

Farmers' organizations serving farmers and rural territories

**Newsletter n°13
November 2018**

Women in Biyehmo follow trainings to grow their business

The community development association of the village of Biyehmo in the Fayoum governorate launched its program of entrepreneurship training specifically tailored for women of the locality. Women there were already active in the association by producing crafts from the wood and leaves of the palm tree, but the production struggled to integrate the local market. The women from the association expressed their frustration with this situation and asked for support and coaching in entrepreneurship. Many of them expressed their will to evolve from a small scale, side activity, to a viable business that can contribute significantly to their household income. Two groups of 15 to 20 women each participated to two sessions of trainings in September, October and November 2018.

The Biyehmo area is famous for its palm groves and the quality and quantity of their dates production. The first session focused on dates processing and the baking of cakes and other products with an important value-added. A group of women from the association travelled to Siwa during the second week of November to present their production in the Siwa dates festival, one of the major date festivals in the region.

High illiteracy rate, a major challenge in training women to entrepreneurship

Most of the women involved in the association in Biyehmo are partially or totally illiterate and expressed their concerns regarding their abilities to manage a business. The expert who facilitated the trainings adapted its material and activities to this issue, creating a comprehensive tailored curriculum.

By using images, concrete illustrated example, video content and games, the expert succeeded in creating a positive dynamic among the women who set up their own goals and organized themselves to succeed through mutual help and solidarity. Most of the women who attended the training realized that there are ways to overcome this obstacle.



More trainings will be implemented in food processing but also in crafts making, with a particular attention to selling and marketing skills as well as networking. The goal of the overall program is to establish connection with the market in Cairo, where their production can be sold for a higher price and could generate more revenue.

The production is expected to raise in quantity and quality in order to present it again at the Siwa festival on a bigger scale but also to organize a local dates festival in Biyehmo where the culture, the crafts and the skills around date cultivation and harvest will be displayed and promoted.



Apple producers from Rich debate their results of the season

After two years of technical follow-up and advice on apple orchards management, it was the time for a technical and economic assessment of the 2018-2019 season. At the beginning of 2018, some apple producers started recording their technical and economic data. Following the autumn harvests and sales, individual and collective restitutions were organised and discussed in these various groups.

"Understanding and comparing gross margins", an inspiring exercise

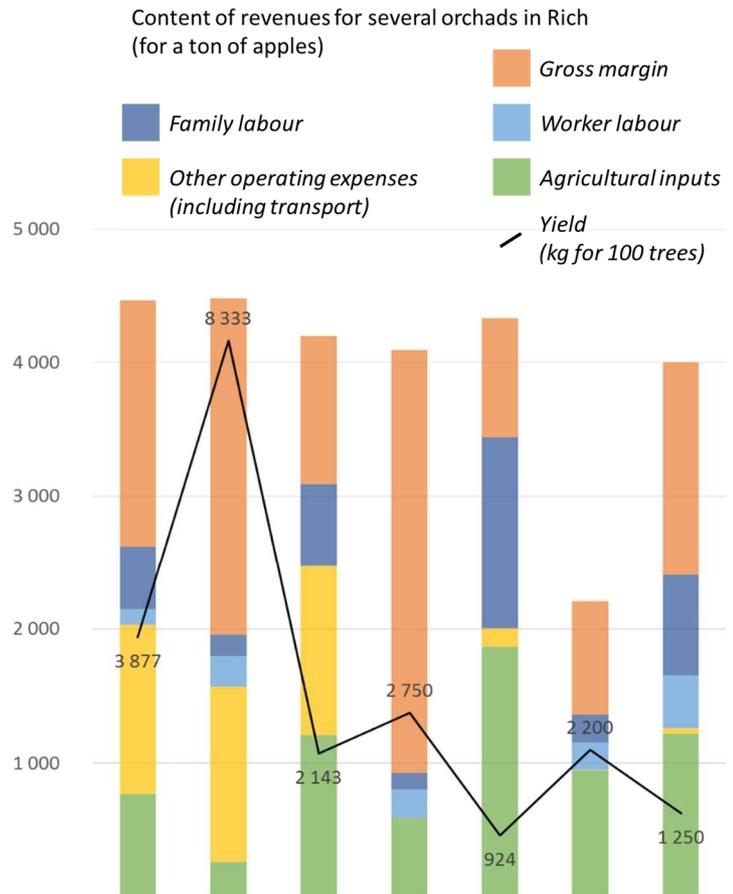
As a first step, the crop technical path of some apple producers was reconstructed and presented to the group. This allowed apple producers not only to know the practices of others, but also to listen the adjustments of dates, doses, etc. proposed by the technician specialized in fruits production.

"I have better identified the errors in my practices; I can see that I can progress and I have some areas for improvement to test."

In a second phase, in addition to the yield estimations of these few orchards, the economic results were presented, explained and discussed. It allowed an understanding of how expenses are broken down, and through this, the relative importance of inputs, labour and transport costs in gross margins.

After these individual restitutions, each group could compare the results of the orchards monitored in its area with those of other groups: margin analyses were carried out (i) per ton of apples and (ii) per 100 trees. The exchanges focused on the efficiency of crop technical itineraries (in terms of yield, but also in terms of agricultural inputs costs) and the effect of marketing methods (sales on standing crops or wholesale markets) on gross margins.

The apple producers were curious and interested in these various analyses and comparisons. Combined with advice, these economic analysis exercises can allow apple producers to adjust their choices and practices. Comparing yourself from one year to another, monitoring the effect of certain practices over the long term (such as pruning, which does not have an immediate effect), ... as well as a relevant group facilitation generally help producers progress, within the group.



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