

## Achievement on a Banner

**Sarah Markrum**, age 40, a widow lives in Sharona Island, a remote village in Upper Egypt, has three children, Bassem, Yostina and Abunoub (Bola). Sarah's husband, Asheia Akhnoukh, was a day laborer working at low paying odd jobs. The family's survival heavily relied on contributions from the local Church.

Sarah owns no furniture or assets. She and her daughter sleep on the floor, while the two boys share a small vermin-infested mattress. The mattress is so small that one of the boys usually ends up on the floor which is a source for parasites and pathogens which can cause a variety of diseases.

Sarah's children were struggling in school, especially Bassem who normally excelled academically. She also could not pay for private tutoring which is now the principal schooling track due to the collapse of the Egyptian educational system. The financial hardship caused Sarah to be depressed. Finding

Freedom through Friendship (FFF) and the Council of Services and Development (CSD) met Sarah in a dire situation. Within a month, with a grant of 2,000 EGP (\$120), 30 vaccinated chickens and enriched poultry feed was delivered. For an additional \$600, Sarah received two beds, mattresses, bedding, a refrigerator and an electric washing machine. The team also paid the annual tutoring fees for the children. The beds had an immediate positive health impact by alleviating allergiess. To Sarah, the washing machine was the greatest liberation from the daily chore of hand washing clothes. A source of pride was Bassem's academic success. He is now one of the top students in school. A banner featuring the pictures and names of the best students hangs across the street (top row, 2nd from the left).

Unfortunately, all of the chickens died from unknown disease. Due to the loss of the poultry with several widows, the FFF & CSD team has concluded that poultry production is NOT a viable project for rural households. This is an opposing view to the prevailing theory that poultry production is an option to improving the economic status of women in rural areas of developing countries.

Two CSD facilitators, Marian Gamal and Bassem Wahba were influential in delivering hope to Sarah and each child through support and building a strong friendship with the family. Sarah is inspired with the progress that was achieved financially and academically.

*Sarah thanks FFF and CSD for caring. And we do care!*



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