



## Newsletter December 2010 to March 2011

### Dear Friends

Despite the instability in Egypt, EpiscoCare has succeeded in maintaining ongoing projects and the activity levels in the local community centres. In this newsletter we would like to highlight some of the activities and events for the period December 2010 to March 2011.

We apologise for the delay of our news letter, but due to the turbulent time Egypt has faced the last couple of months a lot of things has been slightly out of schedule.

### Food distribution

In post- revolution Egypt many people in our target communities has lost their jobs or their permanent income source because of recession and many are desperately seeking help from our local centres. The level of need is massive and because of that, the Anglican Diocese of Egypt and EpiscoCare has send out a special appeal to raise money for buying food packages to support the most affected families. We have received many funds from both organisations and private people and in the beginning of March we could start the handouts. On behalf of the people who have received help, we would like to express a deep gratitude. So far we have distributed food packages to 2.704 families and we will keep on helping the needy as long as we have funds.

You can read Bishop Mouneurs special appeal here: <http://www.dioceseofegypt.org/english/specialappeal>



Pictures from Boulaq Community Development Centre during handing out of food packages.



## December 2010

As part of EpiscoCare's health and environment programme we build people's awareness on how to raise the general health of their families. We have highlighted two events on this topic which took place in December.

### **Seminar on Female Genital Mutilation**

Boulaq, Ain Shams and El Salam community development centres held a joint seminar on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to raise awareness about this harmful tradition. The speakers at the seminar were representatives from El-Azhar and from Ministry of Social affairs. The centres had invited local leaders and key people to participate in the meeting, as they wish they can be role models in their communities in order to prevent people from performing FGM.



### **Seminar on family planning**

Ain Shams Community Development Centre held, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Solidarity, a seminar on family planning. The seminar was attended by 40 people, mainly women. They were educated on the use of birth control prevention, how to prevent the transmission of sexually infections. Although issues like these are regarded by many as taboo, everyone was responsive and actively participating. There were raised many relevant and interesting questions to the speaker, who were from Ministry of Social Solidarity.



### **Conference with World Council of Churches**

EpiscoCare recognize the importance of having good relationship with other NGOs and GOs to exchange experiences and knowledge.

The World Council of Churches invited us to participate in a two days workshop under the topic Learning Together – Building Capacity. The participants represented different churches and church organisations from many Middle Eastern countries and it was a very good opportunity to exchange experiences with people from outside of Egypt who are also working in the field of development and combating poverty.



Mrs. Mariam Ibrahim, Mr. Griges and Mrs. Mortensen participated as representatives from the Diocese/EpiscoCare



## January 2011

To facilitate a productive and structured work plan, EpiscoCare started the year 2011 by evaluating on our achievements and work in 2010 and draw up goals and made strategies for 2011.

### **EpiscoCare strategy 2011**

EpiscoCare's executive Director Mrs. Mariam Ibrahim met with all centre managers and programme coordinators to discuss and plan the events and strategies for EpiscoCare work in the year of 2011. It was a fruitful day where everyone had the opportunity to express opinions and expectations for the year. The day resulted in a new edition of EpiscoCare Strategy Plan referring to all our projects and programmes.

### **Interfaith dialog**

Through all of EpiscoCares work we practice what we call Live Interfaith Dialog, as we welcome people from all backgrounds to our centres. We find it very important to be role models and to show tolerance for everyone despite religious or social boundaries.

After the tragically bombing of a Church in Alexandria on New Year's Eve, EpiscoCare decided to organize a public meeting on the topic how to encourage a united Egypt despite different religions or cultural. The meeting took place on January 12<sup>th</sup> and was held in cooperation with Ministry of Culture. Both Muslim and Christian leaders were invited to emphasize the need for unity and to oppose any crises for our beloved Egypt. This great evening took place at El Salam Community Centre and was attended by 112 people.

## February 2011

EpiscoCare realize that having specialized, devoted and professional people in the staff improves the quality and the share of the work and makes it more effective. In February, in addition to ongoing projects, we focused a lot on training of staff.

### **Training of staff in several of our programmes**

We need our staff to be continually trained and updated on matters related to EpiscoCare's program and projects in order to assist our beneficiaries in the best possible way. Therefore we, during this month, held training seminars for staff members at EpiscoCare's main office.

It is extremely important that our staff members are capable of dealing with different kinds of situations in their daily work in the centres. To this end, we held a seminar on conflict resolution and conflict management.





## March 2011

This month EpiscoCare's work has been influenced by the Egyptian constitutional referendum. Our centres have done a great effort to help people in our target communities to obtain their identity papers and election cards before the election the 19th of March.

### Political awareness and the right to vote

EpiscoCares centres have held awareness seminars about the importance of political participation. Ain Sham Community development centre held seminars in building awareness to participate in the political development of the country and in the importance of voting and expressing opinions. Also 50 people were helped to obtain their election cards. El Salam community development centre assisted 60 of their beneficiaries in acquiring official ID-papers and 100 in obtaining election cards.

### Mother's day celebration

An important date this month was the 21th of March; Mother's Day! Many of EpiscoCares beneficiaries are women. They struggle to get food on the table and to secure a good future for their children. As underprivileged, it might be difficult to have the energy for a demanding family life and many poor women feel inadequate. Mother's Day is a very important celebration for EpiscoCare as one of our aims is to empower women and raise their self-esteem.

All EpiscoCares local centres celebrated the day and more than 600 women attending the parties. All the women were given encouragements for their great work as mothers and housewives, and they all received a presents to show how appreciated they are.

In Boulaq centre the day were celebrated with, first a small service for the women while the children were activated with drawing and playing.

The service was lead by Trix Surname, who is a volunteer at the centre. She held a very moving and encouraging speech about the relationship between a mother and her children and about the responsibility of being a parent. Father Bahig translated the speech from English to Arabic. After the service there were a celebration and everyone received treats. For the children there were candy and for the ladies there were presents. Some of the ladies who have shown good examples in helping and supporting others or who have been role models in parenting were called to the stage and given special awards.





### **Prayer Requests**

Please pray for all staff members, volunteers and people associated in EpiscoCare's projects; may they each fill the role assigned to them and may they find strength and encouragement in their work to the benefit of others.

Pray for God's leading during this critical transitional period in the life of Egypt. Pray for the people who have been affected by the situation and for those in need, may they find peace and comfort.

Pray for year 2011, may the presence of EpiscoCare be a light in the darkness for many people.

Pray that all Egyptians, men and women, rich and poor, Muslims and Christians may unite in the spirit of God's grace.

### **Contacts**

For more information about EpiscoCare and our work please contact:

Mrs. Mariam Ibrahim/Executive Director, EpiscoCare

[episcocare@gmail.com](mailto:episcocare@gmail.com)

tel. +20 (2) 2738 0821/3.

Webpage: [www.episcocare.org](http://www.episcocare.org)