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The process of monitoring and evaluation of the Egyptian social pension program (al-daman al-igtimaay): An assessment

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THE PROCESS OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE EGYPTIAN SOCIAL PENSION PROGRAM (AL-DAMAN AL-IGTIMAAY): AN ASSESSMENT

A Thesis Submitted to the

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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By

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on one of the oldest social protection programs in Egypt, the social pension program (Al Daman Al-Igtimaay), implemented by the Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS). It attempts to assess and analyze the extent of available monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes in the social pension program applications and in some of Egypt's relatively poorest governorates, Assiut and Qena. The main findings include the presence of baseline data on the families, some poverty indicators, and the presence of certain elements of monitoring and reporting. However, there's a lack of key performance indicators, long and interim goals and targets, as well as having an intense focus on monitoring rather than evaluation. The findings showed that while there has been a growing importance for monitoring across different administrative levels; however, there's a general lack and misdistribution of resources especially human and financial to conduct these activities. Finally the study also presents a historical moment of transition from the old social pension program to current reforms planned by the MoSS to correspond to the current context, as well as the aspirations and needs for improved developmental results.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acronym	
MoSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfers
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PWD	People with Disabilities
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
RBME	Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation
DLI	Disbursement linked indicators
PMT	Proxy Mean Testing
ILO	International Labor Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIECS	The Household Income, Expenditure, and Consumption Survey
NCSCR	The National Center for Social and Criminological Research
NOSI	National Organization for Social Insurance
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics

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Chapter 1: Introductory Discussions

Public sector organizations around the world have recognized that traditional methods of managing public affairs, institutions, and services are neither suited for our rapidly changing world nor are they responsive to fulfilling the increasing citizens demands (Kettl, 2000). Both citizens and other stakeholders such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), international donor organizations, private sector businesses, and parliaments have been pushing governments to improve service delivery models, and achieve better development results and impact. Improving developmental results and impact require that governments plan wisely for developmental activities, projects, and programs in a way that corresponds and recognizes the overall context of a country and its associated practicalities. It also requires good financial, political, and human resources to support these activities, but the most important of all, it requires a rigorous, efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. Achieving better developmental results is of pivotal importance to this discussion especially in light of the current status of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and population health following the global financial crisis and unrest that followed the Arab Spring.

Poverty in Egypt is a widespread problem with 26.3% of the population in 2013 falling below the national poverty line according to the Egyptian statistical bureau, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). Sabri (2005) discusses the influence of economic neo-liberalism and structural adjustment policies on the poverty in Egypt, especially regarding inflation, rising cost of living, devaluation of the Egyptian Pound. She highlights the existence of research on poverty in both qualitative and quantitative forms exist in Egypt; however, she argues that the research is not sufficient. The quantitative research focuses on measurements of poverty and poverty lines and the amount of population exposed to poverty; however, she highlights that statistics produced differ according to different organizations and scholars' measurements due to differences in definitions of poverty, dimensions of poverty measured, and different methodologies used. The qualitative aspect of the research focuses on how the poor cope with poverty and on manifestations of poverty.

The Household Income, Expenditure, and Consumption Survey (HIECS) is a reliable source of data published by CAPMAS and it helps in giving indicators about living standards of households and individuals, and provides databases that are used for poverty measurements to inform the design of social assistance programs, compile consumer price indices, and assessed inflation (CAPMAS and Economic Research Forum website).

CAPMAS and HIECS data show that poverty is not evenly distributed across the country with discrepancies across geographic regions and between urban and rural areas. Poverty mapping exercises are the method that depicts the spatial distribution of poverty indicators across the different regions and these exercises are dependent on HIECS and some elements of the population census also produced by CAPMAS. According to these maps, Upper Egypt specifically holds a very high poverty ranking where it has a 26.7% poverty rate in urban areas and a 49.4% poverty rate in rural areas (CAPMAS, 2013). The differences in poverty rankings across the different regions can be attributed to differences in educational levels and educational quality, employment, public services availability, as well as differences in access to roads, infrastructure, and markets available for trade.

Aside from geographical poverty mapping, research shows that some vulnerable groups in Egypt are highly susceptible to social shocks and falling into poverty gaps. These vulnerable groups focus on women headed households which include divorced, widowed, and deserted women, disabled persons, old age, underemployed and seasonally employed individuals, those working in the informal economy and orphans (Loewe, 2004).

Poverty has been attributed to a lack of physical, human, and social assets with high illiteracy rates, few social rights and political influence, as well as low wages and high unemployment rates (Loewe, 2004). The Gamal Abdel Nasser era initiated a wave of guaranteed public sector jobs for citizens; however, with increasing globalization, the number of university graduates, structural reforms, and the inability of the public sector to absorb more employees, the youth have turned more and more into the informal economy for jobs and sustenance (Barsoum, 2015). Informal employment refers to jobs that lack work contracts, employment benefits, and social protection schemes (Barsoum,

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2015). The OECD's definition of social protection focuses on poverty, capacity, and risks through arguing that social protection is a set of "policies and actions which enhance the capacity of poor and vulnerable groups to escape from poverty, and better manage risks and shocks" (OECD, 2009:17).

