
Final External Evaluation

AECID 2021/PRYC/722 Project

**“Vulnerable Women from 5 Governorates of Upper Egypt
Economically and Socially Empowered Assume Leadership Positions
in Public Spaces.”**

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FINAL REPORT

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PRELUDE

This report presents a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the project's Final Evaluation (FE), titled "Vulnerable Women from Five Governorates of Upper Egypt: Economically and Socially Empowered to Assume Leadership Positions in Public Spaces." The initiative is a strategic partnership between the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), Fundación Promoción Social (FPS), Upper Egypt for Education and Development (AUEED), and Fundación Mainel. The evaluation critically examines the project's actual outcomes, with an Executive Summary providing a brief overview of the key findings and recommendations.

The evaluation was conducted by the Final Evaluation Team (FET), a group of experienced professionals with a diverse range of expertise. The FET introduced additional criteria, including Innovation, Gender, and Partnership, to enrich the evaluation framework outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR). By incorporating these additional perspectives, the evaluation aimed to offer a deeper understanding of the project's overall performance, innovative approaches, gender inclusivity, knowledge generation, and the strength of its collaborative efforts.

The comprehensive analysis of the project's achievements, guided by the project's general objective, specific objective, and three distinct results, ensures a thorough understanding of the project's performance. The report's authors have placed significant emphasis on evaluating the extent to which these objectives and results were realized, providing a comprehensive and detailed assessment. This involved meticulously examining the project's outcomes, identifying key findings, and formulating actionable recommendations. The report also highlights the lessons learned throughout the project's lifecycle, offering valuable insights for future initiatives. The comprehensive analysis reassures the stakeholders about the thoroughness of the evaluation, facilitating informed decision-making and strategic planning. In addition, **ten annexes** are attached for more information and illustrations, namely:

- [Annex \(1\):](#) Final Evaluation Matrix
- [Annex \(2\):](#) Interviewees Lists
- [Annex \(3\):](#) Final Evaluation Data Collection Tools
- [Annex \(4\):](#) Final Evaluation Team Members
- [Annex \(5\):](#) Final Evaluation Terms of Reference
- [Annex \(6\):](#) Primary Results PowerPoint Presentation
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The FET extends its heartfelt gratitude to all the stakeholders whose cooperation and support made this evaluation possible. We sincerely thank Mr. Giacomo Crescenzi, the Head of Mission in Egypt for Fundación Promoción Social, for his unwavering support and provision of critical secondary resources, materials, and information. His responsiveness to all communications was invaluable. We also sincerely thank Mr. Ramy Yousef Sadek, AUEED Project Manager, for his understanding and support throughout the FE process, meticulous data collection, and fieldwork organization. Additionally, we are grateful to Ms. Dina Raouf, AUEED Deputy Director, Ms. Hanaa Fakher, AUEED Programs Manager, and Mr. Emad Gerges, AUEED M&E General Coordinator, for their valuable input and insights, which greatly enriched the final external evaluation process. Your contributions have been instrumental in the success of this evaluation, and we sincerely appreciate your efforts.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AECID	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (<i>Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation</i>)
AUEED	Association of Upper Egypt for Education and Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DO	Direct Observation
DR	Desk Review
EGP	Egyptian Pound
FEE	Final External Evaluation
FET	Final Evaluation Team
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPS	Fundación Promoción Social (<i>Social Promotion Foundation</i>)
IDI	In-Depth Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
NCCM	National Council for Childhood and Motherhood
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ODS	Objetivos De Desarrollo Sostenible (<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>)
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OTC	Oficinas Técnicas de Cooperación (<i>Technical Cooperation Office</i>)
PDF	Portable Document Format
RBM	Results-Based Management
RH	Right Holders
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TOC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Background and Objectives

'Vulnerable Women from Five Governorates of Upper Egypt: Economically and Socially Empowered to Assume Leadership Positions in Public Spaces' project is an ambitious initiative executed by a strategic partnership between AECID, FPS, AUEED, and Fundación Mainel. The project's overarching goal was to facilitate the economic and social empowerment of vulnerable women across Upper Egypt, equipping them with the necessary skills, resources, and leadership capabilities to significantly enhance their socioeconomic status and engage actively in public life.

The project's theory of change was premised on mitigating economic vulnerability among marginalized groups by providing them with safe environments, essential tools, targeted training, and access to microcredit. These interventions were designed to enable the participants to secure sustainable livelihoods through decent work, thereby fostering long-term economic independence and social inclusion. The project's general objective was to catalyze vulnerable women's economic and social empowerment in Upper Egypt. Specifically, the project aimed to enhance professional skills, increase income generation opportunities through business initiatives, and cultivate leadership qualities among the most promising beneficiaries.

Methodology

The FET adopted a comprehensive and methodologically rigorous approach to evaluate the project's outcomes. The evaluation framework integrated qualitative and quantitative research methods, encompassing fieldwork in Menya, Assiut, Sohag, and Luxor governorates. The assessment process included a total of 13 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 127 individuals from diverse backgrounds, including project beneficiaries and stakeholders, 16 In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), and a meticulous review of secondary data sources.

The evaluation also critically examined the project's design, implementation, and results against its stated objectives. Quantitative data was analyzed statistically to measure the extent of outcome achievement, while qualitative data was subjected to thematic analysis to capture nuanced insights into stakeholder experiences and project impact of the project regarding the eight evaluation criteria: **Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability**. The FET added the criteria of **Innovation, Gender, and Partnership**. The FET ensured that all evaluation activities were conducted by strict ethical standards, prioritizing all respondents' dignity, confidentiality, and safety.

Key Findings

The project's evaluation was based on eight comprehensive criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability. The FET also included Innovation, Partnership, and Gender to provide a detailed understanding of the project's performance and impact.

- **Relevance and Coherence:** The project was exceptionally relevant, effectively addressing the specific needs of vulnerable women in Upper Egypt. It was strategically aligned with the priorities of the implementing partners, national development policies, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This alignment ensured that the project's interventions were timely and strategically integrated with ongoing efforts to promote gender equality and economic empowerment.

- **Effectiveness:** The project surpassed its initial targets, demonstrating high levels of effectiveness. A total of 486 women and girls received sewing and fashion design training, significantly exceeding the original goal of 110 participants. Moreover, the project successfully supported the establishment of 82 startups, 99% of which were led by women. These achievements underscore the project's success in fostering sustainable economic opportunities and enhancing the socioeconomic status of its beneficiaries, instilling optimism about its long-term impact.
- **Efficiency and Resource Utilization:** The project was implemented with commendable efficiency, achieving its objectives within the allocated budget. Despite facing challenges such as staff turnover, the project managed its financial and human resources effectively. Budget adjustments were made judiciously in response to fluctuations in the currency exchange rate, ensuring that the project's financial integrity was maintained and instilling confidence in its financial management.
- **Impact:** The project profoundly and positively impacted the beneficiaries. It significantly boosted their self-confidence, as they could contribute to their families income and take on leadership roles in their communities. The economic independence gained through the project's interventions was evident in the improved living conditions of the beneficiaries and their ability to support their families. The social status of the beneficiaries also saw a marked improvement, as they were now seen as successful entrepreneurs and community leaders. The skills and knowledge imparted through the training programs enabled women to improve their living conditions significantly, support their families, and contribute to their communities. Additionally, the quality of products developed by young entrepreneurs was markedly improved, facilitating better market access and increased revenue generation.
- **Sustainability:** The project's focus on building robust community structures, such as production groups and networks of female entrepreneurs, bolstered the sustainability of its outcomes. However, challenges remain in formalizing these groups and securing long-term financial sustainability. The project's approach to capacity building was particularly noteworthy, as it ensured that the skills and knowledge imparted to beneficiaries would continue to benefit them beyond the project's lifecycle.
- **Innovation:** The project's innovative approaches included establishing workshops, recycling initiatives, and digital marketing strategies. These innovations demonstrated the project's ability to drive meaningful change and set a precedent for future initiatives. The project also piloted activities within parallel schools, providing technical skills to students and involving their family members, thus promoting intergenerational learning and collaboration.
- **Gender:** The project effectively challenged traditional norms through gender-sensitive approaches, empowering women and promoting gender equality. These approaches led to increased incomes, reduced economic burdens, and improved social status for the beneficiaries. The project's success in this area underscores its significant impact on social transformation and should inspire further initiatives in this direction.
- **Partnership and Collaboration:** Strategic and effective partnerships significantly enhanced the project's success. Collaborations with the Design and Fashion Center and NCW provided technical and social support, improving product quality and addressing critical social issues. Networking with MOSS enabled participation in ministry exhibitions, with plans for future activation. The harmonized partnership between FPS and AUEED, marked by flexibility and professionalism, profoundly impacted beneficiaries—supportive responses from partners, especially AECID,

allowed for efficient project management. AUEED's experience and capacity in the target governorates ensured smooth implementation and strong relationships with beneficiaries.

Key Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Government Collaboration:** It is recommended that further enhancements be made to collaboration and coordination with governmental entities to align the project's activities with national development strategies and ensure a more integrated approach to achieving its objectives.
2. **Formalize Entrepreneurial Networks:** The registration of the Egypt Female Entrepreneurs initiative should be expedited to create a formal platform for experience exchange, best practice sharing, and collective advocacy.
3. **Develop Community Incubation Centers:** Establish community centers that serve as incubation hubs for entrepreneurs and startups, particularly women-led. These centers should offer comprehensive support services, including mentorship, training, and access to financial and non-financial resources.
4. **Expand Service Coverage:** Consider extending the reach of financial and non-financial services to cover additional districts within the targeted governorates. This expansion will allow more women to benefit from the project's resources, thereby amplifying its impact.
5. **Enhance Monitoring and Evaluation:** Appoint a dedicated M&E officer to strengthen the project's monitoring and evaluation framework. This role should focus on enhancing data collection, analysis, and reporting processes to ensure that the project's outcomes are accurately measured and documented.
6. **Develop a Strategic Marketing Plan:** Implement a comprehensive marketing and communication strategy to enhance the visibility of the project's activities and outcomes. This strategy should leverage various communication channels to increase stakeholder engagement and promote the project's success.
7. **Establish Sustainable Community Spaces:** Create sustainable community spaces that provide ongoing support activities in outreached communities. These spaces should offer continuous training, mentoring, and networking opportunities to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project's impact.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the project successfully achieved its objectives, delivering significant positive outcomes for the targeted women and communities in Upper Egypt. The evaluation highlights the critical importance of continued support and the scaling up of similar initiatives to ensure the gains are sustained and expanded. Implementing the recommendations in this report will enhance the project's long-term impact and ensure the continued empowerment of vulnerable women in the region.

1. BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Women's economic and social empowerment is widely recognized as having the most transformative impact on their lives. It enables women to make autonomous choices, participate in strategic family decisions, and significantly enhance their negotiation power within their families and communities. Empowerment provides women with the freedom to leave abusive relationships and pursue healthier alternatives. Furthermore, women's financial contributions to family income enhance their involvement in decision-making processes related to childbearing and childcare, thereby elevating their status within the family and society.

Participation in the labor market allows women to influence the well-being of their families directly. Working women often allocate substantial portions of their income towards their children's education, health, and overall livelihood improvements. This financial support not only fosters the development and stability of the family but also reinforces the social standing of women. As a result, families benefit from the additional income provided by women's work, achieving greater financial stability. Socially empowered women can better care for their families and engage more actively in strategic family decisions, leading to improved outcomes for the entire household.

1.2 PROJECT'S BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Project's Theory of Change

The project's theory of change relies on reducing the economic vulnerability of impoverished groups, providing them with safe spaces, tools, training, and credit that allow them to generate resources through decent work.

1.2.2 Project Objectives

General Objective:

“Promoted the economic and social empowerment of vulnerable women in Upper Egypt.”

Specific Objective:

“Vulnerable women from 5 governorates trained and with resources to access public life.”

1.2.3 Project Expected Results, Indicators, Target Groups, and Locations

Project Results:

The project has three main results:

- Result 1: “Installed professional skills that improve the socioeconomic opportunities of women.”*
- Result 2: “RHs increase their revenue generation opportunities with business initiatives.”*
- Result 3: “Young entrepreneurs empowered for leadership create business and social promotion networks.”*

Project Indicators

Project Specific Indicators:

- 1) 60 new sustainable micro-enterprises in Upper Egypt, in all sectors.
- 2) 80% of new microenterprises are run by women.
- 3) 1 production group linked to tailoring in Menya.
- 4) 1 sustainable network of women entrepreneurs in Sohag, Luxor, Qena, and Assiut.

Indicators of Result 1:

- 90% of the 110 RHs acquire/improve their skills to produce with good quality.
- 18% of 110 RHs who participate in the training request training in entrepreneurship.
- 18% of RHs access a job opportunity by collaborating with local tailoring workshops.

Indicators of Result 2:

- 60 young people (75% women) improve their business management skills at the end of their training.
- 40 young people (75% women) access microcredit.
- 30 young people (75% women) report a 15% increase in income from their business at the end of the Project.

Indicators of Result 3:

- 400 girls (70%) and boys increase their awareness of gender rights.
- Eight young entrepreneurs apply to train as leaders and collaborate with the community.
- 1 semi-formal network of female entrepreneurs for social participation.

Project Locations and Target Groups

Location: Menya, Assiut, Sohag, Qena, and Luxor governorates.

Target Group: Primary focus on women and youth, a total of 534 Rights Holders (RHs) as follows:

- a. 30 vulnerable rural women from Menya: Beni Ebeid, Abu Korkas, and Bayadeya villages, aged 19 to 50, from families of 4-6 people, with monthly family income 1200-2000 L.E.
 - i. Training in tailoring and entrepreneurship
 - ii. Help with internships at a local tailoring workshop.
- b. 80 adolescents and young people from 13 to 21 years, from those attending AUEED non-formal (parallel) schools in Menya and Assiut.
 - i. Professional training in tailoring and non-financial support to start a business project or access internships in a workshop in their area.
- c. 40 new young entrepreneurs (75% women) between 19 and 50 from Assiut, Sohag, Qena, and Luxor, with monthly family incomes between 2000 and 5000 L.E.
 - i. Financial and non-financial support to start and/or scale a business project.
- d. 400 girls and boys (268 girls and boys from parallel schools + 132 girls and boys from formal schools) from Menya and Assiut governorates.
 - i. Awareness of gender rights and civic education from women entrepreneurs who will participate as speakers and role models.
- e. 8 talented and socially committed female entrepreneurs receive support to scale their businesses and become community leaders and role models for young people and teenagers.

1.2.4 Project’s Key Partners

Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)

AECID was created to promote the whole exercise of development, conceived as a fundamental human right, with the fight against poverty being part of building this right. To do this, it follows the guidelines of the *“Plan Director (PD) de la Cooperación Española (CE) 2018-2021”*. The plan pays attention to the crosscutting elements of Spanish Cooperation: the approach based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, the gender perspective, environmental quality, and respect for cultural diversity, in line with the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015 and which will govern global development plans for the next 15 years. SDGs include ending poverty in the world, eradicating hunger and achieving food security, guaranteeing a healthy life and quality education, achieving gender equality, ensuring access to water and energy, promoting sustained economic growth, taking urgent action against climate change, promoting peace, and facilitating access to justice.

