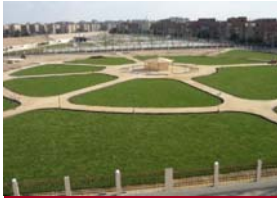


# **Chapter 9**

## **Environmental Development of Informal Settlements**





## Environmental Development of Informal Settlements

### Introduction

Informal settlements in Egypt occupy some 30% of residential areas, with about 1105 populated by more than 16m citizens. Due to the absence of land use maps in these settlements, utilities and services have severely dropped. Furthermore, informal activities—commercial and industrial, especially SMEs and crafts—have been concentrated in them. The residents of such settlements suffer from lack of public awareness, the environment in particular. Unfortunately, all circumstances have allied against them, causing environmental pressures due to high concentrations of pollutants resulting from burning wastes and gaseous and liquid industrial emissions. All of these have negatively and directly impacted available natural wealth resources according to the circumstances and properties of such settlements, which have eventually lead to environmental deterioration.

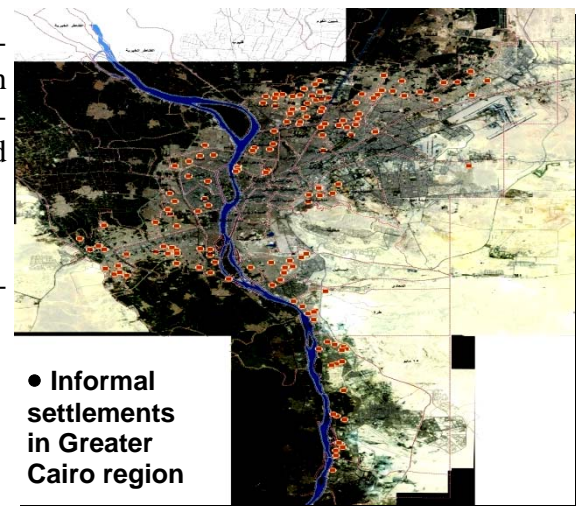
In Greater Cairo region, some 5m citizens reside in more than 152 informal settlements, of which 68 are in Cairo and populated by some 2.3m citizens, 36 in Giza populated by some 1.4m, and 48 in Qalyubia populated by some 1.3m. All these data indicate that in Cairo only there are about 44.7% of the informal settlements, resided by around 46% of the total informal Slums population in Greater Cairo.

### Upgrading Informal settlements

The purpose of environmental development and upgrading informal settlements is achieved through participatory action, in a framework of decentralization, and by implementing priority programs and measures such as:

- Providing lacking services and utilities;
- Controlling and reducing environmental pressures and loads; and
- Treating negative development impacts and lack of services.

Upgrading informal settlements is the cornerstone for sustainable development and social justice in Egypt. A great concern has been paid by the State to this matter:



**Map (9.1) Informal settlements in Greater Cairo Region**

## Environmental Development of Informal Settlements



1. Developing informal settlements has been on the President's electoral platform;
2. A National Sustainable Development Committee has been formed, headed by the Minister of Environment, prioritizing the improvement of the environmental conditions in environmentally-deteriorated areas, especially informal settlements ;
3. The State's adoption of a participatory developmental policy; and
4. Some leading projects adopt developing informal settlements by participating in planning and implementation.

However, there are some challenges lying ahead, such as increased rise in population paralleled with degrading service levels and inefficient State's resources and potentials vis-à-vis all informal Slums problems.

Upgrading and developing informal settlements in a framework of participation and treating priority issues help attain many direct and indirect goals: providing a better environment for living and working, creating more job opportunities coupled by raising living standards, increasing environmental awareness and ameliorating public health, as well as maximizing social participation in planning and implementation to achieve decentralized environmental management in a manner that would ensure environmental system sustainability.

### MSEA Slums Upgrading Contributions in Collaboration with Integrated Care Society

MSEA implements several programs for environmentally upgrading and developing Maassara and Ezbet el-Walda under integrated Slums upgrading programs sponsored by the First Lady Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak.