Following the 1952 revolution, in response to the rising rates of poverty, and in line with global commitment across the globe to social protection against income and social shocks, Egypt worked on a social protection system that includes different schemes. A 2002 report published by the World Bank and the Egyptian Ministry of Planning tackles the issue of social protection in Egypt (World Bank and Ministry of Planning, 2002). The report argues that there are three main social protection programs in Egypt, namely the cash transfers (Al Daman Al-Igtimaay) and social insurance programs (*Al Taameen Al-Igtimaay*) implemented by MoSS, the food subsidy program (*Al-Tamween*), and the programs implemented by the Egyptian Social Fund for Development like public works and intensive labor programs. The report classifies social protection programs in Egypt to be either welfare related or development related arguing that the social pension program (*Al-Daman Al-Igtimaay*) is welfare related and severely underfunded hence providing very low amounts to families in poverty. The report concludes that transfers and subsidies need to be better targeted in order to reach the poorest families and succeed in lifting them from poverty with emphasis on using poverty characteristics in the evaluation of families applying for the social pensions rather than relying solely on the subjective evaluation of the social workers. Furthermore, the report concludes that there needs to be better monitoring of the poverty status and the impact of social protection programs on poverty in terms of quality and quantity.

Another report (see Shaban et al., 2005) shows that spending in Egypt on social protection, especially social pensions, and food subsidies is low compared to spending on energy subsidies. It also shows that there are many organizations working on social protection but with little coordination, their efforts are fragmented and thus have less reach to the poor. At the time of publishing, the authors argued that social protection programs were not successful in getting the poor out of poverty due to little efforts on monitoring and evaluation of programs, aside from reports and reviews from donor

funded programs, and that there is a need for more systematic monitoring and impact evaluations for these programs. The report provides information on the administration of the social pension program and shows that management of information systems, automation, and the use of information technology is uncommon. It also suggests reforms in targeting mechanisms to improving the reach and effectiveness of social pension through implementing geographic targeting with emphasis on the poorest regions and using HIECS and poverty maps, targeting on the basis of electricity consumption, or proxy mean testing which the report argues will produce the best results. Finally, the report suggests that Egypt might want to consider implementing other programs like Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) or public works programs to tackle poverty and that there is a role for communities and the private sector in identifying and reaching out for the poor.

Sholkamy and Hallez (2011) discuss social policy and protection and argue that quality of implementation, rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge creation, and transparency and fairness are pivotal elements for the success of any social protection program. They discuss the challenges the Arab world is facing with regards to poverty and the rhetoric and movements in social protection discourse, especially with regards to World Bank and IMF approaches to countries to instill social protection systems.

Based on the above discussions, the next section is going to examine some of the main social protection programs in Egypt like social insurance (*Al-Taa'meen Al-Igtimaay*), social pensions (*Al-Daman Al-Igtimaay*), health care insurance, as well as subsidies on certain commodities.

1.1 A Glance at public social protection programs in Egypt
1.1.1 The Social Insurance System in Egypt
According to the Household Income, Expenditure, and Consumption Survey, HIECS 2012/2013, 60.1% of household heads in Egypt are participating or benefitting from social insurance systems. The social insurance system is a scheme where workers pay contributions which are then invested by the state and are repaid once the worker reaches retirement age or faces a social shock.

Loewe (2004) identifies six groups covered by social insurance schemes. The first group is comprised of public and private sector employees and this is the general social insurance scheme regulated by law 79 of 1975. This group's pension largely depends on worker, employer, and state contributions to cover contingencies such as maternity, unemployment, old age, sickness, and coverage for dependents of former employees in case of death. These employees are also covered by health insurance provided by the National Health Insurance Organization (Loewe, 2004). The second insured group consists of employees of multinational corporations and professional associations. Employees in this group can opt out of the general scheme and can enroll in private insurance with better social and health benefits. The third and fourth insured groups are self-employed persons, employers, and migrant workers. This group has better pensions; however, lack health insurance and unemployment benefits. The fifth group includes the army and those in top bureaucracy positions and this group is not covered by the national organization for social insurance but is rather covered by some ministries and non-contributory schemes through tax financing. The final group is comprised of those that are not covered by the five mentioned types of insurance and are enrolled in the comprehensive social insurance system regulated by law 112 of 1980. This pension was also called "El-Sadat pension" and it provides a pension for those who are above 65 years of age and who have proved to be completely disabled and are uncovered by other types of social insurance mechanisms.

Loewe (2004) identifies key issues with the current social insurance system including the majority of the population not being covered by serious risks like unemployment, health insurance rates being too low and the quality of services offered being of poor quality, not providing protection for vulnerable groups especially women household heads. Actual coverage rates by social insurance are problematic where many Egyptians are not enrolled in social insurance schemes because of mistrust in the system, a lack of awareness and preference to spend today's income on consumption rather than savings for future shocks, difficulties in administrative issues, and claiming of rights to social insurance, issues with the monitoring of the system and supervising employers to ensure worker rights. The benefits provided by the current system are also too low despite the contribution rates being reasonable because of issues in adjustments according

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to inflation rates, salaries and wages being too low, and the lack of sanction enforcement on those who do not pay due contributions (Loewe, 2004).

1.1.2 Healthcare insurance

Loewe (2004) discusses public healthcare and health insurance which are characterized by system fragmentation and lack of coordination between five different types of healthcare providers including private hospitals and clinics, health insurance organization, curative care organization hospitals, hospitals and healthcare facilities owned by ministries and agencies, and finally public health care facilities that mainly serve the poorest segments of the population and that are distinguished with their poor quality.

