



## Newsletter April to June 2011

### Dear Friends

Egypt is still very much affected by the effects of the revolution. In EpiscoCare's target communities the lack of income opportunities affects many people, and in particular there is a growing need for economic assistance.

But thanks to EpiscoCare's dedicated and hard working staff and fieldworkers, and the generous support from partners and friends, we continue our work to ensure comprehensive development to make changes and transform people's lives through our many activities taking place at the local community development centres.

April 2011

### Micro-loans as emergency assistance

Because of the current critical economic situation in Egypt, where many small factories and workshops have had to close and new investment and construction have stalled and foreign investors have withdrawn from the Egyptian market, a large number of people have lost their jobs. Through generous funding, the Diocese and EpiscoCare have been able to distribute food packages, as an emergency assistance, for families in need. In addition to providing food packages, EpiscoCare offers micro-loans and gives basic knowledge of marketing skills and financial management. This gives people the opportunity to implement small income generating projects to be able to support themselves and their families on a long term basis.

One of the people who has received a micro-loan is Goda Ahmed.

"My name is Goda Ahmed and I live in El Salam City. My brother is handicapped and I am responsible for him. Before the Egyptian revolution I was working as a day to day worker. It wasn't an easy life, but at least I was able to earn for a living. After 25 of January things have changed and I have not been able to find work as before. My friends advised me to go to EpiscoCare's local community centre in El Salam to ask for a loan to buy some goods and start a small street shop, because even though I am poor, I have the skill to be a good sales man".



"The centre helped me to do a feasibility study and gave me the loan. I started my project buying some tissue boxes, lighters and cigarette packs and am now working as a peddler. I would like to be self reliant and not burden anybody. My dream for the future is to rent a small store, but only after I have repaid my loan".

View Bishop Mouneer's special appeal and the weekly response reports at the Diocese webpage:  
<http://www.dioceseofegypt.org/english/specialappeal>



### Vocational training

As part of EpiscoCare's economy programme we provide vocational training in various fields. In April, Ain Shams Community Development Centre in cooperation with the Palace of Culture organization offered a special course for women in embroidery. Part of EpiscoCare's aim is to empower local women by teaching them various practical and creative skills, so that they can produce handcrafts to sell, in order to contribute to their family's income.



### "I am not alone" classes as a new activity



EpiscoCare have started a new class for children aged 6 to 13, who for various reasons are not enrolled in school.

This is a great opportunity for children, who otherwise would not have got an education. The classes support the children and teach them regular subjects such as mathematics, literacy etc. In addition the projects also builds awareness for the parents about the importance of education. The children are also offered social activities in order to increase their creativity and self esteem.

May 2011

### Awareness seminar

Today more than ever it is important to have an understanding of how the political system works.

One of the aims in EpiscoCare's Community Organization programme is to build knowledge and awareness on democracy and how everyone can participate and influence the development of the local community toward a positive direction. And we can proudly say that there is always a great attendance to these activities.

In May, Ain Shams Community Centre held a seminar on the understanding of democracy where more than 150 people attended.





### Adult Education graduation party



Illiteracy is a big problem in Egypt. Approximately 30 percent of the adult population have never learned how to read and write, the problem especially affects women. This statistics emphasises the importance of the adult literacy classes held as one of the regular activities in all of EpiscoCare's centres.

Education is the first step to combating unemployment and poverty. The literacy classes' aim to help poor and marginalized people and EpiscoCare always strives to encourage and support all the students to continue within the education system.

After finishing a course with a final exam the centers provide the graduates with an accredited diploma and arrange a celebration party for them and their families. In May Ain Shams centre celebrated the graduation of 9 students.

June 2011

### Empowering women



At EpiscoCare's local centers women are taught various practical and creative skills, as well as learning about the possibilities to earn an income and about financial management. In June-July, the Boulaq center arranged a three week vocational training course for women to learn to make accessories and jewelry. The course was conducted with assistance from two outside trainers from the Ministry of Culture, Madam Nahet and her assistance Mr. Ahmed, who taught the women to make beautiful things in beads and fabric art.

### Farwell to volunteers

EpiscoCare are continually blessed with people who come as volunteers to help and assist in our work and we are most grateful for that. In June we have had to say goodbye to three overseas volunteers, who have been associated EpiscoCare for a longer period. Stephanie van Straten who has been helping and assisting at EpiscoCare's social centre in Menouf, Charlotte Kirton who has taught English at EpiscoCare's language centre (ETC) in Maadi and Cæcilie Andersen who has been assisting at EpiscoCare's head office. EpiscoCare wants to give a big thanks and wish all three of them happiness and blessing in the future.



EpiscoCare always welcome volunteers to help in our work. If you want to know more about volunteering with us, please see the website for more information.



### Prayer Requests

Please pray for EpiscoCare's staff, fieldworkers and volunteers, that they may find encouragement and happiness in their work. Pray especially for those who have a difficult time and for those who are struggling with serious illness in their families.

Pray for the safety of the people in Egypt as they are going through a very difficult time. Pray for justice and provision for the poor and destitute, the ones who always suffer the most.

Pray for the situation in Egypt, for wisdom for Egypt's future political leaders, a peaceful transition of power and for the future of the country.

Pray for the entire Middle East as its countries are going through a significant period of unrest.



Thank you

### Contacts

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