



# A NEW OPPORTUNITY: THE SPARK OF A DREAM PROJECT

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Noura and her two-year-old daughter.

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“We went through very difficult times and I often had to seek support from relatives and neighbors, especially when my husband, a simple farmer, had no work for days and weeks. And it got worse with the COVID-19 crisis. If it were not for the little aid we received from community associations, we wouldn’t have been able to survive this crisis!”

This is Noura Shukri Abdel Hamid, a 32-year-old Egyptian farmer from the village of Burtabat, Maghagha District in El-Minya Governorate, Egypt and a beneficiary of the project “Improving the livelihoods and nutrition of rural women and their families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Neither she nor her husband have adequate education, but she wants a better future and a better life for her children. She is keen that her eldest son, Abdullah, who is 15 years old, and his younger brother Abd al-Rahman, who is 11, get a decent education and obtain their “great certificate”, as she refers to it – a university degree.

She has different expectations for her two-year-old daughter, Habiba. She would be quite satisfied if Habiba completes her secondary education and then gets married, as is the norm for girls in her village. If, however, circumstances allow Habiba to continue her education as with her male siblings, that would be alright with her as well.

“We kept waiting long days and nights for relief, for the COVID-19 crisis to pass, leaving us in peace without losing any family members. We had insufficient nutrition, and medical services were not easily accessible. We depended heavily on traditional recipes and herbal remedies.”

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Noura – a micro entrepreneur.

She endured, coped and did not give up hope. “My husband is a simple farmer with an intermittent job that doesn’t ensure enough income for the whole family. I was always looking for an opportunity to support him in covering our living expenses and improving my family’s livelihood, until the project on improving the livelihoods and nutrition of rural women affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in Minya

Governorate appeared, offering small-animal rearing projects for families via NGOs working with the project. I applied for this opportunity via one of the associations working with the project, and luckily was selected, after they reviewed my financial status and living conditions.”

Accordingly, Noura and others selected by the project were trained in the basics of running micro projects, conducting simple market and feasibility studies, product marketing, and determining the appropriate time to sell their products. She received two female goats and 250 kg of feed to kick-start her business. She and other women were also trained in how to properly raise goats and sheep, how to produce homemade feed at lower costs, how to monitor their animals’ health and how to report symptoms early on in order to avoid infections.

“The goat project, which I received from FAO, will help me improve my livelihood and provide an income for my family, which is greatly needed. I received two female goats and 250 kilos of fodder and look forward to having 20 goats. I will sell the male goats that are born and leave the female goats in the herd so that they reproduce more goats, as taught by the FAO farmer field school,” said Noura. Now she has hope that she can grow her dream business and attain her aspirations for a better life and future!



Noura is a micro-entrepreneur participating in FAO’s project.