According to the Household Income, Expenditure, and Consumption Survey, HIECS 2012/2013, only 38.1% of households are participating in the health insurance system.

1.1.3 Commodity subsidization

Another social protection mechanism is the commodity subsidization programs offered by the different Egyptian ministries. For example by the ministry of supply and internal trade through subsidizing bread, cooking oil, tea, and sugar, and other commodities (Loewe, 2004). Meanwhile, other ministries and agencies provide subsidies for electricity, fuel, gas, and piped water. The commodity subsidization scheme has an issue with benefiting the rich rather than the poor (Loewe, 2004).

1.1.4 Social Assistance and Pensions in Egypt

There is a system for non-contributory social pension and assistance programs run by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Al-Awqaf ministry) and this mostly targets ministry employees (Loewe, 2004). Another program is run by Nasser Social Bank (NSB) and is financed by the charitable donations of *Zakat*[1]. These funds are directed to covering the costs of marriage for the poor, providing cash assistance to women headed households,

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[1] Zakat is money collected from people donating their money for charitable causes to the poor and needy as part of the Islamic doctrine.

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orphans, elderly persons, and poor families in general through *Zakat* committees spread throughout NSB branches in Egypt (Loewe, 2004).

The largest social assistance and pension program is run by the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS). Law 30 of 1977 is one of the earlier laws for non-contributory social pensions (Al-Daman Al-Igtimaay) targeting poor and vulnerable groups like orphans, women headed households, orphans, elderly and disabled persons through monthly cash transfers. The transfers provided under this law were not conditional nor was the family status followed up with by social workers and researchers. Furthermore, the beneficiary groups did not include the unemployed or underemployed (Loewe, 2004). This law was replaced by a newer law, Law 137 of 2010 and its bylaw 451 issued on December 20, 2010 for *Al-Daman Al-Igtimaay*.

Law 137 of 2010 also provides financial transfers, which can be transferred on either monthly or exceptional basis according to type of help/transfer to the same beneficiaries. Law 137 of 2010 introduces new elements to the traditional social pension program through obliging social researchers working in MoSS to conduct a baseline survey for the family to determine poverty status, compile databases and datasets to be shared across different stakeholders, conduct bi-annual follow up with the status of families to decide on continued eligibility, obtain medical commission certificates for disability and illness proofs, as well as be responsible for the integration of families into productive activities like training and employment centers. It also introduces a new family file and prepares the old system to the migration to another system of social assistance.

Sabri (2005) conducts an assessment of the social pension program in Egypt implemented by the MoSS. She then moves to discuss the social pension program, and argues that it is not well designed nor well implemented because its benefits are too meager compared to the soaring costs of living, its administrative procedures are too complex, especially for illiterate, sick, disabled, and elderly persons who are some of the main targets of the program, and also that employees are very subjective when it comes to evaluating families' compliance with the criteria for pensions. She also argues that the social assistance does not cover many poor groups who might need it, including poor

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individuals with no employment or street children for example. Her interviews with beneficiaries showed that the target groups interviewed lack information about the program or about how to apply for it, have experienced issues with bureaucracies and delays, unprofessional behavior, corruption, or subjectivity from social workers and officials administrating it, and difficulties in procuring documentation for applications.

In 2015, presidential decree number 15 for the year 2015 was issued to allow the prime minister to approve new social pension and assistance programs that covers beneficiaries not previously covered by the traditional *Daman Igtimaay* based on suggestions from the Minister of Social Solidarity and the Minister of Finance. Accordingly, Prime Ministerial decree number 540 for the year 2015 was issued to legalize a new social assistance program by the Arabic name of "Takaful and Karama" which translates into the words "Solidarity and Dignity". The decree allows MoSS to start to implement *Takaful,* which is a conditional cash transfer program that disburses financial transfers to families determined to be poor through a proxy mean test (PMT) formula and links financial assistance to school attendance of children (at least 80 Percent of the school year), and health and nutrition issues (vaccination, weight measurements, attendance of health and hygiene literacy classes). *Karama* is cash assistance given to the elderly 65+ years and the disabled (disability that prevents ability to work) with conditions on providing proof of life every six months and providing medical commission certificates with the percentage of disability. Decree 540 for 2015 emphasizes the importance of beneficiary data registration, statistical calculation of poverty, proxy mean testing for eligibility, family follow ups, disbursement of funds through smart cards, and the financial amounts allocated to families accepted into the program.

Takaful and Karama was designed based on an earlier pilot project implemented in Ain El-Siera area in Cairo, Egypt. Sholkamy (2011) explains this pilot project through a case study. She shows that social workers in the MoSS are responsible for identifying eligible families, that there had been little investment in capacity building of social workers or the infrastructure that helps them work. Sholkamy's study criticizes the social pension system through saying that the targeting mechanisms are faulty because there is

no database of families that deserve pensions, the paid amounts are too little, there is corruption in the process, and the eligibility criteria do not reflect current hardships and needs. This study further notes that social workers are the personnel primarily responsible for registering and following up with families in social pensions. Because social workers are legally liable if they record any false information, even if because of the family's false reporting, there are incentives for them to not deliver services. The social workers are also underpaid. In the Ain El-Siera pilot project, social workers were given a specific tool to conduct house visits to families, monitor the families and they were trained in a participatory manner that took into account their experiences and concerns. The targeting process also relied on geographical targeting, family poverty, self-targeting, and social worker experience. They also had a sense of ownership in the program because they were consulted in the design and implementation processes.