The AECID is attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union, and Cooperation through the Secretary of State for International Cooperation, Ibero-America, and the Caribbean. The Law 23/1998, of July 7, on International Cooperation for Development, contemplates the Agency as the executive body of Spanish Cooperation and frames its object within its priorities: the promotion of development and balance in international relations, the prevention and care of emergencies, the promotion of democracy and the promotion of relations with partner countries. AECID has instruments such as technical cooperation, economic and financial cooperation, humanitarian aid, education for development, and social awareness to implement and achieve its mandate. The AECID and its partners work in more than 30 countries through its Technical Cooperation Offices, Cultural Centers, and Training Centers network.

Fundación Promoción Social (FPS)

FPS is a private, non-profit institution that has been working since 1987 to promote human, social, and economic development by people’s dignity. It establishes its goals by the diversity of the countries it works in and acknowledges local organizations’ priorities and proposals, consistently placing the individual at the core of its activities. The Founding Board of Trustees included people with experience in education and business, all sharing the same goal of working for disadvantaged people in Spain and other countries.

FPS’s **mission** is to guarantee that all people live according to human dignity and enable people to take over their lives and become the producers of their development. FPS’s **vision** is to build a solidarity-based culture centered on the individual and the need to achieve a more dignified life and work, liberty, and social participation for all. FPS aims to enhance everyone’s unique abilities; it pursues an agile, efficient way of working, paying particular attention to the civil sector to achieve proper development. The **values** that support the FPS’s mission are:

- Contribute to reducing poverty and inequalities by promoting human, economic, social, sustainable, and well-balanced development.
- Promote education and professional training as the base for long-lasting development as a producer of wealth and social engagement.
- Make possible the promotion of women in all areas and activities to increase their social participation and incentivize their access to decision-making.
- Support minorities to guarantee equal access to essential goods and services, according to justice and equality, and promote cultural dialogue peacebuilding.

- Promote and diffuse culture as a qualified expression of individuals and its historical hazards to contribute to cultural dialogue and agreement between social groups.
- Raise a more profound social and charitable awareness, especially among the young.

Association of Upper Egypt for Education and Development (AUEED)

AUEED is an Egyptian NGO established in 1940 and re-registered with MoSS under No. 576 in 2009. AUEED has been involved in the development of Upper Egypt for 80 years. It is considered one of the first NGOs to start working in Egypt. AUEED's mission is to empower local communities, especially the poor in Upper Egypt, through quality education and development programs. AUEED works for a society that pursues social responsibility by promoting teamwork, volunteering, justice, and partnership with society. It strives to preserve authenticity and national identity throughout 80 years of human and community development in Upper Egypt. AUEED's Microfinance Program has been active since 2001. It has a vision that recognizes that the poor - especially the economically active - have the right to receive continuous quality financial and non-financial services at a reasonable cost, which contributes to empowering community members and improving their income, alleviating poverty, and maintaining the financial stability and economic security of low-income families in Upper Egypt.

Fundación Mainel

Fundación Mainel has been working on culture, education, and the development of villages for 25 years in two fields: **Solidarity**, in which it provides education, training, and opportunities so that all people can convert themselves into protagonists of their development and grow an entrepreneurial attitude; and **Culture**, in which it organizes activities that raise awareness and promote a profound reflection of the human spirit. Fundación Mainel's vision is *“A better world in which the meaning of life and human dignity are **more important than material interests.**”* while its values are:

- Love and respect for all; remember that this means more than simple economic aid.
- Open opportunities for all without discrimination, inspired by Christian humanism.
- Open dialogue for all, trying to unite people from different cultures, ethnicities, and religions—determination to provide forums for the peaceful exchange of opinions and respecting different views.
- A positive outlook, promoting progress and spreading optimism in a chaotic & often unfair world.
- Quality, professionalism, enthusiasm, transparency, and accountability to achieve our goals.
- Teamwork, adopting schemes with higher levels of participation each time, promoting the initiative of our employees, local partners, and project beneficiaries.
- Responsibility in resource management, based on the sustainability of our actions.

1.3 FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the Final Evaluation (FE) is to assess the project's performance and achievements, as well as its intended general and specific objectives and expected outcomes concerning project design and execution. The FE Team evaluated various aspects of the project, including the quality, consistency, applicability, suitability, and flexibility of its implementation and adaptation to the local context. This assessment scrutinized how effectively the project utilized appropriate instruments, coordination, and harmonization to meet the target group's needs.

The scope of the FE encompassed a comprehensive review of the project's design, implementation, management, and results. Each component was meticulously evaluated to ensure they met the highest standards of quality and relevance and were well-adapted to the specific local conditions. This thorough evaluation ensures accountability and transparency, providing stakeholders with a clear and detailed understanding of the project's overall performance and impact.

2. FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The FEE methodology was guided by the ToR ([Annex 5](#)), which was very clear and included the evaluation criteria and questions. The FET established strict ethical procedures to ensure the respondents' dignity, confidentiality, privacy, and safety during data collection sessions.

2.1 APPROACH

The FET ([Annex 4](#)) employed a robust methodology integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques to conduct a comprehensive summative assessment. With a primary focus on appraising the project's performance against its intended objectives and its designed execution process, the FET meticulously examined a range of indicators within the project's implementation plan. Quantitative data measuring the project's outputs and outcomes was obtained solely from secondary resources, providing a numerical basis for evaluating success rates and overall achievements. ([Annex 8](#)). Concurrently, qualitative techniques, such as IDIs and FGDs, delved into the nuanced aspects of the project, capturing the diverse perspectives of key stakeholders, including vulnerable rural women, adolescents, young people, new women entrepreneurs, and schoolchildren in the targeted governorates of Upper Egypt.

The evaluation also scrutinized the project's impact on the beneficiaries, addressing their challenges. It explored the project's effectiveness in supporting rural women, adolescents, and young people and nurturing new talent among women entrepreneurs. Additionally, it examined the project's influence on the educational experiences of young schoolgirls and boys in both formal and parallel school settings. The dual application of qualitative and quantitative methods allowed for a thorough understanding of numerical achievements and provided rich insights into the qualitative dimensions of the project's success and areas that required attention. This comprehensive approach ensured a well-rounded evaluation, facilitating informed decision-making for future project iterations and improvements.

2.2 SCOPE

The FEE was conducted to comprehensively evaluate the project's design, implementation, and impact. The scope of the FEE was expansive, encompassing various critical dimensions of the project's design, implementation, management, and results. A holistic assessment was conducted to evaluate the quality, consistency, applicability, suitability, and flexibility of the project's implementation, gauging its adaptability to the local context. The evaluation delved into how the project utilized appropriate instruments, internal coordination, and harmonization to address the target group's needs and geographical areas. The scope of the comprehensive evaluation aimed to achieve several key objectives. This involved assessing the project's relevance to identified problems and unmet needs, scrutinizing the alignment between expected results and the achievement of objectives, and evaluating the contribution of activities in optimizing available resources. Additionally, the FEE analyzed and identified excellent practices highlighted challenges and unintended outcomes, and discerned the social and economic impact of the project. A comparative analysis against baseline indicators from needs assessments was conducted, assessing and highlighting challenges and unintended outcomes and the enabling environment in the five targeted governorates. Learning from the project's implementation was distilled to inform future interventions, documenting bottlenecks, strengths, and weaknesses of the project's management unit and committee. The FEE also scrutinized the responsiveness and flexibility of the project management to current and emerging national development needs within the project framework. Stakeholders'

participation was evaluated to gain insights into the project's viability, and programmatic lessons learned were drawn to enhance future interventions.

2.3 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The FET conducted fieldwork in Menya, Assiut, Sohag, and Luxor governorates for the main purpose of FEE. The evaluation team meticulously designed a set of qualitative and quantitative questions aligned with the five evaluation criteria outlined in the ToR and three additional criteria incorporated by the team ([Annex 1](#)). These questions were strategically crafted to guide the FGDs and the IDIs and ensure a comprehensive project assessment. The questions were tailored to evaluate the project's relevance to identified problems and unmet needs, assess the consistency between expected results and the achievement of objectives, analyze the contribution of activities and optimization of available resources, identify good practices, and highlight challenges, unintended outcomes, and the social and economic impact of the project. The team also developed questions to compare achieved qualitative and quantitative indicators with baseline data from needs assessments and assess the level at which the project created an enabling environment for the target group of the five governorates. Additionally, the team's three additional criteria guided questions related to distilling lessons learned from the project implementation, documenting bottlenecks, strengths, and weaknesses of the project's management unit and committee, and assessing the responsiveness and flexibility of the project management to current and emerging national development needs within the project framework. This comprehensive set of questions aimed to capture nuanced insights and data, facilitating a thorough evaluation of the project's performance and impact.

2.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

2.4.1 Data Collection

The FET employed a meticulous and comprehensive data collection approach, utilizing FGDs, IDIs, secondary resource reviews, and direct observation. A total of **13** FGDs were conducted, engaging **127** individuals from diverse backgrounds, including project beneficiaries and stakeholders¹. These group discussions facilitated gathering qualitative insights, capturing the varied perspectives and experiences related to the project's achievements and impact. Furthermore, **16** IDIs were conducted, either in-person (**14**) or virtual (**2**), with key stakeholders, donors, and beneficiaries, including **10** beneficiaries from the Menya, Sohag, and Luxor governorates, **5** AUEED management members, and the expat manager of the project in support of AUEED operations representing donors² ([Annex 2](#)). This comprehensive process allowed in-depth exploration of individual viewpoints and experiences and ensured a thorough understanding of the project's impact. The IDIs provided a platform for a more personalized understanding of the project's influence on different stakeholder groups. In addition to these direct engagement methods, the team thoroughly reviewed secondary resources, such as project reports and documents, to complement the primary data collected. Direct observation was also employed to assess the project's on-the-ground, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the contextual nuances.

¹ The moderator, respecting the autonomy of the participants, explained the aim of the FGD and that the information gathered would be confidential and used only for evaluation purposes. Before each FGD started, verbal consent was obtained, giving the participants the control to decide their involvement.

² As the IDI was planned in advance, agreeing to participate in the interview indicated consent. In the field-based IDIs with the beneficiaries, the interviewer explained the purpose of the IDI to each participant, ensuring they understood and obtained their verbal consent before proceeding.

The FET took stringent measures to protect the collected data from tampering, loss, theft, or physical damage. These measures included limiting access to the data and keeping any data stored on paper in a secure location. After being input electronically, data was only shared with evaluation team members who analyzed all the collected data. The FET ensures that no collected data will be published, shared, or used for purposes other than the evaluation, thereby maintaining the confidentiality and integrity of the evaluation process.

Table (1): Focus Group Discussions Participants

No	FGD Type	Place	Date	Numbers		
				F	M	Total
1	AUEED Senior Project Team	Cairo		1	3	4
2	Women and Girls trained in tailoring	Abu Korkas - Menya	2 June	12		12
3	Women and Girls trained in tailoring	Beni Ebeid - Menya	2 June	16		16
4	Women and Girls trained in tailoring	EL-Bayadya - Menya	3 June	11		11
5	Parallel School Students	EL-Bayadya - Menya	3 June	9		9
6	Parallel School Students	Assiut	3 June	11		11
7	Parallel School Students' Mothers	Assiut	3 June	10		10
8	New Young Entrepreneurs	Sohag	4 June	9		9
9	Girls & Boys from Parallel and Formal Schools	Kom Gahrib School - Sohag	5 June	22		22
10	Girls & Boys from Parallel and Formal Schools	Sahel Tahta School - Sohag	5 June	12		12
11	New Young Entrepreneurs	Luxor	6 June	7		7
12	Field Project Team	Luxor	6 June	2	2	4
TOTAL				122	5	127

Table (2): In-Depth Interviews Participants

No	Name	Occupation	Mode	Date	F	M
1	Terraza Ibrahim	Beneficiary – Menya Governorate.	In-person	2 June 2024	✓	
2	Remonda Sliman	Beneficiary – Menya Governorate.	In-person	2 June 2024	✓	
3	Bothina Ibrahim	Beneficiary – Menya Governorate.	In-person	2 June 2024	✓	
4	Giacomo Crescenzi	FPS Head of Mission in Egypt	Virtual	3 June 2024		✓
5	Haidy Feleep	Project Member	In-person	4 June 2024	✓	
6	Gina George	Beneficiary – Sohag Governorate	In-person	4 June 2024	✓	
7	Aya Hegazi Ali	Beneficiary – Sohag Governorate	In-person	4 June 2024	✓	
8	Samah Sawiris	Beneficiary – Luxor Governorate	In-person	6 June 2024	✓	
9	Zeinab Ali	Beneficiary – Luxor Governorate	In-person	6 June 2024	✓	
10	Asmaa Khamis	Beneficiary – Sohag Governorate	In-person	4 June 2024	✓	
11	Nabilah Ahme	Beneficiary – Sohag Governorate	In-person	4 June 2024	✓	
12	Samah Moustafa	Beneficiary – Luxor Governorate	In-person	6 June 2024	✓	
13	Ramy Yousef	Project Manager - AUEED	In-person	1 July 2024		✓
14	Emad Gerges	M&E Manager - AUEED	In-person	1 July 2024		✓
15	Michael Beshara	Project Accountant - AUEED	In-person	1 July 2024		✓
16	Hanaa Fakher	Program Director - AUEED	Virtual	4 July 2024	✓	

2.4.2 Data Analysis

The collected data underwent rigorous analysis, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data from FGDs and IDIs were subjected to thematic analysis to identify key patterns, themes, and narratives. This qualitative approach allowed the team to explore the intricacies of stakeholder perspectives and experiences. Quantitative data derived from the questionnaire and other numerical sources were subjected to statistical analysis to generate measurable indicators and metrics. Triangulation, the process of comparing and contrasting data from multiple sources, was a key analytical method employed to enhance the robustness and reliability of the findings. The triangulation process facilitated a holistic understanding of the project's performance and impact by cross-referencing insights from different data collection tools. The combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses ensured a nuanced and comprehensive evaluation, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent synthesis and reporting phases of the evaluation process.

2.4 RISKS AND LIMITATIONS

While the fieldwork in the four governorates proceeded seamlessly, characterized by efficient organization and minimal disruptions, it is important to acknowledge the potential risks and limitations of the evaluation process. One notable risk is the reliability of self-reported data gathered during IDIs and FGDs. Respondents might provide socially desirable responses or inadvertently misrepresent their experiences. The FET employed thorough training and standardized data collection protocols to mitigate this.

Another limitation is the potential for selection bias. Project participants may be more or less likely to participate in interviews or focus groups, which could skew the data. The FET addressed this by ensuring diverse representation and selecting participants from various demographics within the targeted governorates.

Additionally, external factors such as unexpected events or changes in the local context could impact the validity of the evaluation findings. Despite these considerations, the FET implemented rigorous quality control measures and remained adaptive to evolving circumstances to minimize potential biases. This comprehensive approach aimed to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the evaluation, providing stakeholders with reliable insights into the project's performance.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

This involved a comprehensive assessment of the project's relevance, coherence, and strategic alignment based on a range of key sub-criteria, including but not limited to the following factors:

- (i) Effectiveness in Identifying and Addressing Needs: The project's success in pinpointing and addressing the specific needs and priorities of the target communities.
- (ii) Strategic Alignment with Partner Organizations: The extent to which the interventions align with the strategies of AECID, Fundación Promoción Social (FPS), Fundación Mainel, and the Association of Upper Egypt for Education and Development (AUEED).
- (iii) Consistency with Goals and Objectives: The coherence of project activities and outputs with the project's overarching goals and specific objectives.
- (iv) Alignment with National Policies: The project aligns with Egypt's national policies and harmonizes with the efforts of other donors and NGOs operating in the region.
- (v) Stakeholder Development Agendas: The project's coherence with the development agendas of various stakeholders, including governmental entities and national and international NGOs.
- (vi) Contribution to National Agendas: The project's contribution to Egypt's national agenda for women's empowerment and economic development.
- (vii) Integration with AUEED Programs: The project's coherence with other programs within AUEED.
- (viii) Alignment with Egypt's Strategy 2030 and SDGs: The alignment of the project with Egypt's Strategy 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This holistic evaluation approach ensures a thorough understanding of the project's strategic relevance across multiple dimensions. By examining these factors, the evaluation provides a detailed and nuanced analysis of how well the project has met its broader alignment with key strategic frameworks.

RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE FINDINGS

These findings underscore the project's success in aligning its objectives and activities with the needs of the target communities and broader strategic goals. This alignment ensures a comprehensive and impactful approach, affirming the project's relevance, strategic fit, and coherence with various frameworks, policies, and development agendas.

- **Finding 1: Addressing Target Community Needs:** The project effectively identified and addressed the specific needs and priorities of the target communities. It has successfully met and fulfilled these identified needs, demonstrating a thorough understanding of the local context and a solid commitment to addressing the communities' most pressing issues.
- **Finding 2: Alignment with Strategies:** The project's interventions were consistently aligned with the strategies of AECID, FPS, Fundación Mainel, and AUEED. This alignment not only ensured that the project's goals and objectives were congruent with those of the funding and executing organizations but also enhanced the project's overall strategic fit and coherence, instilling confidence in the project's strategic alignment.
- **Finding 3: Consistency of Activities and Outputs:** The project's key activities and outputs were highly consistent with its general and specific objectives and desired results. This consistency

demonstrated effective integration between the planned interventions and the expected outcomes, highlighting the project's strategic planning and execution.

- **Finding 4: Harmonization with National Policies:** The project aligns with the Government of Egypt's (GOE) public national policies, showcasing an awareness of and integration within the broader national development context. Additionally, the project harmonizes with the concepts of other donors and NGOs operating in Upper Egypt, ensuring a coordinated approach to regional development.
- **Finding 5: Coherence with Development Agendas:** The project aligns with Egypt's women's empowerment and economic development agendas, contributing to broader societal goals. It is coherent with the development agendas of various stakeholders, including governmental, national, and international NGOs, reflecting a unified effort toward common development objectives and making all stakeholders feel part of this collective endeavor.
- **Finding 6: Integration with AUEED Programs:** The project demonstrated integration with other programs that AUEED is implementing in Upper Egypt. This integration ensured a unified approach to development initiatives, maximizing the impact and sustainability of the interventions.
- **Finding 7: Alignment with Egypt's Strategy 2030 and SDGs:** The project is strongly aligned with Egypt's Strategy 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), showcasing a commitment to national long-term development goals. Its alignment with the SDGs, particularly Goal No. 5, which focuses on women's economic and social empowerment, reflected its contribution to achieving these global targets.

RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1:** Strengthening collaboration and coordination with governmental entities is recommended to enhance project effectiveness. While commendable ongoing communication efforts are in place to address this aspect, there is a need to place additional emphasis on fostering closer coordination with relevant stakeholders. Strengthening partnerships with governmental entities will enhance the project's impact and contribute to a more harmonized and integrated approach to achieving shared objectives. This step is crucial for maximizing the project's reach and sustainability through proactive engagement with vital governmental stakeholders.

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

A comprehensive analysis evaluated the project's effectiveness and performance, encompassing its quantifiable, qualitative, and temporal achievements. This assessment scrutinized the actualization of both General and Specific Project Objectives, evaluating the realized outcomes against the envisaged results. The FET meticulously appraised the extent to which project objectives have been met, examining influential factors contributing to either success or non-achievement. Furthermore, emphasis was placed on evaluating the efficacy of capacity-building interventions and training initiatives in fostering the acquisition of requisite skills for effective awareness-raising. Unintended positive or negative changes stemming from the project's implementation were also scrutinized. A critical aspect of this evaluation pertains to gauging the project's consistency in reaching its intended beneficiaries and delivering the requisite support. This multifaceted assessment aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the project's overall performance and its impact on both anticipated and unanticipated facets of its objectives.

EFFECTIVENESS FINDINGS

Project Specific Objective: “Vulnerable women from 5 governorates trained and with resources to access public life.”: The project's primary focus was improving vulnerable women's economic lives in five governorates of the Upper Egypt region. The desk review and the FGDs conducted with the targeted beneficiaries showed that the project surpassed most of its targeted results. This success is reflected in achieving planned targets for project indicators, as detailed in the findings below.

- **Finding 8:** The project's design and implementation ensured consistent alignment with its objectives and results, instilling confidence in stakeholders about its strategic direction.
- **Finding 9:** The project's primary objective was to empower vulnerable women by enhancing their skills and providing them with resources to significantly improve their economic and social conditions. This objective was accomplished through two key strategies: 1) supporting a start-up group of women and adolescent entrepreneurs with production tools (such as sewing machines) and paid internships in the targeted governorates of Menya and Assiut, and 2) providing financial resources to a group of young entrepreneurs. The project has successfully met its objectives, as demonstrated in the evaluation of other findings below. This success underscores the project's effectiveness and positive impact on these women's lives.
- **Finding 10:** The project has surpassed the initial target of 110 participants through comprehensive training programs in tailoring, with **486** women and girls now equipped with valuable sewing skills. This notable achievement is divided as follows: in Assiut, 205 women and 130 girls successfully completed the training, while in Menya, **125** women and **26** girls gained these skills. This outcome demonstrates the project's extensive reach and effectiveness in providing practical, income-generating skills to many beneficiaries, far exceeding expectations. Figure 2 illustrates the totals for each governorate, highlighting the project's impact across these regions. With such a successful track record, we can confidently look forward to the future of this project.
- **Finding 11:** The project has surpassed the initial target of 60 participants through comprehensive entrepreneurship training programs, as 127 beneficiaries received nonfinancial services training, and 82 beneficiaries received nonfinancial services (Figure 1). This achievement underscores the project's effectiveness in reaching and empowering more female entrepreneurs than initially anticipated.

Table (3): Training Programs Beneficiaries

Training Village	Sewing	Entrepreneur	Advanced	Production Line	Production Line Workers	Swing Machine	Internal Force	Social & Psychological
Abu Korkas	41	18	38	12	16	7	25	12
Beni Ebeid	42	14	40	18	21	7	27	11
EL-Bayadya	42	15	40	7	14	6	26	14
Total	125	47	118	37	51	20	78	37

- **Finding 12:** The project has surpassed the initial target of 8 champion entrepreneurs to be involved in leadership and gender rights development. A total of 18 champions entrepreneurs were selected from the pool of participants for this project (2021/722) and the previous project funded by AECID (2019/296), and 16 champions have completed the training program and actively participated in the relevant activities. Their active involvement is a promising sign for the future

of AUEED projects, as it indicates a growing network of committed individuals working towards shared goals.

- **Finding 13:** The project far exceeded its gender awareness target, engaging 455 youth across 11 events in Assiut, Sohag, and Luxor governorates. Initially, the goal was to reach 400 participants, but the project's comprehensive outreach efforts significantly allowed it to surpass this target. This overachievement demonstrates the project's success in broadening its reach and impact, particularly in raising gender awareness among the youth.
- **Finding 14:** The project has successfully developed and sustained three village-based production groups of women working in sewing, significantly surpassing the initial target of forming just one group in Menya. These groups, established in three large communities: Abu Korkas, Bayadeya, and Beni Abed, have served as catalysts and safe spaces, allowing women to gather, develop skills, and network. They have provided access to tools, supported the development of project ideas, and fostered collaboration and co-production. This expansion has not only created employment opportunities for more women but has also strengthened the local economy through collective enterprise. Establishing these groups has not only enhanced the skills and productivity of the participants but has also fostered a strong sense of community and collaboration. This sense of community is a key aspect of our project, keeping all involved connected and engaged and ensuring the sustainability of our economic activities.
- **Finding 15:** The project aimed to support young entrepreneurs by encouraging the formalization of their pioneering efforts. While the group did not pursue collective formal registration, they collaborated informally, successfully establishing one cooperative. This outcome underscores the complexities and challenges of formal registration, highlighting the need for flexible support structures. The informal collaboration among young entrepreneurs demonstrates their ability to innovate and work together, even without formal recognition. This is a testament to their resilience and the project's adaptive approach, which has effectively addressed the challenges young entrepreneurs face.

Table (4): Project Indicators' Achievement

Indicators	Baseline	Target	Achieved	Difference	Result %
General Objective: Promoted the economic and social empowerment of vulnerable women in Upper Egypt.					
Specific Goal: Vulnerable women from 5 governorates trained and with resources to access public life.					
▪ 60 new sustainable micro-enterprises in Upper Egypt in all sectors.	▪ 0 microenterprises are financially sustainable.	60	82	+22	136%
▪ 80% of new microenterprises are run by women.	▪ women run 34% of the microenterprises in the intervention area.	48	81	+33	169%
▪ One production group linked to tailoring in Menya.	▪ 0 groups of tailoring production.	1	3	+2	300%
▪ One sustainable network of women entrepreneurs in Sohag, Luxor, Qena, and Assiut.	▪ There is no such initiative for the RH profile of the project.	1	1	0	100%
Result 1: Installed professional skills that improve the socioeconomic opportunities of women.					

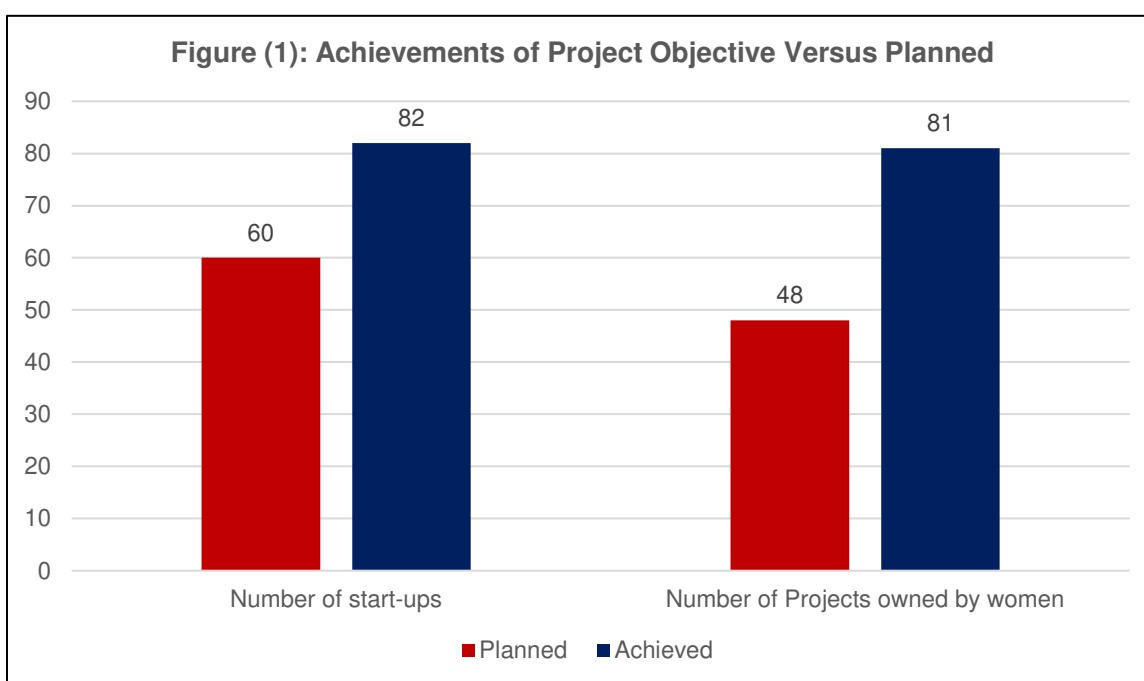
Indicators	Baseline	Target	Achieved	Difference	Result %
▪ 90% of the 110 RHs acquire/improve their skills to produce with good quality.	▪ 0% participate in comprehensive professional training programs that help them produce with quality.	99	486	+387	490%
▪ 18% of 110 RHs who participate in the training request training in entrepreneurship.	▪ 0% have a micro-enterprise or business project.	20	47	+27	235%
▪ 18% of RHs access a job opportunity by collaborating with local tailoring workshops.	▪ 0% offer quality products.	20	37	+17	185%
Result 2: RHs increase their revenue-generating opportunities with business initiatives.					
▪ 60 young people (75% women) improve their business management skills at the end of their training.	▪ 65% have a business idea. ▪ 35% have a start-up project (less than one year).	60	127	+67	212%
▪ 40 young people (75% women) access microcredit.	▪ 0% have basic experience in entrepreneurship and business planning / management.	40	82	+42	205%
▪ 30 young people (75% women) report a 15% increase in income from their business at the end of the Project.	▪ 0% have accessed a microcredit for a business project.	30	30	0	100%
Result 3: Young entrepreneurs empowered for leadership create business and social promotion networks.					
▪ 400 girls (70%) and boys increase their awareness of gender rights.	▪ 70% have low levels of awareness about gender rights and civic education.	400	451	+51	113%
▪ Eight young entrepreneurs apply to train as leaders and collaborate with the community.	▪ 0% participate in volunteer activities.	8	16	+8	200%
▪ one semi-formal network of female entrepreneurs for social participation.	▪ 0% have access to markets beyond the reach of the local community.	1	1	0	100%

Note:

- 1) Regarding the indicator that 80% of new microenterprises are run by women, it is important to note that 81 out of 82 new businesses established via the project were run by women, which is 99% (vs. the original target of 80% of beneficiaries).
- 2) concerning the indicator, 18% of 110 RHs who participate in the training request training in entrepreneurship. It is important to note that the 47 women who requested trainings are part of the group of 125 women who completed tailoring training in the 3 workshops in Menya only. This means that. If we calculate the % by using this sample as the denominator, the result is 37,6% ($47/125=37,6\%$). This is due to the fact that by overachieving the total outreach of trainings from 110 to 486 units, we had to focus our work on entrepreneurship on the women working in the tailoring workshops, which is 125.
- 3) Regarding the indicator, 18% of RHs access a job opportunity by collaborating with local tailoring

workshops. It is important to note that the 37 women selected for the internship are part of the group of 125 women who completed tailoring training in the 3 workshops in Menya only. This means that, if we calculate the % by using this sample as the denominator, the result is 29,6% ($37/125=29,6\%$)

- **Finding 16:** The project focused on creating production clusters instead of pursuing formal entity registration. These clusters were successfully established in three villages, each equipped with workshops. This strategic initiative ensures that rural women have access to essential production tools and a supportive community environment. By providing structured and resource-rich settings, the project empowers rural women to sustain and grow their economic activities independently. The empowerment of these rural women is a source of pride, as they are now able to sustain and grow their economic activities, fostering economic self-reliance and building a foundation for long-term community development and resilience.



- **Finding 17:** The project effectively utilized the cascade model to extend its reach and ensure the sustainability of the skills imparted. In this approach, four Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops on sewing skills were conducted, involving 13 women. These trained women then cascaded their knowledge by training an additional five women each within their communities. The ToT workshops included a three-day session on product design and another three-day session on sewing skills quality. This model not only amplified the project's impact by reaching a larger audience but also fostered peer-to-peer learning and community support. [Table \(5\)](#) details the various types of training delivered and the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries, illustrating these training sessions' broad and lasting influence.
- **Finding 18:** The project effectively tackled key challenges for entrepreneurs by providing access to information, financial and non-financial support, and quality professional training. It also facilitated experience exchange events like exhibitions, allowing entrepreneurs to learn from best

practices, success stories, and failures. This comprehensive approach instills confidence in the project's positive impact.