**Activities implemented include:**

#### 1. Establishing Gardens

A 7-feddan garden was established in Ezbet el-Walda and provided with different activities for citizens, such as green areas, children playgrounds, theater, cafeteria, and other required services. Another 4-feddan garden was established in Maassara on the Autostrad road, provided with the same previous activities in addition to a 300-m environmental awareness and women's activity development center. It was provided with furniture and equipment for achieving the purpose of the center, as shown in Fig. (9.1) and (9.2).



Fig. (9.1) Ezbet el-Walda Garden



Fig. (9.2) Maassara Garden



## Environmental Development of Informal Settlements

### 2. Tree-planting

Some 760 trees were planted in Phase I, other some 500 in al-Maassara, as well as more than 1000 m<sup>2</sup> of green surfaces in Phase II (Fig. (9.3)).



**Fig. (9.3) Ezbet el-Walda gardening and tree-planting**

### 3. Beautifying House Façads (painting):

948 houses were painted, a total surface area of 91,000 m, for more than 30,000 citizens in 4217 residential units, as shown in Fig, (9.4)



**Fig. (9.4) Painting façads**

### 4. Lifting Solid Wastes (historical accumulations)

More than 1 million m<sup>3</sup> of solid wastes from Maassara and some 200,000 m<sup>3</sup> from Ezbet el-Walda, as shown in Fig. (9.5).



**Fig. (9.5) Lifting solid wastes**

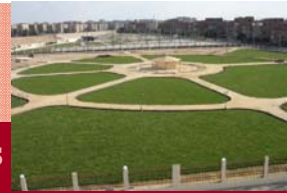
### 5. Road Pavement

Roads were paved with cement dust. Surfaces of a total 18,500 surface meters were paved in Maassara and Ezbet el-Walda in participation with local youths trained and qualified for the project, as shown in Fig. (9.6).



**Fig. (9.6) Road pavement**

## Environmental Development of Informal Settlements



### 6. Establishing Environmental Awareness Centers

Environmental Awareness Centers have been established in Ezbet el-Walda and Maassara. They have different divisions such as the Green Corner for environmental awareness, as well as NGOs, Craft Activities using environmental materials, Women's Awareness and Capacity Building, in addition to training and conference rooms, as shown in Fig. (9.7)



Fig. (9.7) Environmental Awareness Center

### 7. Operating Environmental Awareness Centers

As per the Protocol signed by MSEA and ICS to implement various activities such as women's awareness, capacity building and illiteracy, the Center has been run by an supervisory committee from Helwan District, ICS, MSEA representatives, in addition to some NGOs and local leaderships. Beneficiaries from this center amounted to some 2300 persons. 14 seminars, 9 workshops and 10 training courses were conducted in different areas (sound nutrition and food preservation, women's role in development and the environment, environmental education, air pollution and its impact on the environment, orientation to natural protectorates, along environmental competitions, developing handicrafts and computer skills), as shown in Figs. (9.8) and (9.9).



Fig. (9.8) Workshops



Fig. (9.9) Seminars and training courses

## Future Trends for Slums Environmental Development

MSEA looks forward to implementing more activities in other informal settlements in light of the lessons learnt and successes in Maassara and Ezbet el-Walda, and due to the importance of such matter, being enlisted on President Mubarak's electoral platform. In this respect, a Slum Environmental Development Unit was created in EEAA, mainly focusing on replicating and disseminating activities in Maassara and Ezbet el-Walda in all other informal settlements. To this end, specific tasks have been identified as a framework for the Unit:

1. Organizing environmental development programs and projects in informal settlements, identifying time-tables for implementation and priorities.
2. Including informal Slums development in MSEA policies, programs and plans according to the financial and technical human resources available for such cause.
3. Creating environmental committees in developed settlements in coordination with EEAA RBOs and EMUs, with representatives from all sectors to be in charge of the sustainability of measures taken and implementing agreed plans.



## Environmental Development of Informal Settlements

4. Disseminating participatory action methodologies and approaches among all civil society, business sector and private institution sectors interested in social and public action, as well as NGOs and the public sector, besides the contributions from international donor agencies for implementing environmental projects in informal settlements for their residents.
5. Spreading successful experiences in informal Slums environmental development at the national, regional and international levels.

**To ensure the achievement of the goals desired, a group of experts have been selected for managing and implementing the Unit's activities.**