1.2 The purpose of the research

The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze the process of M&E of the social pension program (Al Daman Al-Igtimaay) within the Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) with a special focus on the follow up of families and human resources management for the implementation of M&E. Throughout the study, there is an analysis the methods and processes that MoSS uses in following up with families, and M&E for the progress and results of the social pension program on different administrative levels, both local and central. For the purpose of enriching the discussion, it is essential to provide a background on the MoSS as well as a background on the social protection department which is in charge of implementing the social pension program as well as the monitoring department which is in charge of implementing some M&E activities.

1.3 Background on the MoSS, social protection, and monitoring departments

The MoSS was founded on the 20th of August 1939 through a royal decree issued by King Fouad, and has changed names and specialties according to the preferences of different rulers. It has been known as the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Insurance, the Ministry of Social Solidarity and Social Justice. It was merged and separated from the Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade many times; however, throughout its history, its main mandate remained centered around the social wellbeing and welfare of citizens. The latest legal document specifying the MoSS

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mandate is presidential decree 421 for the year 2005 on the specialties of MoSS. This mandate covers many social issues especially poverty, vulnerability, civil society, and integration. In line with its overarching mandate, the MoSS works on social and economic protection on the one side, while also working on social and economic development on the other. It also seeks to protect, mainstream, and integrate elderly persons, people with disabilities (PWDs), street children, survivors of violence, orphans and foster children, families and people experiencing extreme forms of poverty, along with other vulnerable social groups (MoSS Website, 2015).

The MoSS is also responsible for licensing, monitoring, and supervising local and local branches of foreign NGOs of different forms based on the current law for nonprofit organizations number (Law 84) for the year 2002 and its executive regulations and bylaws. Also, other institutions like the Nasser Bank for Social Development, the National Center for Social and Criminological Research (NCSCR), along with the National Organization for Social Insurance (NOSI) fall under the umbrella of the MoSS (MoSS Website, 2015).

The central office of the MoSS is located in Cairo. The current organizational structure of MoSS shows that the minister supervises three sectors directly, the social care and social development sector, the financial, administrative, human resources, and directorate affairs sector, as well as the central department for the Minister's office affairs. Figure 1 shows the organizational chart of the ministry with the different sectors, central departments, and general departments, which was retrieved from the MoSS website (2015).

Figure 1: MoSS organizational Chart

Legend:
- Central Department
- General Department
- Sector

The Minister of Social Solidarity

Social Care and Social Development
- **Non-Profit Organizations and Alliances**
  - Local Organizations
  - Alliances and Foundations
  - International Organizations and Cooperatives
- **Social Care**
  - Social Defense
  - Family and Childhood
  - cultural clubs
  - Women's affairs
  - rehabilitation for PWDs
- **Social Development**
  - Technical guidance and preparation
  - Marketing and Exhibitions
  - Vocational Training and Small Industries
  - Local community development
  - Public Service
- **Social Protection**
  - Pensions and Compensations
  - Crises and Humanitrian Interventions

Financial, Administrative, Human Resources, and Directorate affairs
- **Human Development**
- **Directorate Affairs**
- **Financial and Administrative Affairs**

The Minister's office affairs

According to the Ministry's website, aside from the central level, MoSS has presence in different directorates supervised by the General Department for Directorate Affairs. According to an interview with one of the specialists working in this department, this central department supervises three other general departments, including Greater Cairo (Supervises 3 Directorates, 66 Social Administrations, and 443 social units), Upper Egypt (Supervises 10 directorates, 86 Social Administrations, and 775 social units), Lower Egypt (Supervises 14 Directorates, 141 Social Administrations, 1347 social units). As for the aspect of social service provision, the social units are the closest points of service delivery for Egyptian citizens in both urban and rural areas and provide information on the MoSS services and projects, register citizens in social pension programs, as well as refer citizens to the closest service centers in their areas. Every year, the MoSS renovates old administrations and units and sometimes builds or rents new headquarters for additional units as per community needs assessments.

According to an interview with the head of the central department for Non-profit organizations and alliances, the MoSS also has different projects and centers dedicated for certain causes. These centers include vocational training centers, centers of training for productive families' projects, service centers for working women, shelters for the hosting and protection of women survivors of violence, rehabilitation centers for disabled persons, among other projects. Some of these projects are owned and operated by the MoSS, while others are given to NGOs to run and operate with annual financial aid or with in kind contributions through providing trainers, equipment, and machineries.

1.3.1 Background on the Social Protection Department

According to documents retrieved from MoSS (2015), the social protection department in the ministry works on social pensions and on compensations for victims of disasters and crises. The goal of the department is to protect families that do not have enough income to suffice essential needs or a minimum standard of living. This is specifically for vulnerable groups in society that are not covered by social insurance umbrellas and that do not have jobs as well as the families of military conscripts while they are serving their military duty and families of martyrs.

The central department's role is to frame general policies and formulate programs for these groups, guide local administrations and social units on any necessary issues, monitor the performance of local administrations with regards to social pensions and compensations, propose amendments to laws, administrative decisions that deal with social pensions and compensations according to needs, produce reports and statistics as needed on social pension issues, formulate systems for methods of evaluating those who request exceptional assistances (MoSS Website, 2015).