Table (5): Training Provided on Sewing, Fashion, and Product Design³

Training	Total Beneficiaries
ToT on sewing for ten days.	13
Advanced ToT on sewing for six days to design new products.	13
Fashion training and recycling for five days.	15
Production line training.	37

Result 1: “Installed professional skills that improve the socioeconomic opportunities of women”: The project, aimed at empowering women and girls economically by enhancing their sewing and fashion design skills, has been a resounding success as shown in the related to “R1” findings below:

- **Finding 19:** The project leveraged parallel schools within local communities to expand its outreach and benefit vulnerable women in these areas. [Table \(6\)](#) presents the number of beneficiaries in these locations, demonstrating the project's effectiveness in reaching its target audience through community-based initiatives.

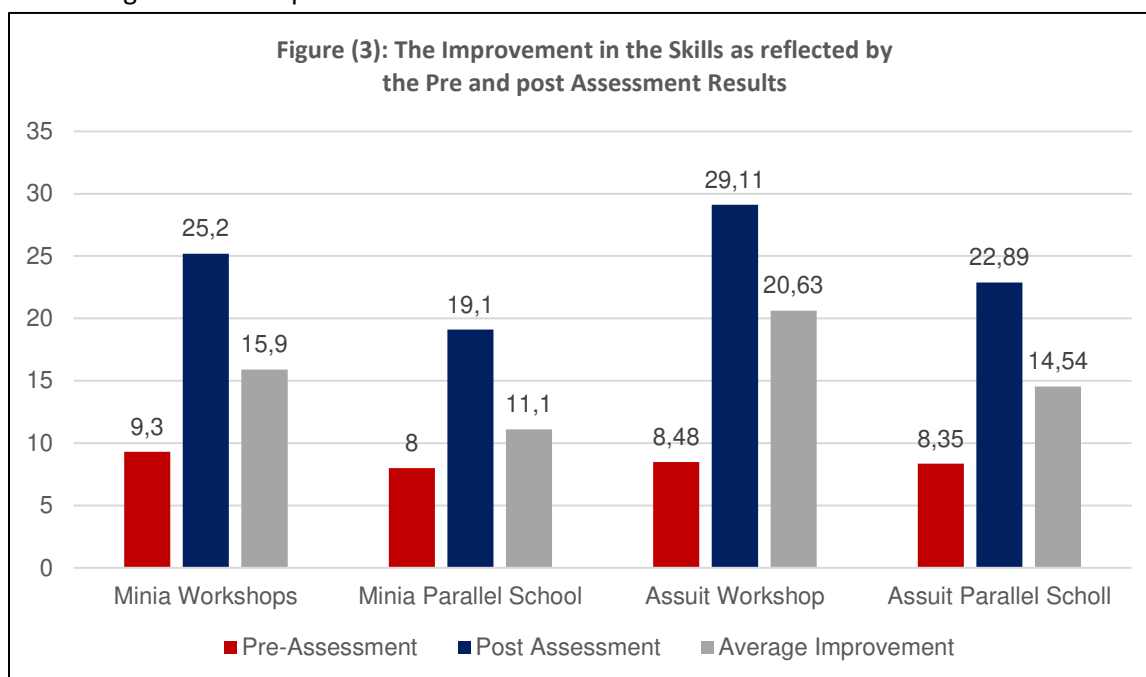
Table (6): The Number of Beneficiaries in Menya and Assiut Governorates

Governorate/Location	Target group		Total
	Women	Girls	
Assiut	205	130	335
▪ Parallel school in Naikhela	37	37	74
▪ Parallel school in Zarabi	42	30	72
▪ Parallel school in Ghanaim	42	29	71
▪ Parallel school in Kosaya	42	17	59
▪ Parallel school in Bani Mohamdyat	42	17	59
Menya	125	26	151
▪ Abu Korkas	41	--	41
▪ Bayadeya	42	--	42
▪ Beni Ebeid	42	--	42
▪ Markaz El-Fatah	--	26	26
Total	330	156	486

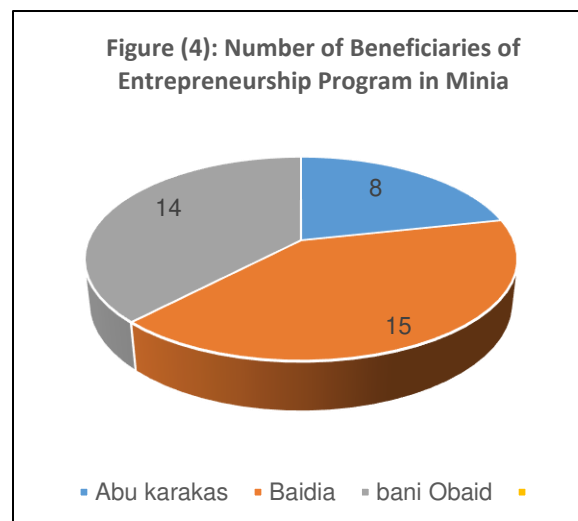
- **Finding 20:** The results of pre-post-assessments clearly evidenced the project participants' improved skills. The average improvement in skills ranged significantly from 11.1 to 20.63, highlighting the effectiveness of the training programs. This substantial progress underscores the project's success in enhancing the participants' abilities and equipping them with valuable,

³ **Table 5** refers to the 37's Project 722 beneficiaries participating in the production line ToT. However, the total number of women trained is 51 (Table 3) because AUEED, in a spirit of inclusivity, included 14 women from the community who were not part of Project 722 but had previously contributed to school uniform production before COVID. These women were engaged as external resources, demonstrating the project's commitment to involving the wider community.

marketable skills. Figure 3 visually represents these improvements, demonstrating the tangible impact of the training initiatives on the beneficiaries' skill levels. This measurable advancement validates the training quality and reinforces the project's overall goal of economic empowerment through skill development



- Finding 21:** The project successfully enhanced the entrepreneurial capacity of 47 beneficiaries in Menya, significantly exceeding the initial target of 20. This notable achievement reflects the effectiveness of the project's training and support initiatives. As illustrated in Figure 4, the distribution of these 47 beneficiaries is detailed, showcasing the project's extensive reach. Additionally, the average improvement in their entrepreneurial skills was 2.5, representing a substantial 46.3% increase from the pre-assessment. This significant progress not only underscores the project's impactful role in fostering entrepreneurial development but also instills hope for a future where individuals can achieve greater economic self-sufficiency.
- Finding 22:** The project has successfully met its intended target of enhancing production quality and providing more technical training. It reached 37 beneficiaries who completed the production line training, as reported by AUEED. These women improved their technical skills in the production line of school uniforms, with a remarkable increase in their skill level, shown by an average pre-assessment score of 4, rising to an average post-assessment score of 11—an improvement of 169%. The training was conducted in three locations in Menya: Abu Korkas (12 beneficiaries), Beni

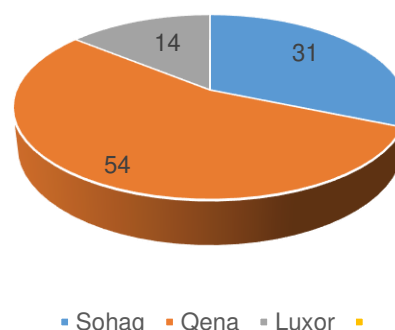


Ebeid (18 beneficiaries), and Bayadeya (7 beneficiaries). This achievement not only demonstrates the project's effectiveness in enhancing technical skills and production quality among rural women but also the positive impact it has had on the community, making the AUEED team proud and connected.

Result 2: “RHs increase their revenue generation opportunities with business initiatives.”: Under this result, the project provided both financial and non-financial services to improve the quality of production in Sohag, Qena, and Luxor, as evidenced in the findings below:

- **Finding 23:** The project has demonstrated its efficiency by exceeding its target, providing entrepreneurship skills training to 127 individuals, which was more than double the planned goal of 60. Figure (5) illustrates the distribution of beneficiaries, with 99 participants completing a comprehensive five-day training course. Additionally, 28 beneficiaries from Qena participated in a condensed two-day version of the training, covering the same core content in a shorter format, showcasing the project's ability to deliver high-quality training in an efficient manner.
- **Finding 24:** The project's technical support and coaching sessions, provided by loan officers, have significantly benefited the participants. These officers, with their dedication and expertise, have been instrumental in the success of the project. Thirty-seven beneficiaries received this support upon request, closely approaching the target of 40 across the three governorates. This assistance proved crucial in addressing specific challenges faced by the beneficiaries, greatly enhancing their ability to improve and sustain their businesses.
- **Finding 25:** The project offered specialized training programs to 19 beneficiaries to enhance product quality. These included 7 participants in “Talli” design techniques, 6 in patron design, and 6 in baking and desserts. These programs were designed to refine the beneficiaries' skills and improve the overall quality of their products.
- **Finding 26:** The project achieved impressive success in its financial support component, demonstrating a high loan repayment rate among beneficiaries. This outcome indicates the effective use of microfinance in promoting business growth and sustainability. The project’s ability to exceed its initial targets, with a total of 94 loans disbursed compared to the original goal of 40, showcases its adaptability and responsiveness to the community's needs, making the beneficiaries feel valued and considered. This accomplishment reflects the project’s overall effectiveness and efficiency in implementation and management, underscoring the positive impact and sustainability of the support provided (Please refer to finding 33 for details on this matter).

Figure (5): Number of Beneficiaries of Entrepreneurship program in Sohag, Qena and Luxor



Result 3: “Young entrepreneurs empowered for leadership create business and social promotion networks.” As a result, the project worked to sustain the project interventions by establishing the Entrepreneurs Cooperative Association and developing the Entrepreneur's network of the targeted governorates, in addition to raising their awareness of gender issues and equality.

- **Finding 27:** The 11 events were held in multiple schools across the three governorates, each targeting different student groups, with the total number of students engaged is 451. These events aimed to foster a deeper understanding of gender issues, encouraging the youth to challenge stereotypes and advocate for gender equality within their communities. [Table \(7\)](#) illustrates the distribution of participants by governorate, emphasizing the project's extensive impact on promoting gender-sensitive attitudes among the younger generation.

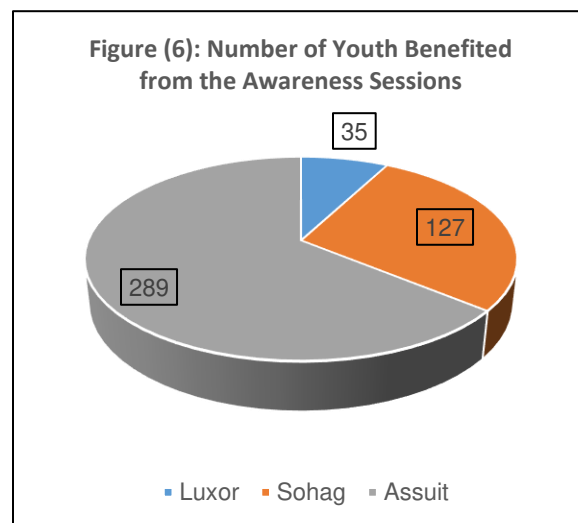
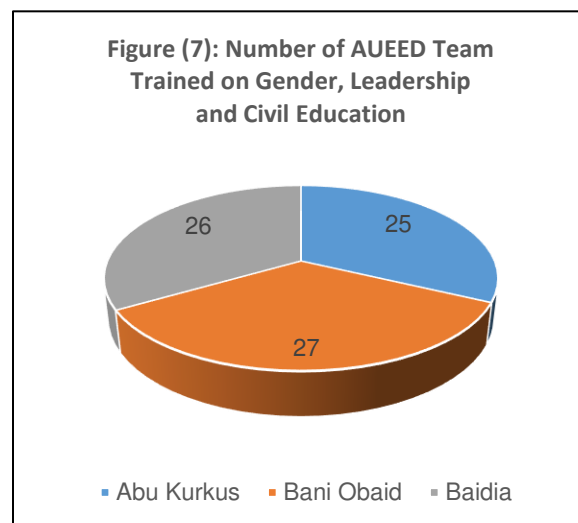


Table (7): Number of Youth Benefited from Awareness Sessions in the Schools

Date	Location	Schools Participating	Number of students
23/05/2023	Sahl Tahata Schools	- Elzraby Parallel School - Sahel Tahata Formal School - Elnekla Parallel School	41
16/08/2023	Elzaraby School	- Elzaraby Parallel School - Elzaraby Formal School	66
16/08/2023	Elnekla Schools	- Elnekla Parallel School - Elnekla Formal School	46
16/08/2023	Elghanayam Schools	- Elghanayam Parallel School - Elghanayam School	39
21/08/2023	Kom Ghaeeb Schools	- Komghaeeb Parallel School - Komghaeeb Formal School	42
8/29/2023	Nagaa Elsoyagh School	Nagaa Elsoyagh Primary School	17
8/30/2023	Nagaa Elsoyagh School	Nagaa Elsoyagh Preparatory School	18
20/09/2023	Dayrot School	Dayrot School	29
20/09/2023	El Qosya School	El Qosaya School	59
15/08/2023	Gehena Schools	- Gehena Parallel School - Gehena Formal School	44
09/08/2023	Bani Mohamdeat Schools	- Bani Mohamdeat Parallel School - Bani Mohamdeat Formal School	50
TOTAL			451

- **Finding 28:** AUEED implemented a thorough capacity-building program for 78 beneficiaries across various locations in Menya. This training focused on critical areas such as gender awareness, leadership development, and civil education, equipping beneficiaries with the necessary skills to effectively support the team members and advocate for the project's goals together. The training aimed to enhance the beneficiaries' ability to lead initiatives, discover their internal strength, and address gender-related life challenges. **Figure (7)** displays the number of beneficiaries trained at each location, underscoring the project's commitment to strengthening women's power.



- **Finding 29:** The Egypt Female Entrepreneurs initiative demonstrated AUEED's commitment to supporting and empowering female entrepreneurs in the target area. The project selected 16 women (11 from Luxor and 5 from Sohag), who received training on gender issues and the basics of cooperatives, essential for their business development and community engagement. Additionally, two meetings were held at AUEED's headquarters in Cairo to support and mentor these entrepreneurs further. Although the project provided training on the formal registration of a collective entity, it did not have a responsibility or target to accomplish this formalization. By the end of the project, the beneficiaries chose to collaborate informally rather than formalize a collective entity, highlighting the ongoing challenges and complexities of establishing a formal support structure. Despite this, the initiative successfully created a network of empowered women poised to drive economic growth and social change in their communities.

EFFECTIVENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 2:** The project's immediate focus should be on expediting the registration of the Egypt Female Entrepreneurs initiative. This formalization is not just a bureaucratic step but a crucial platform for exchanging experiences, lessons learned, and best practices among entrepreneurs from various governorates and sectors. The resulting network will not only foster collaboration, innovation, and mutual support but also significantly enhance the collective impact of female entrepreneurship in the region.
- **Recommendation 3:** Envision establishing a "community center" in Menya to serve as an incubator for entrepreneurs and start-ups in Upper Egypt, with a strong focus on empowering women and girls. This center, with its comprehensive range of financial and non-financial services, including mentorship, training, and access to resources, will create a nurturing environment where budding female entrepreneurs can not only survive, thrive, and scale their businesses but also inspire others in their community.
- **Recommendation 4:** Initiating another project phase to extend financial and non-financial services to the remaining districts and communities within the targeted governorates is crucial. This expanded coverage will not only further empower women economically and socially but also

ensure that more individuals benefit from the project's support and resources, ultimately driving profound and widespread community development.

