



SUCCESS STORY

Women Lead Effort to Clean Up Canal

The El-Sharakah canal is no longer used for waste disposal



Photo: USAID/Mina Luika

Haneema Basry explains her strategy for convincing the community to help clean up their canal at an association meeting in El-Sharakah, Egypt.

“No matter how little education a woman has had, once she knows that her acts can negatively affect her family’s land and source of income, she will be willing to do anything to correct the situation,” said Haneema Basry, El-Sharakah canal water users association member.

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Abd-El Reheem Ali, head of El-Sharakah Canal Water Users Association, knows how important women are as members of his association. It was through their efforts that the community cleaned up its canal, improving everyone’s health, as well as the farmers’ crops.

The canal water used to be very dirty. People would throw garbage into the canal, and as rubbish accumulated it blocked the flow of water. In rural Egyptian households, women are usually responsible for throwing out garbage. Women in the association took the initiative to launch an awareness campaign among women in this rural farming community. The women went from farm to farm teaching the women who were running each household that throwing garbage in the canal was not only endangering their health, but also affecting their source of income as well — the family’s crops.

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The association needed to attack the problem but also effect a cure to the current problem so the association teamed up with the Islamic Charity Association to rent a tractor that collects garbage two times a week. As a result, the canal now is no longer used for waste disposal. And Abd-El Reheem Ali will readily confirm the effect of their contribution, as he surveys his fields and prepares to harvest what promises to be an excellent crop of sugar cane.