Social assistance services include monthly social assistance, which are disbursed based on a field social research for the family by a social worker. The family is granted the social pension if these families or individuals lack a stable income or whose income is less than the amount given by the social pension. The beneficiaries of this pension, are determined by Law 137 of the year 2010 on social pension and the bylaws that regulate it, and the ministerial decrees issued on it. Further details about the beneficiaries of the social pension will be provided in Chapter Four.

The social protection department also offers exceptional cash assistance that can only be disbursed once every financial year for the same beneficiary groups. These include assistance for educational costs for children in preparatory, primary, and secondary levels, funeral and burial costs, costs of giving birth, and other urgent needs facing the family. Child pensions are offered by the department according to the Child Law 12 of the year 1996 and its amendments. The child pensions are offered to children whose parents are unknown, orphaned children, children of widowed women, and of men in prison (whose prison sentences does not fall below three year). The department also offers income generating project grants to be used in training and startup expenses including buying supplies or equipment to help in the project.

As for the compensations and crises, this includes assistances given to civilians injured by military operation, and these include assistances for funerals, injuries, disabilities, as well as aid for the injured or martyr family in case of sickness, educational needs, marriage, and honorary cash transfers in national holidays and religious occasions. Compensations are also given to those who reside in areas experiencing desertification for one time annually. Further assistances are given to poor families in remote areas near

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the border "Halayeb and Shalateen" as well as the families whose sons are conscripted in the military for the period of their conscription. Furthermore, compensations are given to victims of fires, floods, earthquakes, collision accidents, drowning which result in loss in lives or properties.

Figure 2 is retrieved from presentation prepared by the head of the social pension program in MoSS in 2015, and explains the different programs under the social protection department.

Figure 2: Programs under social protection department
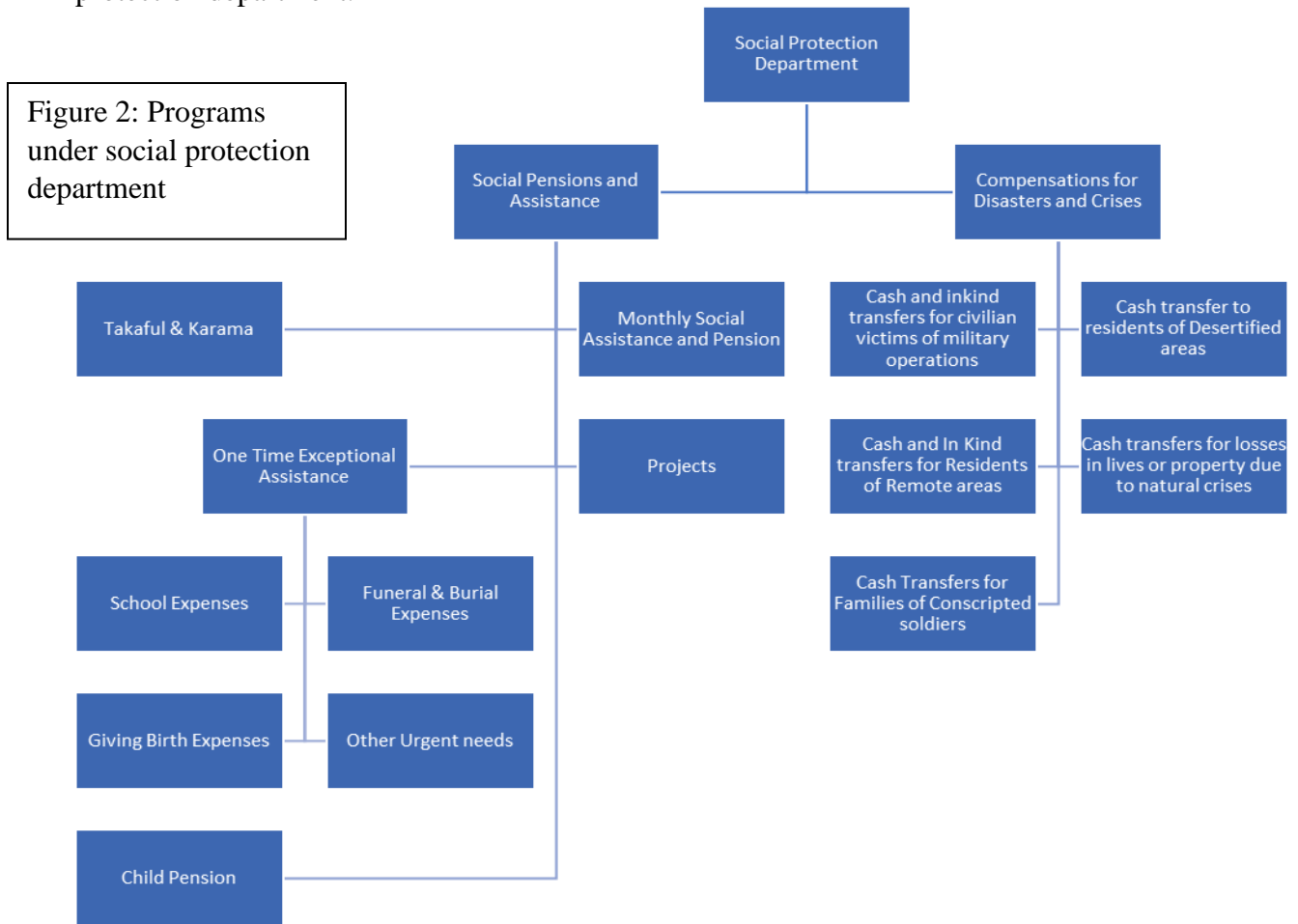
1.3.2 Background on the Monitoring Department