- **Recommendation 5:** The capacity-building approach successfully implemented in this project should be adopted as a prototype for enhancing the skills of women and youth in other sectors. By replicating this model, AUEED can contribute to the economic empowerment of a wider demographic, fostering sustainable development and improving livelihoods. across various industries.
- **Recommendation 6:** Conduct tailored training sessions for beneficiaries in Menya focusing on essential entrepreneurial skills such as project management, bookkeeping, and marketing. These trainings should be delivered in a straightforward and accessible manner, tailored to the beneficiaries' current knowledge and experience levels. Develop a structured follow-up plan to provide continuous support and guidance to beneficiaries as they apply their newly acquired skills in practice. This proactive approach will empower beneficiaries to effectively manage their enterprises, improve financial literacy, and strategically market their products or services, thereby enhancing their overall success and sustainability. Additionally, fostering a supportive environment for ongoing learning and development among beneficiaries will further reinforce their entrepreneurial capabilities and foster long-term economic empowerment.
- **Recommendation 7:** To further enhance social awareness and community impact, the project should strengthen its collaboration with local schools, aiming to integrate social awareness programs into their curriculum. This partnership will help educate students on important social issues, fostering a culture of awareness and responsibility from a young age. Engaging with schools will not only amplify the project's reach but also ensure a sustainable approach to raising social consciousness in the community, providing long-term benefits and reassurance to the stakeholders.

3.3 EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES USE

The assessment of the project's efficiency involved a comprehensive analysis of resource utilization, including financial, human, and material resources. It evaluated the adequacy and technical capacity of project staff, efficient allocation of human resources, and turnover rates to ensure sustained momentum. Financial resource evaluation focused on the sufficiency of the project budget and cost efficiency. The assessment also examined the appropriateness and effectiveness of implementation methods in translating resources into measurable results. This detailed analysis offers valuable insights into the project's operational effectiveness and suggests strategic refinements for future improvements.

- **Finding 30:** The project was meticulously designed with a strong dedication to the beneficiaries, it added the following:
 - Systematic non-financial services, in addition to financial assistance, offer comprehensive support. This approach was based on thorough study and documentation to address various needs efficiently. In Menya, where there is no microfinance office, the project

التدريبات الى كنا بنحضرها في جهات تانية ، كنا مستمعين فقط. لكن هنا طلعوا كل الى جوانا حتى في المقابلة الشخصية
The trainings we were participating in other places, we were listening. But here, they brought out the best in us, even in the interview.

focused on equipping women with production tools and facilitating access to paid internships, ensuring the women received practical support to advance their skills and economic opportunities beyond mere financial aid.

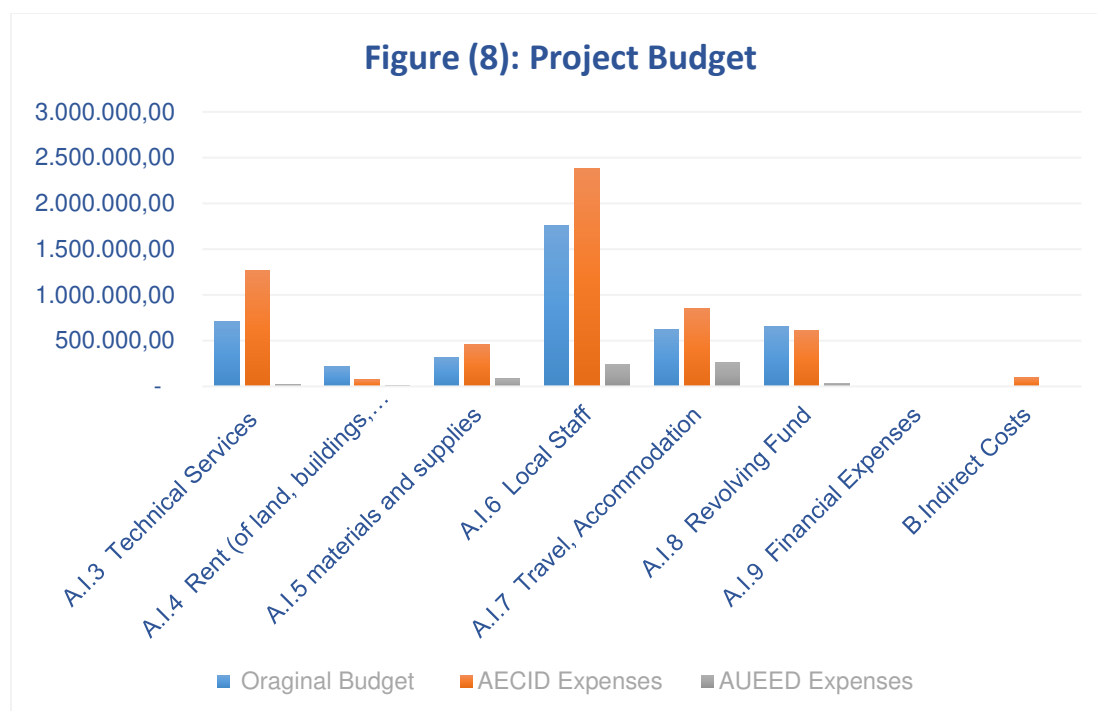
- Comprehensive training manuals and materials ([Annex 10](#)) for product development and highly qualified trainers with relevant experience.
- A key component of the project was the concept of cooperatives for women entrepreneurs, which aimed to foster a sense of cooperation and complementarity instead of competition. This approach not only instilled a new mindset but also empowered these women to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavors.
- The production line in Menya provided school uniforms for Upper Egyptian schools. These uniforms were not only affordable but also of high quality, meeting the schools' standards. Additionally, marginalized women were trained to work in the production line, providing them a source of income.
- The protection and recovery from violence and discovering the inner strengths of marginalized women exposed to violence.

3.3.1 Cost Efficiency:

- **Finding 31:** The project demonstrated remarkable cost-effectiveness, as evidenced by its ability to surpass overall targets without compromising quality. It efficiently executed the planned interventions within the allocated budget of 382.095,11 Euros provided by the AECID, in addition to 48.384,24 Euros provided by FPS and AUEED for a total project budget of 430.479,35 Euros. This success is a testament to the project's efficiency and resource management.
- **Finding 32:** Due to the Euro exchange rate increase between the initial and the last financing payment, the total budget made available to the local partner increased to EGP 5,748,780.00, which was used efficiently. The following [Table \(8\)](#) shows the exchange rate differences and the adjustment of the budget items accordingly:

Table (8): Euro Exchange Rate Comparison between Initial and Final Financing Payments

Milestones	EUR	EGP	Exchange Rate
1	100,000.00	1,984,190.00	19.8419
2	100,000.00	3,246,000.00	32.46
3	15,434.00	518,590.46	33.6005
Total	215,434.00	5,748,780.46	



- **Finding 33:** Some criteria were set by the project management to distribute the surplus resulting from the currency gain, as follows:
 - Activities that contribute to achieving financial sustainability (loans)
 - Technical activities and training supplies that contribute to raising the efficiency of the beneficiaries and achieving the impact of the project
 - Social activities were designed based on the beneficiaries' needs identified during planned training sessions. While not directly related to the technical activities, these social initiatives indirectly impacted the performance and well-being of beneficiaries, many of whom have been affected by domestic violence and low self-esteem.
 - Salaries for the project team due to the extension of the project until 31 March 2024.
- **Finding 34:** AUEED's accounting department, in collaboration with the FPS, is responsible for creating the annual financial budget for its projects. The FPS conducts budget reviews and forecasts for the project, which is managed by the **FPS Financial Project Advisor** and conducted in close collaboration with the AUEED Deputy Manager. This collaborative approach ensures thorough oversight and alignment between the financial strategies of both organizations, contributing to accurate and transparent financial management.

كارد القرض فادني في الادخار

The “Loan Card” helped me in Savings
- **Finding 35:** The project disbursed 94 loans, comprising 82 new loans and 12 renewed loans across three governorates, significantly exceeding the initial target of 40. The distribution of these loans indicates a strong engagement with beneficiaries and a well-structured financial support system that effectively meets local business needs. [Table \(9\)](#) offers a detailed breakdown of the loans provided, highlighting the project’s role in enhancing economic opportunities for beneficiaries.

The high number of loan renewals further underscores the effectiveness of microfinance support in fostering sustainable business growth among participants.

Table (9): Number of Loans provided in the Three Governorates

Governorate	New Loans				Renewed Loans			
	Male	Female	Total	Value	Male	Female	Total	Value
Luxor	0	23	23	150,000	0	6	6	101,000
Qena	1	48	49	677,000	1	4	5	108,000
Sohag	0	10	10	60,000	0	1	1	10,000
Total	1	81	82	887,000	1	11	12	219,000

- **Finding 36:** The originally planned total loan portfolio was L.E. 400,000.00, but it grew to L.E. 652,000.00, a significant increase that reflects the high demand for loans by beneficiaries. By the end of the project, L.E. 1,106,000.00 was paid in loans via the established revolving fund. This indicates a loan capital turnover rate of 2.8 times, a strong success indicator for project management compared to best practices in the global microfinance industry, and a promising sign for the future of the project impact.
- **Finding 37:** AUEED employs the "Odoo" Accounting System⁴, a robust tool capable of tracking financial transactions and generating detailed accounting reports. This system significantly aids the project management team in monitoring the project's financial activities. Financial reports are generated monthly, allowing for consistent tracking of expenses. Additionally, all financial supporting documents are sent to the HQ in Cairo for a thorough review. The branch accountants in the governorates initially enter the project expenses. These entries are then meticulously reviewed at the HQ to ensure they align with both donor and AUEED financial requirements. This dual-layered process of local entry and central review not only enhances the accuracy and compliance of financial records but also upholds the integrity and transparency of the project's financial management practices. It ensures that all expenditures are properly documented and accounted for, providing stakeholders with a clear view of the project's financial health.
- **Finding 38:** The project lacks established financial indicators to evaluate cost efficiency, such as metrics to determine the cost of creating a job or providing a training opportunity. The absence of these indicators makes it challenging to measure project activities' economic impact and efficiency.
- **Finding 39:** The 'Loan Tracker System' is crucial for monitoring loan follow-ups and generating monthly reports. These reports offer a comprehensive overview of the project's financial status, detailing key metrics such as the ratio of issued loans, loan capital, loan principal, administrative costs, the number of paid and remaining installments, and the repayment ratio. This system not only ensures transparent and effective financial oversight but also provides the data necessary for making informed decisions and strategic adjustments, making it a flexible and adaptable tool in our project management.

⁴ Odoo is a comprehensive business management software that includes a wide range of tools, such as customer relationship management, e-commerce, billing, accounting, manufacturing, warehouse management, project management, and inventory management.

- **Finding 40:** AUEED's strict adherence to donor requirements and compliance with all GoE procedures and laws regarding the payment of taxes and social insurance for staff is not just a requirement but a significant contributor to the project's integrity and accountability. This commitment ensures that we operate transparently and fairly, even in direct purchase orders. By tendering for all requested services and contracts, AUEED reinforces the project's integrity and accountability, as well as our commitment to regulations and procurement of best practices.

3.3.2 Management and Processes

3.3.2.1 Management Findings:

- **Finding 41:** The project management demonstrated considerable competence, achieving the project's outputs and results. The team's adaptability was particularly noteworthy, making appropriate adjustments to plans during difficult circumstances without compromising quality. This showcases the team's resilience and problem-solving abilities, providing reassurance about the project's adaptability.
- **Finding 42:** The project manager's consistency throughout the implementation period positively impacted the project's schedule, contributing to its effectiveness and efficiency.
- **Finding 43:** The project team maximized project outcomes efficiently through effective coordination, a testament to solid management. Their proactive problem-solving approach and commitment to excellence significantly contributed to achieving the project's goals and delivering positive results.
- **Finding 44:** The project management team excelled in developing and executing effective implementation plans, making necessary adjustments to maximize the project's impact on beneficiaries despite facing serious and unpredictable obstacles.
- **Finding 45:** Exceptional coordination between FPS and AUEED, with clear rules and responsibilities, contributed to the project's success. The HQ in Cairo and the governorates' offices demonstrated exemplary coordination, supported by the Program Manager and AUEED Deputy Director. This seamless integration and effective resource utilization significantly contributed to achieving the project outcomes and results.
- **Finding 46:** The project's structure effectively illustrated the clear administrative relationship between FPS and AUEED. This successful structure, despite highlighting a staffing gap in the governorates, particularly Menya, underscores the need for more assigned personnel to enhance project implementation further.
- **Finding 47:** Due to high turnover, the project faced significant challenges in maintaining a consistent accounting team at the local level, particularly in Menya. Two accountants resigned consecutively, and the third was appointed only towards the project's end.
- **Finding 48:** The human resources allocated for the project were insufficient to meet the "level of effort" required to implement the project activities effectively. These activities, crucial to the project's success, were carried out by a small field team that experienced a high turnover. Despite these challenges, the staff went above and beyond to ensure the project activities were carried out efficiently. However, the current annual appraisal system, which determines staff salary increases, does not adequately reflect the staff's efforts or keep pace with the prevailing inflation rate. This issue is a cause for concern as it may further impact on staff morale.

3.3.2.2 Process Findings:

- **Finding 49:** The project's successful incorporation of non-financial services, a new venture for AUEED, stands as a unique achievement. This smooth integration and high-quality results not only demonstrate effective management but also instill stakeholder confidence in the project's leadership and direction.
- **Finding 50:** The project team excelled in capacity-building for beneficiaries, particularly in training activities. They ensured the selection of appropriate trainees through a transparent process and used knowledgeable and skilled trainers.
- **Finding 51:** AUEED has established a robust system for its microfinance program, offering various types of credit tailored to meet different clients' needs, enhancing its overall effectiveness.
- **Finding 52:** Project partners and stakeholders played a crucial role in the planning and implementation phases, actively engaging in discussions, reviewing deliverables and results, and developing work plans.
- **Finding 53:** The project team continued to partner with official government agencies such as the National Council for Women, building on previous successes and achieving remarkable results.
- **Finding 54:** Beneficiaries in Menya belong to highly marginalized groups, and the project has significantly improved their lives. However, issues remain:
 - The entrepreneurship training provided by Aspire was initially too advanced for the beneficiaries' current skill levels. To address this, the project teams simplified the curriculum and delivered it over two days in a practical manner, ensuring a hands-on approach. The revised training focused on producing and selling fabric-based products, aligning with what the women understood and were passionate about, ensuring the content was more accessible and relevant to their needs.
 - The project did not include any follow-up component to support this group of beneficiaries after the business training. Any follow-up support provided by the local team was beyond the original project plan and was conducted as an additional effort.
 - Beneficiaries face practical challenges, such as difficulty maintaining equipment, inadequate marketing skills, and lack of proper record-keeping.
- **Finding 55:** The project has a logical framework with quantitative and qualitative indicators to monitor results. The M&E unit is finalizing the system and database.
- **Finding 56:** While the project did not implement a formal capacity-building plan, it provided staff training based on emerging needs identified throughout the project's duration. Staff demonstrated their commitment by actively participating in beneficiaries' training sessions, which helped them better understand the beneficiaries' capabilities and needs. This on-the-job training approach, while practical, also highlighted the project's adaptability and its ability to respond to emerging needs. Despite this, the team still requires further development in measuring project improvement, fostering client entrepreneurship, providing non-financial services, and offering coaching.
- **Finding 57:** The project's reporting system operates on a two-level structure. The first level involves an accumulative Excel sheet prepared by AUEED and sent to FPS, which includes comprehensive data. FPS handles the second level of reporting, compiling information into a

format required by the donor. AUEED does not participate in this level, ensuring a streamlined and efficient process.

