet Nasser from an informal area into a legalised district, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has supported this decision by financing the Participatory Development Programme in Urban Areas (PDP), inter alia in Manshiet Nasser. On behalf of the German government and the Egyptian Ministry of Economic Development (MoED), KfW Entwicklungsbank (German Development Bank) and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) are carrying out a participatory development project to establish and secure basic needs, in close cooperation with the Cairo governorate, local administrations, civil society organisations and nongovernmental organisations. The prime

objective of this project is to improve the living conditions of – and hence reduce potential health risks to – poor residents in Manshiet Nasser by rehabilitating and upgrading the urban infrastructure; this involves the provision and extension of a secure water supply distribution system, the implementation of an organised sewerage system and – to a lesser extent – the upgrading of the road network.

A participatory approach is being applied, in order to combine the demands of the residents on the one hand and the constraints related to the provision of infrastructure by the several authorities on the other. The key element is that residents are involved in the planning processes and that local democracy is promoted; the residents are encouraged to put forward their own solutions in order that aid projects can be tailored to their needs. The sense of ownership of the improved facilities by the beneficiaries will thus guarantee the sustainability of the project. Disbursements to contractors are being managed



Abdel Aal Canal in Manshiet Nasser.



Cultural centre.



through a local disposition account, administered externally on behalf of the client, including annual audits by an independent financial adviser to international standards.

The project is implemented in the form of an open fund, to fully use the available resources, focussing on the three main infrastructure sectors of water supply, sanitation and roads, which have been identified as priorities in the Manshiet Nasser Guide Plan and the subsequent Participatory Budget Planning. The project will also influence the wider urban development of Manshiet Nasser through small Community Development Investments in public facilities and communal initiatives in cooperation with a technical cooperation programme provided by GTZ. The technical cooperation component assists the district predominantly in formalising the urban planning and community development as well as the administration on process development for legalisation.

Phase I commenced in Ezbeth Bekhit, a sheikha (subdistrict) of Manshiet Nasser with a 1998 population of 28,900 in 6,490 households. The quarter covers an area of 47 feddans (20.1 ha), mainly stretching along the King Khaled Autostrada. The topography, which is characterised by extreme differences in elevation, is dominated by limestone cliffs, the result of quarrying over the centuries. Phase II extends the project to further parts of Manshiet Nasser. The funding allocated will allow full water distribution and sewerage services to be extended to approximately half of the population and to pave 4.5 km of the internal roads. Due to the low water supply standard (only 59% of households having access to the public potable supply system and some during night hours only) and lack of proper sanitation (only 56% have access to the informally constructed sewerage network, although all dwellings have privately installed septic tanks), the critical environmental and public health conditions prevail in the quarter.

At present neither the quantity of potable water resources nor the pressure in the supply network is sufficient to cover overall demand; similarly, the existing gravity sewers are in a structurally unsound and poorly maintained condition, causing sewage to overflow into the largely unpaved streets and stagnant pools to develop in depressed areas. The main objective in the design of the water and sewerage systems is to minimise the excavation depths of the gravity lines in the very narrow lanes, in order to prevent the collapse of adjacent buildings; small lifting stations are envisaged to evacuate sewage from otherwise inaccessible areas.

Shortly after the start of the project things have indeed improved for thousands of people in Manshiet Nasser. A central sewage collection plant has been built and many have already been connected to the drinking water network. It seems that the whole community of Manshiet Nasser does not simply accept the programme, its people virtually identify with it and the success story is catching on: similar projects have been launched in several other suburbs of Cairo and Alexandria.