The process of monitoring is used at both the central level and local levels to different degrees. The organizational charts shown in (Figure 3) is obtained from MoSS's website (2015) and shows that the Minister's office affairs central department oversees different other general departments. These general departments include the technical office; information center, documentation, and decision support; public relations

department; political communication department; security department; citizen services department; external affairs department; legal affairs department; the planning department; and most importantly a monitoring department. The monitoring department's job description as listed in MoSS official documents (2015) is to assist leadership in MoSS to ensure the completion of business and delivery of service in a timely manner. It monitors the completion and deviation of duties from employees especially when it comes to citizen services. The results of this monitoring are then communicated to MoSS leadership to avoid further deviations and impose sanctions, if necessary.

In terms of tasks, this general department is tasked with following up with the field level service delivery and ensure that citizens are being served in an adequate and humane manners. Employees in the department should prepare reports on the results of monitoring and present them to MoSS leadership. They also follow up with work plans, timeframes, and work on developing systems for overseeing the work of the different departments, and NGOs that receive aid from the Ministry. According to the job description, they should also follow up with the implementation of solutions and record deviations from plans, and hold periodical meetings with involved stakeholders to follow up with progress, reach solutions, and improve performances.

Within each department and program, individuals are also assigned to the task of monitoring and evaluation for their programs.

Figure 3: Departments under the Central Department for the Minister's Office Affairs
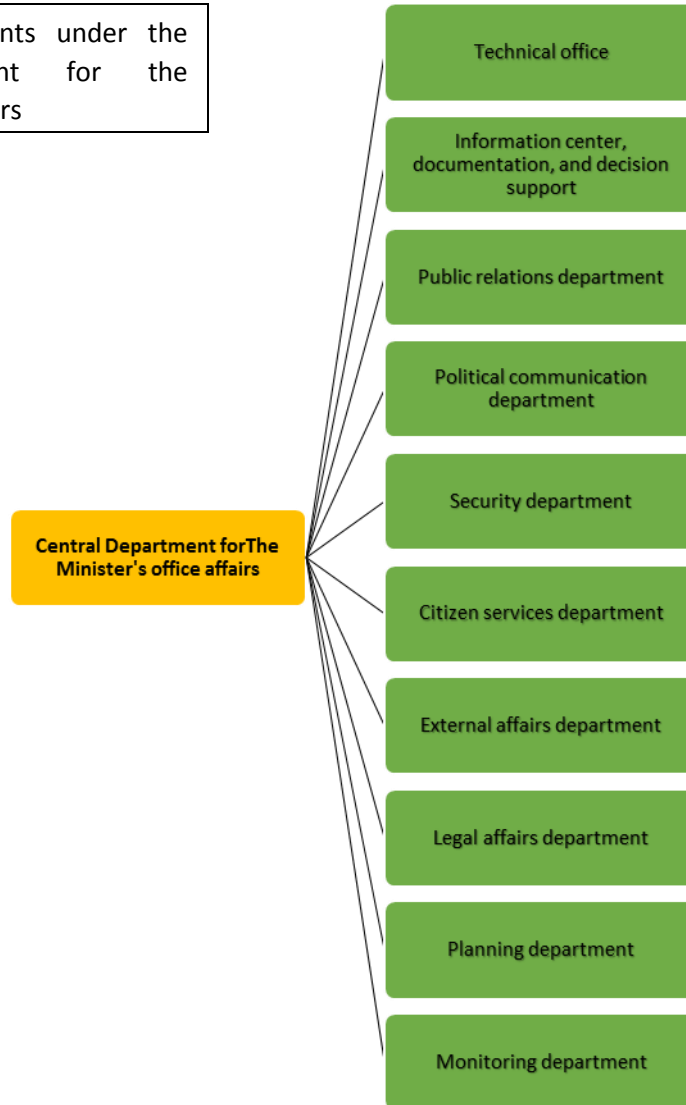
Source: MoSS Website, 2015

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The objective of the study is to identify key strengths and weaknesses in the family follow up and the current M&E processes of the social pension program to inform policy makers. The key research questions that this study seeks to answer are as follows:

1.4 Research Questions:

1. Does the social protection sector in MoSS currently monitor and evaluate the social pension program?
   a. If yes, what are the methodologies and processes that are used in monitoring and evaluation for the progress and results of their projects, programs on different levels, both central and local?
2. Do the policy makers at MoSS feel a need and possess readiness to implement an M&E system for the social pension program?
3. What are the challenges to improve the M&E system within the social protection sector?