- **Finding 58:** AUEED employed a formal selection process for beneficiaries entering the project, utilizing application forms, interviews, and clear selection criteria. Regarding selecting beneficiaries for accessing special support within the project, AUEED used a systematic and structured approach to ensure fairness and impact. However, there were no "documented detailed criteria" for this stage. Key factors considered included economic conditions, tailoring evaluation scores, training commitment, family size, prioritizing marginalized women for sewing machine distribution, and other support activities. Women who demonstrated high performance in post-tailoring evaluations were chosen for the production line. At the same time, a product development consultant made recommendations for educational trips and internships based on performance. This structured but non-documented process ensured that selections were made based on merit, commitment, and need, aligning with the project's goal of supporting the most deserving participants.

Table (10): Beneficiaries Received Sewing Machines

Item	Result
Average Number of Family Members	5.1
Direct Beneficiaries	126
Indirect Beneficiaries	638
Average Family Income	1883
Average Age of Beneficiaries	36
Number of Beneficiaries who are Mothers of Children in the Association's Schools	29

- **Finding 59:** The project has established a robust documentation mechanism to record all training activities and success stories, including attendees' participation, pre-post-tests, and brief mentions of some success stories. While a good start, this system is not yet comprehensive. However, with significant enhancements and possible automation, it can become a cornerstone of the project's transparency and accountability. Improving this system will not only make analyzing data and writing comprehensive reports easier but also reassure stakeholders of the project's commitment to accurate and detailed documentation of its activities and outcomes.
- **Finding 60:** The project has developed a wealth of training materials on a variety of topics, from Product Development to Social Interventions. These materials are not just resources but a testament to the project's commitment to community development. They are valuable tools for building community knowledge and capacity and a source of pride for all involved. Sharing these materials with relevant parties is not just an exchange of experiences but a celebration of the project's achievements.
- **Finding 61:** The project's interventions were designed using an evidence-based approach, ensuring they addressed beneficiaries' needs accurately. This involved conducting an in-depth needs assessment and leveraging AUEED's reputation and strong community relationships.
- **Finding 62:** The project used participatory and practical training approaches to enhance beneficiaries' knowledge and skills. WhatsApp groups were created for each training group to support and coach trainees further, fostering a supportive learning environment.

- **Finding 63:** The project demonstrated exceptional adaptability in responding to new developments and changes, continuing to support beneficiaries through appropriate communication techniques and adapting to social uncertainties.
- **Finding 64: Pioneering E-Conference for Regional Networking:** The project successfully piloted a novel networking and peer exchange approach between Egyptian pioneers and Jordanian entrepreneurs through an E-Conference. This initiative fostered valuable cross-country interactions within the MENA region, allowing entrepreneurs to share challenges and solutions from a rich tapestry of diverse perspectives and contexts. Participants appreciated this innovative platform, which enhanced their understanding and provided fresh insights into overcoming similar issues in their respective environments.
- **Finding 65:** Despite the diverse group of beneficiaries, the project's outreach modality was extensive and effective. It facilitated awareness of entrepreneurial culture and broke stereotypes, especially for women in disadvantaged communities. The project maintained a commendable level of respect for the customs and traditions of the beneficiaries and their communities, building trust and acceptance.

EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES USE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 8:** The project team should prioritize hiring additional staff to provide adequate support at the field level. This strategic move will alleviate workload pressures on existing team members and enhance the project's operational capacity. Furthermore, it is crucial to establish a swift recruitment process for substitute staff when vacancies arise, ensuring minimal disruption and maintaining team performance. This will ensure more effective implementation and support for beneficiaries, making the team feel more supported and less overwhelmed.
- **Recommendation 9:** Finalize the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system to align with AUEED's standards across other projects. This alignment will ensure consistency and enhance the team's professional image and competence. Implementing tools and methodologies that enable the production of high-quality reports and robust data collection will further enhance the team's capabilities. In addition, it is recommended that the database be finalized to track project performance and monitor beneficiaries' development systematically. This comprehensive database, storing background information of beneficiaries and documenting the services they receive, will not only improve data management but also facilitate informed decision-making. This will also make the team feel more organized and control the project's progress.
- **Recommendation 10:** The project should include a specialized Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) officer in the staff list. This role requires technical expertise in data collection and analysis, particularly in monitoring the project indicators and reporting on their progress. By having a dedicated M&E officer, the project can ensure accurate and detailed data collection on the nuanced, subjective aspects of the project's impact, such as beneficiary experiences, perceptions, and changes in social dynamics. This specialized approach will improve the accuracy and depth of the monitoring process, ensuring that the project's achievements are effectively documented and communicated. Additionally, it's crucial that the field team is proactive in improving the monitoring process by receiving training in data collection techniques.

- **Recommendation 11:** Strengthen the project's marketing component by developing a comprehensive marketing and communication strategy. This strategy should outline targeted approaches to effectively promoting project activities and outcomes. Enhancing visibility through strategic communication channels and partnerships will increase stakeholder awareness.
- **Recommendation 12:** Develop a tool to systematically share developed materials with stakeholders to facilitate knowledge transfer and exchange lessons learned. This tool should ensure the accessibility and usability of training materials, best practices, and success stories among relevant parties. Promoting transparency and collaboration through effective sharing mechanisms will strengthen partnerships and enhance project sustainability.
- **Recommendation 13:** AUEED's accounting department should develop financial indicators to evaluate the efficiency of project activities, such as the cost-effectiveness of training opportunities or job creation initiatives. Implementing these indicators will enable rigorous evaluation of resource allocation and expenditure, ensuring optimal utilization and accountability in project management.
- **Recommendation 14: Appoint a non-financial services officer in its** offices with specific roles and responsibilities such as overseeing capacity-building, skills development, and entrepreneurial training. This will ensure that non-financial services receive equal attention to financial services. These officers would be critical in providing holistic support to beneficiaries. By emphasizing non-financial services, the organization can enhance the overall impact of its interventions and support sustainable development within communities.
- **Recommendation 15: Flexibility is essential** in adapting workshops and facilities based on market demands. Consider transforming existing spaces, such as the tailoring workshops, for example, into community centers that offer advanced training programs tailored to specific market needs. This adaptive approach ensures that training initiatives remain relevant and responsive to changing market dynamics, thereby maximizing the impact and sustainability of the organization's interventions. By aligning activities with market needs, the organization can foster innovation, meet community expectations, and enhance overall program effectiveness.

3.4 IMPACT

Assessing the project's impact represents the fundamental challenge and ultimate objective of development endeavors. This evaluation meticulously examined the positive and negative effects of the project, undertaking an in-depth investigation into pivotal aspects. It scrutinized whether the project's strategy, implementation approach, and management are aligned to yield discernible positive impacts on beneficiaries. The examination extended to project initiatives' current and foreseen impacts, exploring tangible outcomes such as enhancing livelihoods for direct beneficiaries. Additionally, the evaluation gauged the project's influence on beneficiaries' opportunities, including advancements in self-employment and entrepreneurship. The nuanced examination was extended to discern the differential impact the project has had on various beneficiary groups. By dissecting these multifaceted aspects, the evaluation provides a comprehensive understanding of the project's overall impact and effectiveness in bringing about positive transformations in the lives of its intended beneficiaries.

IMPACT FINDINGS

- **Finding 66:** The project's activities, driven by stakeholders' collective efforts and commitment, have led to substantial positive social and economic changes for young entrepreneurs and vulnerable women across the five governorates. These improvements underscore the project's impact and serve as a model for future endeavors to empower rural women and enhance economic opportunities. It's the stakeholders' invaluable contributions that have made these achievements possible. They should take pride in these and feel motivated to continue supporting and expanding these initiatives.
- **Finding 67:** The project significantly boosted beneficiaries' self-confidence and self-esteem. Through comprehensive training programs, participants, including young entrepreneurs and rural women, gained the skills, knowledge, and administrative support needed to start and upgrade their businesses or small-scale projects and micro-enterprises. This empowerment not only improved their economic prospects but also elevated their social status and respect within their communities. As they became recognized contributors to local development and economic growth, their transformation underscored the project's profound impact on fostering economic and social inclusion, a fact that the project can all take pride in.

I used to be afraid to speak up at home or express my opinions for fear of saying something wrong. After opening up, getting to know other women, and exchanging experiences, I could speak up and share my opinion at home. FGD, I learned to manage the household and guide my children. IDI
- **Finding 68:** The project's success in empowering women by providing better economic opportunities is significant. This empowerment has led to increased income and economic stability, positively impacting the lives of these women and their families:
 - The project specifically empowered vulnerable rural women, allowing them to support their children's education by ensuring enrollment and retention in school. The income generated from their businesses significantly improved their living conditions, enabling investments in home appliances and renovations, thus enhancing their overall quality of life and stability. It fosters financial independence and contributes to households' overall well-being and resilience.
 - These achievements underscore the transformative power of economic empowerment, inspiring hope and optimism for the future of these communities. They highlight the potential for sustainable community development and deserve to be celebrated.
- **Finding 69:** The project's training and capacity-building activities have profoundly impacted women and entrepreneurs by equipping them with essential skills. These activities have provided beneficiaries with expertise in financial management, bookkeeping, marketing, and various technical abilities. As a result, they have enhanced their employability and gained the confidence and knowledge needed to develop or upgrade their projects. This comprehensive skill-building has opened up new economic opportunities and empowered participants to take control of their professional journeys, fostering sustainable growth and long-term success in their ventures.
- **Finding 70:** The project has significantly enriched women's economic and social lives by providing access to new communication channels and enhancing their financial and decision-making independence. These improvements have enabled women to connect with broader networks, share knowledge, and access resources more effectively. Additionally, increased financial independence has empowered them to make informed decisions about their personal and

professional lives, elevating their status within their communities and fostering greater autonomy and confidence. This comprehensive support has transformed individual lives and contributed to broader social change by promoting gender equality and empowering women to play a more active role in community development.

- **Finding 71:** The project went beyond merely including marginalized groups in its activities by actively fostering an environment where these individuals felt confident to voice their needs, views, and challenges. Through targeted support and engagement, the project empowered marginalized participants to participate actively in discussions and decision-making processes. This approach ensured their inclusion and amplified their voices, enabling them to influence project outcomes and address issues that directly affect their lives. The project promoted social equity and encouraged a more inclusive and responsive community dynamic by creating a platform for marginalized groups to be heard and validated.
- **Finding 72:** After a thorough review of various products created by project beneficiaries, particularly young entrepreneurs in Sohag and Luxor, it is evident that they produce high-quality items well-suited for marketing through various channels such as retail outlets, exhibitions, and e-commerce platforms. With the project's support, young entrepreneurs have significantly increased their sales and revenues by creating marketable products and effectively leveraging new marketing channels. This success showcases their entrepreneurial capabilities and the project's substantial impact on improving their livelihoods. By tapping into diverse marketing avenues, these young entrepreneurs have enhanced their economic prospects, demonstrating their adaptability and growth. The project's efforts have not only facilitated immediate financial benefits but have also equipped beneficiaries with the skills and knowledge necessary for sustainable business development. This outcome underscores the project's role in fostering economic empowerment and entrepreneurial success among young entrepreneurs.

IMPACT RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 16:** Integrate clear economic and social improvement indicators into the project plan and link them with assessments to measure beneficiaries' livelihoods and skills changes.
- **Recommendation 17:** Implement an effective communication and marketing plan to help entrepreneurs access the market and sell their products.
- **Recommendation 18:** Develop a tool to increase/enhance women's accessibility to useful information, including exhibitions, training, financial services, business development services, and networks.
- **Recommendation 19:** Create a sustainable community space for routine support activities in outreach communities. This hub should provide ongoing training, mentoring, and networking events, ensuring consistent support and fostering a sense of community. Equipped with the necessary resources and staffed by trained personnel, the space should be highly adaptable to various programs, demonstrating the project's commitment to addressing the evolving needs of beneficiaries. This sustainable space will maintain the project's impact, support long-term growth, and empower community members for lasting economic and social improvements.
- **Recommendation 20:** Modernizing the organization's workshops and facilities is beneficial. This can be done by upgrading equipment and introducing new crafts and skills that align with current market demands. This modernization effort will enhance the quality of training programs and

ensure beneficiaries receive relevant skills that meet industry standards. By staying abreast with recent market needs, the organization can better prepare beneficiaries for economic opportunities and improve their competitiveness in the marketplace.

- **Recommendation 21:** Provide advanced technical training for workshop trainers to update their skills beyond traditional methods and basic knowledge. Focus on enhancing the efficiency and quality of products, finishing through modern techniques and best practices in their respective crafts. This advanced training will empower trainers to deliver higher-quality instruction to beneficiaries, ensuring they acquire skills that meet contemporary industry standards and enhance their market competitiveness. Additionally, ongoing professional development should be considered to keep trainers abreast of the latest advancements in their fields.

3.5 SUSTAINABILITY / VIABILITY

The comprehensive review and appraisal of the viability and sustainability of project activities extends beyond the project cycle, delving into a thorough analysis of critical facets. This examination considered the project features and interventions with substantial potential for enhancing sustainability and visibility. Factors such as the degree of collaboration with partners and initiatives, significant influences on project continuity, measures implemented to ensure viability and sustainability, and the initiation of new complementary actions are meticulously assessed. The evaluation also scrutinizes the value of knowledge products generated by the project, acknowledging their potential as future references for national and international partners. Furthermore, the sustainability-focused evaluation appraises whether the project's design, interventions, and management are strategically aligned. Critical questions, such as the extent of planned and implemented sustainability-related interventions, the duration of project benefits post-donor funding, and the expected sustained benefits beyond the project's conclusion, form integral components of this assessment. The analysis seeks to identify the factors that significantly impact the sustainability of project activities, providing insights crucial for developing strategies to ensure long-term project viability.

SUSTAINABILITY / VIABILITY FINDINGS

The project has achieved relative financial, technical, and institutional sustainability, laying a solid foundation for its future. These achievements are not just a testament to the project's success but also a result of the collective efforts of all involved, making us all proud and accomplished.

3.5.1 Planning for Sustainability

- **Finding 73: Integrated Planning and Development:** AUEED developed the sustainability plan progressively throughout the project's lifecycle. However, there was no fully integrated sustainability plan in place from the beginning. Nevertheless, key aspects of this evolving sustainability strategy include:
 - **Financial Sustainability of the Project:** AUEED and FPS have collaboratively established a plan to scale the successfully piloted methodology, with the hope of extending the project's reach to additional locations, diverse target groups, and various crafts based on needs assessment. By expanding the scope, the project seeks to maximize its impact, ensuring that more communities benefit from its successful interventions. This strategic planning underscores the unwavering commitment to financial sustainability and the

long-term vision of fostering economic growth and development across a broader spectrum of beneficiaries, providing reassurance and confidence in the shared future.

