

Small Industries and the Population and Development Project (PDP) in Egypt⁽¹⁾

"It is now realized that an isolated family planning programme is not the total solution, rather fertility behavior is a reflection of the socio-economic structure and its pattern of change."⁽²⁾ Since children in developing countries are considered a source of income and a form of power, it seems necessary to formulate a population policy which would provide an alternative source of income, status, security, and emotional needs for women. In accordance with this policy, the Population and Development Project (PDP) was created in Egypt in 1977 with the aim of involving women in various **socio-economic development projects**. The author of this article, Ahmed Abdel Fattah, gives us first hand information about PDP, a project of which he is director.

The PDP grew out of studies which revealed the need to transfer the responsibility for implementation of family planning to the local level. The researchers were convinced that "a program actively involving the people themselves would be more acceptable to them."

The PDP started with support from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. Since 1980 the U.S. Agency for International Development has joined in this support.

A Rural Project

The PDP is principally a rural program because

the need in terms of population problems is greater in rural than in urban areas.

The program has three objectives: 1) reduction of population growth through increase in family planning practice, 2) upgrading women's education and employment and general production of individuals and families, 3) reduction of rural urban migration by raising the standard of village life and associating local communities in socio-economic projects.

Support of Small Industries

This support constitutes a powerful tool for upgrading socio-economic standards in rural communities. The PDP community assistance fund has supported 815 social and productive projects in 12 **governorates** from 1979-1980, in the form of interest free loans. People's participation contributed an additional 25-50% of these amounts. Loan repayments go into a revolving fund which will be reinvested during the next 5 yrs. The total budget of socio-economic projects is estimated at LE 10 million, of which the people's contribution is LE three million.

Prerogatives of the PDP

1. Advisory committees are elected in each village, thus increasing the scope of democratic participative leadership. Together with regional and central coordinators, the PDP has an efficient and effective infrastructure capable of promoting the establishment of small industries.
2. The program is supported by individual experts

⁽¹⁾ Condensed from an article by Ahmed Abdel Fattah, in **Population Studies Quarterly Review**, n^o. 58, Cairo, July/September 1981, pp. 37-42.

⁽²⁾ Quoted by Asfia Duza, **Population Studies** Op. Cit. p. 3.

and specialized institutions such as the National PDP Advisory Committee, which is responsible for strategies and policies capable of pursuing the PDP objectives.

3. The PDP has its own financial resources: the UNFPA, and the USAID; and has recently requested support from the Egyptian government.
4. The PDP encourages people's participation financially and managerially.
5. Emphasis is put on the upgrading of women's status through increased education, participation in public life, decision-making in the family and community and increased income and productive skills.
6. The program is highly interested in linkages

between productive economic projects and social projects.

7. The program supports several kinds of economic projects at the village level, particularly the small industries.
8. The PDP uses an experimental approach supplemented by action research which is capable of exploring questions related to the development of small industries, their production and marketing.
9. The PDP has interest in orientation, training and the provision of technical advice for personnel.
10. The program supports projects which are well prepared and documented.