The organization of the research is as follows: Chapter 1 provides the objective of the study, a background on the MoSS, the social protection department, and the monitoring department. Chapter 2 provides a literature review that tackles the evolution and nature of social protection, the views of social protection being rights based as opposed to needs based approaches, examines how social protection differs in the developed and developing countries, as well as social protection's relationship with marginalization, poverty, and vulnerability, the economic perspectives on social protection, issues with the implementation of social protection programs, and the role of international institutions in social protection programs. Chapter two also includes a brief the processes of monitoring and evaluation, and identifies the literature gap. Chapter 3 provides the conceptual framework of the study, guided by Kusek and Rist's (2014) model and provides a working definition of M&E for social protection programs. It also presents the methodology of the research. Chapter 4 tackles the findings, analysis, and discussions in line with the developed conceptual framework. Chapter 5 presents the conclusions and recommendations for policy makers and public administrators working in the social pension program.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 The evolution and nature of Social Protection

The rise of the rhetoric, practice, and implementation of social protection programs has been attributed to different reasons by different scholars. Some of these reasons include globalization, structural adjustment policies, economic crises, and neo-liberalism with which came increased poverty and vulnerability and social protection's role in easing the effects of these issues on poor and vulnerable groups and citizens in society (Barrientos, 2011). Other reasons include variables like demographic trends and ageing populations and job insecurity (Bilbao-Ubillos, 2012), the need for social protection, to the increase in violence, whether interstate or intrastate (Harvey, 2009), the amount of natural disasters as a result of climate change and other associated issues (Davies et al, 2009) and humanitarian crises at large. The OECD outlines dimensions that are portrayed as important to social protection and these include the promotion of human rights, security, economic growth, democracy, equity, and human development (OECD, 2009).

Social protection could be divided to three main headings which are social insurance, social assistance and labor market regulation (Barrientos, 2011). The first heading includes social insurance instruments which should provide populations with care in case of contingencies. These contingencies can be illness, unemployment, old age, disability, work injuries, family responsibilities, and maternity (Midgley, 2013). The ILO's social security standards show that setting social security coverage systems require countries to determine the contingencies that they will cover, the population coverage, the types of benefits that should be provided to this population group, the duration that this group will be covered for, and the entitlement conditions to these benefits (ILO, 2014a). Statistics produced by the ILO show that more than half of the world's population lack any kind of social security coverage and that only 20 Percent have acceptable social security coverage. Accordingly, the ILO argues that these at risk population can experience poverty, poor health, and feelings of danger and lack of security. The social security situation depicted by the numbers above reflects gaps in economic and human development across and within countries around the globe. Especially given the fact that workers in the developing world lack access to and coverage by social security. ILO

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statistics listed on their website in 2015 show that "fewer than 10 per cent of workers in least-developed countries are covered by social security. In middle-income countries, coverage ranges from 20 to 60 per cent, while in most industrial nations, it is close to 100 per cent" (ILO, 2014b).

Social assistance provides income support for poor and disadvantaged groups. Examples of programs that have been formulated for social assistance include conditional cash transfer programs, unconditional cash transfers, in kind transfers, housing transfers, school feeding programs, public works and intensive labor projects. Examples from around the world include the Bolsa Familia that revolved around conditional cash transfers for families living in poverty to keep their children educated and healthy (Mendoza et al., 2015), while the Chile Solidario Program offers support to elderly citizens who are vulnerable and who are living independently, targets families in poverty, offers cash transfers and psychosocial help, as well as helping homeless persons and families escape from poverty and poor conditions (Borzutzky, 2009). Meanwhile, the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program provides conditional cash transfers and attempts to bring in families to the CCT program while recognizing difficulties in identifying homeless persons, targeting them, following up with their conditions, among other challenges associated with homelessness given the fact that homeless families are not only poor, but they are also mostly unemployed or employed in the informal sector, and typically exhibit more issues like illiteracy or low education rates, malnourishment, worse health conditions, and are vulnerable to abuse, psychosocial issues (Mendoza et al., 2015).

Labor market regulation ensures that workers have basic rights, voice, and participation in their work place and that employers follow certain standards that correspond to these rights.

2.2 Rights Based and Needs Based Approaches to Social Protection:

Access to social protection is a basic right according to United Nations' human rights standards and declarations. International conventions like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1996), and the ILO's Social Security Minimum Standards

Convention (1952) lay down the right of all persons to adequate living standards, medical care, social services, and general support to wellbeing. According to these conventions and the rights based approach, citizens are "rights holders" while states are "duty bearers". The concept of rights based approaches recognizes that states are both responsible and accountable for fulfilling citizen rights as defined in these international conventions. The rights based approach recognizes that all citizens have rights to certain agreed upon elements and norms which provide a minimum standard of living that everyone should enjoy. The rights based approach also recognizes that citizens have equal rights to existing resources and that marginalized groups should have access to these resources (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi, 2004). Devereux (2013) argues that since social protection is a right according to international conventions, then citizens cannot be forcibly and prematurely graduated from social protection programs, they should be referred as claimants of that right and governments should work on mechanisms to ensure and enable claimants to claim their right to social protection through easing processes, operationalizing grievance systems and enforcing social audits. He argues that claimants should be treated with dignity, should receive their transfers on time and with little inconvenience. They should also be given voice, the right to participate as part of their empowerment. Barr (1993) shows how the concept of the welfare state emerged to correspond to rights based approaches where states in the post-WWII period, states, scholars, and politicians recognized the role of the state in ensuring certain standards of living for the citizens through provision of certain services and benefits that contribute to welfare. These services include health, education, cash and in kind support, employment opportunities, among other elements. The way the welfare state operates differs where some states depend on public institutions for the provision of benefits and services while others can have other stakeholders playing a role including community, private sector, and the labor market. Some states finance welfare through taxation, others through contributions or other means (Barr, 1993). Accordingly, the welfare state does not have one meaning, but different schools of thought argue that welfare states are characterized by of social justice, happiness, social solidarity, and a promotion of rights and responsibilities of citizens and taxpayers (Standing, 2007).