- **Financial Sustainability for Target Groups:** The financial sustainability plan for the target groups was achieved by focusing on empowerment, not just funding. For young entrepreneurs, AUEED workshops offer unique opportunities to learn and grow by providing production tools, clearly communicated schedules, and involvement in paid internships. For rural women, these workshops offer the same benefits, plus the consistent income source from the annual production of school uniforms. This approach, which includes loans and re-lending initiatives, is managed with utmost care and responsibility by the association's loan unit, ensuring ongoing financial support and growth for beneficiaries, inspiring hope and a sense of empowerment.
- **Technical Sustainability of the Project:** The project focused on maintaining a distinguished team and transferring their expertise to new projects. This strategy ensures that the technical knowledge and skills developed during the project are preserved and utilized in future initiatives.
- **Technical Sustainability for Target Groups:** To ensure technical sustainability for the target groups, the project supported the non-financial services component, including coaching and other resources. These services were key components in the new project to maintain the beneficiaries' technical development.
- **Supporting Women Entrepreneurs in Cooperatives:** The project played a pivotal role in establishing a cooperative led by a woman entrepreneur in the Sohag governorate. It also supported the idea initiated by women entrepreneurs in Luxor, providing the necessary resources for the cooperative to continue and expand the new project. Importantly, this support has fostered collective growth and empowerment among women entrepreneurs, significantly promoting cooperative development in the project's target areas.
- **Continuity and Expansion of Workshops:** A potential new project plans to continue and expand workshops by establishing them with modern and advanced fixed assets. This plan aims to increase the number of locations and involve more women, highlighting their significant role in transforming workshops into community centers that offer a variety of in-demand crafts, not limited to sewing. By incorporating a broader range of crafts and modernizing the facilities, these workshops can become hubs of skill development and economic empowerment, catering to the evolving needs and interests of the community.
- **Sustainability of Social Impact:** The project incorporated a social component focusing on protection and recovery from violence. This component was included in the new project to ensure the sustainability of the social impact, providing ongoing support and resources for beneficiaries.

3.5.2 Financial Sustainability

- **Finding 74: Strategic Alignment and Strengthening Loan Management for Financial Sustainability:** The project has strategically aligned its revolving fund portfolio with AUEED's existing microfinance programs, ensuring the sustainability of its funding after the project's conclusion, based on the rules for the transfer of the revolving fund to local partners by AECID. This alignment secures ongoing funding for additional small projects, instilling a sense of security and confidence in the project's financial sustainability. More importantly, it facilitates continuous

support for young entrepreneurs. This key aspect should make us all feel optimistic about the project's impact and the sustainability and growth of their ventures. Additionally, since establishing a "Lending Unit" in 2001, AUEED has significantly enhanced its capacity to manage and monitor loan distribution. The proposal to incorporate the project's revolving fund into AUEED's microfinance program will maintain and expand the provision of loans to the project's target group, ensuring sustained financial support for the beneficiaries.

3.5.3 Institutional Sustainability

AUEED is a well-established organization that the government and the development community have recognized for decades. Its success is attributed to the expertise and dedication of its robust board of directors and professional staff. AUEED has a proven track record of implementing successful, comprehensive interventions across various community development sectors in Upper Egypt. This foundation provides a critical safeguard against unforeseen future risks, ensuring the delivery of practical solutions for sustained future growth and stability.

- **Finding 75: Empowering Responsibility Holders and Enhancing Institutional Sustainability:** The project has demonstrated a solid commitment to empowering responsibility holders, such as tailoring workshop facilitators. Workshop facilitators and sometimes the project team were involved in various training sessions alongside project target groups, covering areas such as product development, entrepreneurship, e-marketing, and product design. This approach has significantly improved their capacity and underscores the project's strong institutional sustainability, ensuring its long-term impact and value to its team members and external collaborators
- **Finding 76: Development of User-Friendly Training Guides:** AUEED has developed numerous practical and easy-to-use training guides for future projects. These guides, such as those for providing non-financial services and entrepreneurship, are designed to be accessible and practical, ensuring that similar projects can benefit from the knowledge and experience gained.
- **Finding 77: Sustained Support through Regular Follow-Ups:** While the project committed to providing follow-ups and technical support through field specialists, it faced challenges in consistently implementing these practices, which the team is transparent about. Improving the regularity and quality of follow-ups is essential for maintaining the project's progress and sustainability. Strengthening these efforts will reassure stakeholders about the project's management and instill confidence in its long-term success.
- **Finding 78: Weak Relationship with Governmental Partners:** The project currently suffers from a weak relationship with governmental counterparts and partners who could provide crucial support for sustainability, such as the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS) and the Ministry of Tourism. Strengthening these relationships is vital for ensuring long-term project sustainability and leveraging additional resources and support.

3.5.4 Beneficiaries' Impact Sustainability

- **Finding 79: Enhancement of Social Networks for Women:** The project facilitated women's ability to build and strengthen informal social networks. These networks have created robust support systems and fostered a sense of connection and mutual assistance among women, effectively addressing community issues and promoting solidarity.

- **Finding 80: Impact of Training on Product Quality and Market Reach:** Training in online marketing, product quality, and pricing has significantly contributed to producing high-quality goods sold at reasonable prices. This training has enabled small businesses to expand their client base and enhance their resilience, ensuring long-term sustainability and fostering optimism.
- **Finding 81: The project has notably increased self-confidence and social status among beneficiaries.** This boost in self-esteem has fostered a sense of empowerment, allowing women to control their economic and social lives more. The increase in self-confidence and social status among the beneficiaries is a significant indicator of the project's success in promoting gender equality and empowering women, which are key factors in the project's long-term sustainability.

كنا بنبيع بالخسارة دلوقتى بعد ما اتدربنا على التسعير قدرنا نحسب ازاى
We used to sell at a loss, but now that we have practiced pricing, we can calculate how much we can charge

SUSTAINABILITY / VIABILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 22: Develop an Integrated Sustainability Plan in the Initial Project Stage:** An integrated sustainability plan should be established from the project's inception, detailing precise interventions and activities to ensure long-term success and impact.
- **Recommendation 23: Formulate a Resource Mobilization Plan with Partners:** To secure necessary resources and support, a resource mobilization plan should be created and discussed with key partners.
- **Recommendation 24: Increase Loan Portfolio Funding for Greater Outreach:** The funding allocated for the loan portfolio should be increased to achieve greater geographic and demographic reach and ensure financial sustainability.
- **Recommendation 25: Develop a Clear Exit/Transfer Plan:** Since the project will continue through AUEED, providing financial and non-financial services to the same target groups, partners should develop and approve a clear Exit/Transfer Plan from the start. This plan should include close monitoring to address any deviations promptly and focus on leveraging more financial resources to expand AUEED's wallet and microfinance program.
- **Recommendation 26: Enhance Beneficiaries' Capacities:** Offer coaching sessions to support, advise, and address issues in project management.
- **Recommendation 27: Strengthen Coordination with Stakeholders:** Develop a plan to enhance coordination with stakeholders to support project activities and achieve institutional and social sustainability. This plan should emphasize marketing techniques, exhibitions, networking opportunities, and activating the value-added chain through increased government partnerships with MOSS, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports

3.6 INNOVATION

The project's innovation is a cornerstone, influencing its trajectory and impact. The assessment of the project's innovation encompassed multiple dimensions, beginning with evaluating its level of innovation, replicability, and the potential for scaling up. The project's innovativeness is gauged not only by the

uniqueness of its approach but also by its adaptability and transferability to different contexts, underscoring the potential for broader replication and scalability. Furthermore, the project's innovative aspects are integral at various levels of implementation, with a focus on mainstreaming these innovations to ensure seamless integration across different project components. This entails embedding innovative strategies and practices into the project's core framework, from planning to execution, fostering a culture of creativity and adaptability. Such an approach not only enhances the project's effectiveness in achieving its objectives but also positions it as a trailblazer with the potential to catalyze positive change beyond its immediate scope.

INNOVATION FINDINGS

- **Finding 82: Women Entrepreneurs and the Green Economy: Women entrepreneurs have played a pivotal role in initiating** innovative projects in the green economy. These initiatives promote environmental sustainability and create new economic opportunities for women. By spearheading green projects, these entrepreneurs significantly contribute to the sustainable development of their communities and effectively address pressing environmental challenges.
- **Finding 83: Documentation and Dissemination of Collaborative and Co-Production Models:** The collaborative and co-production models established by the project have significantly contributed to broader economic empowerment. These models, developed through the active participation and experiences of relevant parties and target groups, are invaluable assets. Thorough documentation of these models, capturing lessons learned and best practices, is crucial for their wider dissemination. We believe that these models can adapt and scale up with active involvement, furthering economic empowerment and collaboration. Notably, the project formally established one cooperative, showcasing these models' practical application and success.
- **Finding 84: Innovative Workshops and Recycling Initiatives in Menya:** The project facilitated several innovative workshops and recycling training sessions in Menya. Participants were taught how to create unique, non-traditional products using waste materials, which provided economic benefits through sales and served practical purposes within their families. Additionally, the project established a production line for school uniforms for the Upper Egypt Association, utilizing the skills of beneficiaries trained in Menya. This initiative underscores the practical training application and the immediate economic impact on the participants.
- **Finding 85: Investing in Distinguished Female Entrepreneurs:** The project successfully invested in distinguished female entrepreneurs by transforming them from trainees in the previous project into trainers in the current one. These women received accredited certification from City & Guilds, enhancing their credibility and professional development. This investment empowered these women and ensured the sustainability of the training programs by creating a pool of skilled and certified trainers within the community.
- **Finding 86: Piloting Project Activities in Parallel Schools:** The project introduced a pioneering approach by implementing activities within parallel schools to equip students with technical skills to help them avoid future unemployment. This initiative focused on empowering adolescents with

various craft skills, thereby significantly enhancing their employability and economic prospects and fostering a sense of hope and optimism about the future.⁵

- **Finding 87: Integrating Mothers and Children for Collaborative Income Generation:** In response to requests from the students' families, the project extended its training to relevant family members, particularly mothers. Mothers received sewing training while their adolescents learned different crafts. This collaborative approach fostered a supportive environment where families could create integrated products, significantly supporting the income of marginalized and needy families. This initiative not only promoted economic resilience but also strengthened social cohesion within the community by combining the skills of mothers and children.
- **Finding 88: Scaling Up Pioneer Small Businesses through Product Development Interventions:** The 'Product Development' interventions implemented in the project have significantly benefited pioneer small businesses. These interventions enabled these businesses to recruit additional staff, increase capital, and innovate new products. These businesses have scaled up effectively by leveraging the accumulative experience and lessons learned from the previous Project 2019/296. This growth not only demonstrates the project's impact on individual businesses but also makes a significant contribution to the community's broader economic development, a fact that we can all be proud of.
- **Finding 89: Leveraging Electronic Marketing for Business Growth:** The project beneficiaries have harnessed the power of electronic marketing to expand their client base. This innovative approach has increased the customer base and fostered customer loyalty and trust. By embracing digital marketing strategies, the beneficiaries have reached a wider audience and established a more robust market presence, thereby driving business growth and sustainability.
- **Finding 90: Innovative Quality Assurance Exposure:** The project, driven by a steadfast commitment to quality, conducted an impactful activity to help beneficiaries develop innovative, high-quality products. This was achieved by organizing a trip to Cairo to visit museums and historical sites known for their strict quality standards. The experience provided them with a new benchmark for product quality, introduced innovative ideas, and offered inspiration from traditional craftsmanship. The exposure to these high-quality standards enhanced the beneficiaries' understanding of quality assurance. It inspired them to integrate these principles into their entrepreneurial journey, ultimately elevating the visibility and credibility of their products.

بعد زيارة المتحف : قدرنا نصمم منتجات ذوقها اعلی ونستوحى افكار جديدة (اللي بيشوف جمال بيتج جمال)
“After visiting the museum, we were able to design more tasteful products and get inspired by new ideas (those who see beauty produce beauty)”

- **Finding 91: Economic Empowerment through Innovative Products:** The innovative products created by the beneficiaries have played a crucial role in achieving the project's objectives and

⁵ Children and grown-ups learned the same skills and applied them in family contexts. Kids of 15 years in Egypt can work based on the national labor law. The students at parallel schools in Egypt are at the highest risk of unemployment or unskilled early labor as they don't have education and don't know any technical skills. That is why the project aimed at giving them the technical skill in tailoring to be a pathway to self-employment and craft making. The project gave training to students with a minimum age of 14 years in the schools so that by the time they acquired the skills, they would be 15 years old, and, by Egyptian law, they would be able to work or self-employ.

results. These products have empowered the beneficiaries, particularly women, by enhancing their economic independence. The project has not just enabled women to develop marketable products, gain financial stability, and contribute to their households and communities. Still, it has also inspired them to foster creativity and innovation. This empowerment is a testament to the project's success in promoting economic resilience and social development, and it should inspire us all.

INNOVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations aim to build on the project's successes by incorporating market-driven approaches, fostering partnerships, addressing vulnerabilities, and enhancing training programs. The project can achieve greater sustainability, reach, and impact by empowering women and supporting community development.

- **Recommendation 28: Support and Expand the Parallel Schools Initiative:** Develop deliberate interventions to support the concept of parallel schools, which are community-based educational centers that operate alongside formal schools systematically. Disseminate the results of the piloted activities to improve support to students and their families to create pathways for business development, self-employment, and craft-making.
- **Recommendation 29: Enhance the Quality of Training for Women:** Assess the current training programs for women, focusing on the available assets and the quality of instruction. Increase the number of trainees and implement a robust follow-up system to ensure continuous support and skill development after the training. This strategy will help generalize and replicate successful training programs, benefiting a larger number of women.
- **Recommendation 30: Conduct Specialized Market Studies for Future Projects:** It is crucial to conduct specialized market studies to ensure that future project designs are well-aligned with market demands. These studies are not just beneficial but essential to helping discover innovative ideas that suit the market and meet its needs, ensuring the projects remain relevant and impactful.
- **Recommendation 31: Foster Partnerships through Market Analysis:** After completing a market study, identify similar projects in neighboring regions. This approach can stimulate partnerships rather than competition, resulting in more significant gains for beneficiaries. Collaborating with similar initiatives can amplify the project's impact, share resources, and create a more supportive environment for beneficiaries, paving the way for a brighter future.
- **Recommendation 32: Perform a Vulnerability Assessment for Situation Analysis:** Conduct a situation analysis emphasizing a "vulnerability assessment" to identify gaps that need addressing. This analysis will help highlight the focus areas for scaling up activities, particularly in Menya governorate. By understanding the vulnerabilities, the project can tailor its interventions to meet the community's most pressing needs.
- **Recommendation 33: Establish a Partnership with the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM):** Given the project's expanded focus on addressing motherhood and childhood issues as part of broader family development initiatives, it is essential to forge a partnership with the NCCM. This collaboration has the potential to make a significant impact, enabling the provision of comprehensive support in critical areas such as parental care, the

importance of education for children and mothers, child labor, childhood disabilities (if needed), and the interplay between child work and education, among others.

3.7 GENDER EQUALITY

Gender assessment within the project evaluation adopted a pivotal role, recognizing gender as an indispensable component in the assessment process. Employing the "Gender and Development Approach" for gender analysis, the FET aimed to comprehensively explore the project's impact on promoting gender equality and cultural diversity, ensuring alignment with sectoral strategies in Egypt. This approach involves a meticulous consideration of gender equality across all facets of the project lifecycle, encompassing design, implementation, and assessment phases. A central focus lies in evaluating the project's contribution to changing gender norms, particularly in the context of young women's economic empowerment and work environment. This encompassed an analysis of the project's influence on societal dynamics, challenging traditional gender roles. The gender assessment also delved into identifying and addressing gender barriers that hindered access to and benefit from the project, aiming to foster a more inclusive and equitable project impact. Through this gender lens, the evaluation aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the project's efficacy in promoting gender equality and mitigating gender-based disparities.

