

Date: 1-3 December and 4-6 December 2012

Country: Egypt, Cairo and Menia

By Nick Carter



There's a village in rural Egypt where the children have to walk at least 3km to get to school. It's been built in the wrong place. The children want to be educated and they make the trek every day. Its tiring for them - and the shortest route involves crossing agricultural land which upsets the farmer and there's a chance they might disturb the odd snake.

The first year the school opened the exam results were poor - tiredness was one of the factors affecting the children's performance.

Villagers have tried asking the authorities for a bus to make the journey easier, but to no avail.

In another village, the problem is reversed. There, young people would love to be able to walk to some sort of youth facility, but they don't have anything and some of them are starting to find less constructive things to do with their time. Unfortunately, although one government department says it will build a youth centre, the residents have still not been able to persuade another department to release the land.

In order to get a bus line for the children having to walk to school or the new youth centre, an effective media campaign is needed. Media Diversity Institute (MDI) organised two workshops for the representatives of Egyptian NGOs.



The MDI's project funded by the [Swedish International Development Agency](#) (SIDA) has equipped NGOs with the skills and understanding to work more effectively with Egyptian media and taught them the basics of preparing effective media campaigns and the process to set up a media unit.

As well as learning about working with media, the delegates were able to share their experiences of working to improve the quality of life for ordinary Egyptians. The workshops heard about slum areas that lacked clean drinking water, villages where houses needed roofs, discrimination against women and injuries from careless use of weapons.

The workshops were held in Cairo for NGOs from the capital and Lower Egypt, including Alexandria and North Sinai, and in Menia for organisations based in Upper Egypt. The workshops were run by former UK regional newspaper editor and media consultant Nick Carter and Maie Shawky, a capacity building and media training specialist.

Their sessions included identifying which media could be used most effectively to help achieve campaigning success, how to establish working relationships with media and the detailed analysis and planning needed to prepare a campaign.



The 55 representatives were also taught how to create a media unit inside their organisations and how to tailor messages for maximum impact. Using the full range of resources and contacts inside and out of their organisation was another important lesson.

As the workshops progressed, the NGOs were helped to develop outline plans for the campaign they wanted to deliver. They are now refining those plans for consideration by MDI. It is hoped all the plans will result in successful campaigns, but a number of the best will get extra help from MDI and its Swedish partner.

The workshops were organised within the framework of MDI's two year project "[Rebuilding post-revolution Egyptian Media: Embracing free expression, diversity and Inclusiveness](#)", supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).