GENDER EQUALITY FINDINGS

- **Finding 92:** The project's gender-sensitive and gender-transformative approach uniquely challenges and reshapes gender norms, roles, and power dynamics, resulting in lasting changes by addressing the root causes of gender inequality. It also strongly addressed women's social and economic needs, providing tailored services and activities.
- **Finding 93:** The project's success in enhancing women's entrepreneurship is not just remarkable. It's inspiring. Its comprehensive professional skills training has significantly enhanced women's entrepreneurship, improved incomes, reduced economic burdens, and decreased social vulnerability, painting a promising picture of their future.
- **Finding 94:** The project's impact has not only improved women's economic status but also promoted equitable gender roles by increasing women's financial independence and decision-making power in their communities. This shift in power dynamics is a significant and encouraging step towards more equitable gender roles, fostering a sense of hope and support for AUEED's mission.
- **Finding 95:** The project's commitment to gender equality is evident in its objectives and results, notably improving women's economic status, reducing domestic violence, offering microcredit programs, providing business materials and equipment, and establishing safe spaces for women.

Psychosocial Support: Women in rural Egypt often face barriers to accessing psychosocial support. One of the project's best practices was to offer this essential support, which alleviated pressure and improved the well-being of many women, enabling them to cope with their stressful circumstances. Some cases reported to AUEED linked domestic violence directly to economic hardships and the unemployment of spouses.

This support enables women to participate in community activities, fostering a sense of belonging and social cohesion.

- **Finding 96:** The training provided appropriate timings and locations for women, along with supportive measures like babysitting services and safe transportation, although some participants struggled to attend sessions outside their home province.
- **Finding 97:** The project has successfully boosted women's self-confidence and self-esteem. This psychological benefit, which many beneficiaries reported, is a significant gain on both personal and professional levels, highlighting the project's holistic approach to empowerment beyond economic benefits.
- **Finding 98:** The project has indirectly promoted more equitable gender roles by increasing women's financial independence, which has enhanced their decision-making power within the community, as women reported during FGDs.
- **Finding 99:** The diversity of women's projects/subsectors has enabled women to explore various cooperation opportunities with each other that align with their interests and market demand.
- **Finding 100:** The project identified women with leadership potential, leading to several participants becoming trainers and assuming leadership roles. These women became role models in their communities, local organizations, and AUEED community schools, serving as a foundation for project sustainability and future initiatives.
- **Finding 101:** Interviewed women reported that the project's interventions improved their economic status and alleviated tension and stress. Thanks to the strong relationships established with project focal points in various governorates, they felt safe and trusted in the supportive space that AUEED provided.
- **Finding 102:** The project effectively engaged men and boys in sensitization programs to promote gender equality and highlight the importance of women's economic and social empowerment in Assiut. This comprehensive approach, including national initiatives like the NCW's *“Because I am a Man”* campaign, fosters a supportive environment for women and challenges patriarchal norms.

GENDER EQUALITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 34:** The potential for future improvement is vast. Strengthening cooperation with other organizations, such as the National Council of Women (NCW) and the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprise Development Agency, can make the project not only more effective but also mutually beneficial. Since gender equality is a national priority, future initiatives can be fortified through robust partnerships with these entities, which are key players in promoting entrepreneurship and women's empowerment in Egypt.
- **Recommendation 35:** Strengthen the semi-formal network created by the entrepreneurs in Sohag and Luxor. Established through the project's initiatives, this network is a platform for these entrepreneurs to exchange experiences and knowledge. AUEED could create and support formal communication mechanisms to ensure that the project remains responsive to its needs and challenges, enhancing its sustainability and community impact.

- **Recommendation 36:** To be effective and efficient, the project was not supposed to take a one-dimensional approach focusing only on women and girls but on the dynamics between men and women, boys and girls, at different societal, political, and family levels. This means ensuring the existence of a gender analysis to fully understand the relationships between men and women and their different vulnerabilities and capacities.
- **Recommendation 37:** Develop a precise mechanism to explore the different gendered roles and relationships within the project target area and identify how these create specific needs, risks, and inequities for different groups.
- **Recommendation 38:** Conduct a gender analysis to understand differences in the lives of women, men, boys, and girls in the project context and design activities to address these gender differences.

Engaging men and boys would be very beneficial for the project, which targets social change. Psychosocial support for men is also needed.

3.8 PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

This section involved gathering data and conducting analysis on several critical aspects. First, it assessed the value that different partners added to the project, recognizing each partner's unique contributions and expertise to enhance its overall impact. Secondly, it examined the coordination mechanisms with partners and the channels that enabled effective partner participation, ensuring seamless collaboration and communication throughout the project's lifecycle. The analysis also identified the key factors contributing to building strong and fruitful partnerships, such as mutual goals, clear communication, and shared commitment. Additionally, it explored the critical barriers to building such partnerships, including challenges like differing organizational priorities, limited resources, and potential conflicts—the project aimed to optimize partner engagement and enhance collaborative efforts by addressing these factors.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION FINDINGS

- **Finding 103: Distinctive Partnership with the Design and Fashion Center:** Collaborating with the Design and Fashion Center in the production line of costumes at the Menya workshop proved to be a distinctive and flexible partnership. This alliance significantly added value to the project, enhancing the quality and design of the products and providing crucial technical support.
- **Finding 104: Careful Selection of Technical Support Providers:** The project meticulously selected technical support providers based on specific technical criteria, ensuring they matched the required support fields. These carefully chosen partners delivered high-quality services, contributing significantly to the project's success.
- **Finding 105: Effective Partnership with the NCW:** The project successfully partnered with the NCW to conduct training on violence against women. This partnership, which stemmed from the previous project's final evaluation recommendations, stands out as a key achievement, contributing to the project's social impact and addressing critical issues affecting women.
- **Finding 106: Networking with MOSS:** The previous project's final evaluation also recommended networking with MOSS. This collaboration was marked by women entrepreneurs' participation in

one of the Ministry's exhibitions. The relationship is expected to be further activated and strengthened in the upcoming project phase, enhancing support for women entrepreneurs.

- **Finding 107: Effective and Harmonized Partnerships:** The project's success was significantly bolstered by the harmonized partnership between FPS and AUEED, which profoundly impacted the beneficiaries. This strong partnership was characterized by flexibility and a professional approach to dealing with partners, allowing the project to build robust alliances.
- **Finding 108: Positive and Flexible Partner Response:** A Beacon of Support partners, including AECID, displayed a positive and understanding attitude toward unexpected challenges. Their flexibility and support enabled efficient changes in project management. AECID, in particular, was highly supportive, comprehending all implementation processes and related requirements.
- **Finding 109: Leveraging AUEED's Accumulative Experience:** AUEED's extensive experience in the target governorates facilitated the establishment of strong relationships with project beneficiaries. This existing rapport allowed the project to commence on solid ground, effectively "hitting the ground running" and ensuring smooth implementation.
- **Finding 110: Assumption of AUEED's Capacity and Infrastructure:** The project design assumed that AUEED possessed the necessary capacity and infrastructure for effective execution, which proved accurate.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 39:** Enhance coordination with government partners by building on the existing coordination with MOSS and NCW.
- **Recommendation 40:** Expand Governmental Partnerships, including those with the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Labor, and Ministry of Youth and Sports.
- **Recommendation 41: Leverage New Partnerships:** Utilize additional government and other partnerships to implement activities effectively.
- **Recommendation 42: Strengthen Government Collaboration:** Focus on deeper collaboration with current and new governmental partners.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings and recommendations from the project's recent evaluation underscore its substantial impact on economic empowerment, gender equality, innovation, and sustainability. The project has significantly improved the livelihoods of young entrepreneurs, women, and marginalized groups, driving social and economic advancements. Through targeted activities and comprehensive support mechanisms, the project has successfully empowered beneficiaries to achieve financial independence, improve their living conditions, and gain recognition within their communities.

The project's alignment with the needs and priorities of the target groups has been a cornerstone of its success. By focusing on economic empowerment, gender equality, and innovation, the project has directly addressed pressing social and economic challenges. Its relevance is evident in the tailored interventions that met the beneficiaries' specific needs, such as training programs, financial services, and support for green economy initiatives, providing reassurance about the project's effectiveness and impact.

The project's effectiveness is demonstrated by its tangible outcomes across different beneficiary groups. For young entrepreneurs, the project enhanced entrepreneurship, increased incomes, reduced economic burdens, and improved social status. The success of gender-sensitive approaches in challenging traditional norms and empowering women within this group further underscores the project's impact. Establishing innovative workshops, recycling initiatives, and digital marketing strategies showcases the project's ability to drive meaningful change and instills optimism about its future. For rural women, the project significantly enhanced technical skills and provided access to safe spaces and supportive networks, improving their economic prospects and fostering a sense of community. Additionally, the role of pioneer entrepreneurs in enhancing their leadership skills and becoming role models for local community students is a source of pride and encouragement, highlighting the project's success in fostering leadership and inspiring future generations.

The project has efficiently utilized resources and partnerships to achieve its goals. A meticulous selection of technical support providers, effective collaboration with entities like the NCW and governmental bodies, and leveraging AUEED's extensive experience have all contributed to streamlined implementation. The project's flexibility and adaptability in response to challenges have ensured efficient management and resource allocation, instilling confidence in the project's ability to maximize benefits for the target groups.

The project has effectively enhanced economic opportunities for young entrepreneurs and women. By providing comprehensive training, access to financial services, and support for innovative projects, the initiative has facilitated the growth of small businesses and improved income stability. Notable innovations include establishing green economy initiatives, recycling workshops, and digital marketing strategies, which have opened new avenues for economic development and environmental sustainability.

One of the project's significant achievements is its gender-sensitive and transformative approach, which has challenged and reshaped traditional gender norms. By addressing the root causes of gender inequality, the project has promoted more equitable gender roles and increased women's financial independence and decision-making power. This shift has enhanced women's economic status and contributed to social cohesion and community development, inspiring a new way of thinking about gender roles and empowerment.

Sustainability has been a cornerstone of the project, with efforts focused on ensuring long-term impact. Financial sustainability for target groups has been achieved through loans and re-lending initiatives. In contrast, technical sustainability has been supported by maintaining a skilled team and transferring expertise to new projects. The project has also emphasized the continuity of social impact by incorporating components focused on protection and recovery from violence.

Strong partnerships have played a crucial role in the project's success. Collaborations with the Design and Fashion Center, NCW, and governmental bodies have provided high-quality technical support and training. These partnerships have been marked by flexibility, professionalism, and a shared commitment to the project's objectives. The harmonized collaboration between FPS and AUEED, in particular, has significantly impacted the beneficiaries and contributed to the project's overall success.

Overall, the project has laid a robust foundation for sustainable community development. The detailed recommendations provide a clear roadmap for building on this success, ensuring that the project's benefits continue to grow and reach a broader audience. Moving forward, the project plans to expand and add needy areas, further amplifying its impact and fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and prosperous society.

5. LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Integrated Planning is Essential for Sustainability:** Developing a comprehensive implementation plan from the project's inception ensures long-term success and impact. Progressive planning, although adaptive, can benefit from a more structured approach to integrate financial, technical, and social sustainability early on.
- 2. Partnerships Amplify Impact:** Strong partners, either governmental or non-governmental, international or national ones, and strong technical support providers significantly enhance the project's effectiveness. Establishing and maintaining flexible, professional partnerships is crucial for leveraging additional resources and support.
- 3. Tailored Training Programs Drive Empowerment:** Providing comprehensive, high-quality training tailored to the specific needs of women and young entrepreneurs boosts their skills, confidence, and economic independence. Ensuring supportive measures, such as appropriate training timings and locations, maximizes participation and impact.
- 4. Community/Market-Driven Approaches Ensure Relevance:** Conducting community needs assessment and specialized market studies helps align project designs with current target group needs and market demands, ensuring relevance and maximizing impact. Market analysis can uncover innovative ideas and foster partnerships, enhancing the project's sustainability and growth potential.
- 5. Gender-Sensitive/Transformative Approaches Promote Equality:** Implementing gender-sensitive and transformative strategies effectively challenges traditional norms and empowers women. This approach not only improves women's economic status but also fosters equitable gender roles and social cohesion within communities.
- 6. Resource Mobilization and Financial Planning are Crucial:** Formulating a resource mobilization plan with key partners and increasing loan portfolio funding can extend the project's reach and financial sustainability. Ensuring ongoing financial support and growth for beneficiaries is vital for long-term success.
- 7. Continuous Support and Follow-Up Enhance Outcomes:** Establishing robust MEL and follow-up systems to monitor and support beneficiaries after capacity-development interventions ensures continuous skill development and empowerment. Regular check-ins, additional training sessions, and mentorship opportunities are key to sustaining progress.
- 8. Community-Based Approaches Foster Inclusion:** Initiatives like parallel schools that integrate educational and vocational training for mothers and children create a supportive, collaborative environment. This approach enhances family income, promotes economic resilience, and fosters community development.
- 9. Flexibility and Adaptability are Key to Overcoming Challenges:** The project's ability to adapt to unexpected challenges and make efficient changes in management highlights the importance of flexibility. Supportive partners, understanding of implementation processes, and adaptive planning contribute to successful project execution.

10. Leveraging Existing Experience and Infrastructure Accelerates Progress: Utilizing AUEED's extensive experience and established relationships in target governorates allowed the project to start on solid ground. Building on existing infrastructure and rapport with beneficiaries ensures smooth implementation and effective outreach.

These lessons provide valuable insights for future initiatives, emphasizing the importance of integrated planning, strong partnerships, tailored training, market relevance, gender equality, financial sustainability, continuous support, community-based approaches, flexibility, and leveraging existing experience. By incorporating these lessons, future projects can enhance their impact and sustainability, fostering inclusive and equitable development.

ANNEXES:

ANNEX (1): FINAL EVALUATION MATRIX



Annex (1)_Final
Evaluation Matrix.docx

ANNEX (2): LIST OF INTERVIEWEES



Annex
(2)_Interviewees Lists.c

ANNEX (3): FINAL EVALUATION DATA COLLECTION TOOLS



ANNEX (3)_Final
Evaluation Data Collec

ANNEX (4): FINAL EVALUATION TEAM MEMBERS



Annex (4)_Final
Evaluation Team Mem

ANNEX (5): FINAL EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE



Annex (5)_Final
Evaluation Terms of R€



Annex (5)_Final
Evaluation Terms of R€

ANNEX (6): PRIMARY RESULTS POWERPOINT PRESENTATION



Annex (6)_Primary
Results PPP_AUEED_A

ANNEX (7): SELECTED SUCCESS STORIES



Annex (7)_Pioneers
Success Stories.pdf



Annex (7)_Pioneers
Success Stories.docx



Annex (7)_Minia
Success Stories.pdf



Annex (7)_Minia
Success Stories.docx

ANNEX (8): DESK REVIEW DOCUMENTS LIST



Annex (8)_Desk
Review Documents Lis

ANNEX (9): GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS



Annex (9)_Glossary of
Definitions.docx

ANNEX (10): TRAINING MANUALS AND MATERIALS



مجالات عمل الجمعيات
بنيّة للخدمات الاجتماعية



دليل تدريب ريادة
الاعمال.pdf



تدريب ريادة
الاعمال.pdf



الادارة المالية.pdf



First-Level Tailoring
Manual.pdf



Annex (10)_Training
Manuals and Materials