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The rights based approach is often brought in comparison to needs based approaches where advocates argue for directing the resources for certain groups in society (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi, 2004). While the rights based approach argues that social benefits are a universal right and should be given to everyone, "needs based" approaches support targeting, and argue that in light of limited state resources, the funds that are available should go to the poor and the deserving (All-Kamal and Saha, 2014). Erler (2012) discusses the social construction of poverty in media, public policy, and the influence of that social construction, and depiction of poverty on how people and policy makers view poor people as deserving or undeserving of aid and government assistance. The article shows that those who are seen as "deserving" of public assistance, are viewed as helpless, powerless, and not being responsible for their poverty. This group is seen as unable to work or morally excused from work, this could include in most societies the disabled, the elderly, and so on. However, others, who are able bodied and have the ability to work, but are poor and who do not work, are viewed as lazy, dependent on the state, categorized as having low levels of intelligence, not exerting enough effort, and are seen as violating the social contract and are more likely to engage in undesirable behaviors such as dropping out of education or engaging in drug use and crime. This study also discusses how media and news coverage of poverty influences social policy decisions and the extent of social welfare provided to the poor (Erler, 2012). Financial institutions like the World Bank and those that adopt neo-liberal policy support the needs based view and argue that countries should adopt a market delivery of social services approach along with means testing (All-Kamal and Saha, 2014).

2.3 Social Protection in the developed and developing world

What is common among the literature is the fact that developed and developing countries have different concepts in social protection systems. Developed countries focus on income maintenance and life standard protection while developing countries implement social protection with more need for other developmental goals. These goals include providing and protecting basic consumption levels for food, shelter, and basic needs, aiding in human investment like education, health, and training to enable poor people to escape from intergenerational poverty traps, and finally to empower those in need to overcome poverty (Barrientos, 2011). Developed countries also have mostly

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well-developed basic services, strict labor market regulations, and social insurance in abundance and therefore only a minority of the population needs to be protected by social assistance. However, in developing countries, other social protection instruments are scarce or weak, and therefore, social assistance is needed in abundance to cover a large amount of impoverished and vulnerable populations. Social insurance coverage in developing countries is also stagnating because of labor market liberalization (Barrientos, 2011). Furthermore, studies examining social protection mechanisms in Africa has shown that many households still live in rural areas and subsist through agriculture, or work in the informal sector with no job security and mostly no regular incomes and hence contributory schemes do not suit a majority of the continent's population.

Since poverty and food insecurity are largely found in Africa, some governments introduced transfers and some international organizations have also worked heavily on humanitarian aid for food insecurity. However, since no one is working on the underlying causes of food insecurity, the problem has become chronic and families are dependent on that aid. Transfer grants are used by some governments to compensate for their failed policy in labor market regulation and creation. He argues that most governments implementing cash transfer or public works schemes intend to have beneficiaries "graduate" after a certain number of years through accumulation of enough capital to get them out of the dependency and poverty cycle. However, Devereux's study (2013) claims that most of these families have no prospect of graduating because of the nature of multidimensional poverty, food insecurity, seasonal unemployment, and lack in capacity.

2.4 Social Protection's relationship with Poverty, Vulnerability, and Marginalization

In line with the literature reviewed, it is clear that social protection is often linked with other concepts of poverty, vulnerability, and marginalization but is also often mentioned in relation to growth and equity. The concept of poverty itself evolved over time from Adam Smith's definition of poverty as social isolation and inferiority to its development as a measure of income per capita and a problem of insufficient growth and where the definition of poor populations was those who fell below a pre-defined "poverty line", to a problem of unequal distribution of resources, to multidimensional poverty concepts that surpasses economic boundaries (Foli & Béland, 2014). Some definitions

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show that poverty is "the inability of an individual or family to command sufficient resources to satisfy basic needs" (Fields, 2001: 9). Meanwhile, other definitions argue that poverty is "exclusion from cooperative activity; those in poverty are not 'able to participate in the social life of a community at a minimally acceptable level" (Kanbur, 1987: 64). Amartya Sen argues for the multidimensionality of poverty which refers to the fact that households in poverty also suffer in education, health, employability, nutrition, income, shelter, awareness, and information. These dimensions are often interrelated and interdependent. For example, someone who is poor, cannot afford nutritious food, and hence will suffer in education, health, employment, and income (Barrientos, 2011). Sen defines poverty as the lack of basic capabilities which include health and education which then enhance a person's capability at improving livelihood and where the state needs to guarantee opportunity and freedom for a person to live a better life (as explained in Barrientos, 2011). Measurements of poverty also included consumption based measurements, proxy means tests, among other mechanisms. Furthermore, Barrientos' study also discusses the difference between absolute poverty where families are deprived of nutrition or health or minimum living conditions and relative poverty which is poverty in relation to other groups in society.

On the other hand, vulnerability revolves around the probability that households or individuals will fall into poverty. This is closely related to poverty duration, and poverty persistence. Vulnerability in itself can lead to poverty because families feeling the threat of poverty can, for example, delay health expenditures or reduce food portions which can help them fall into poverty as time progresses (Barrientos, 2011).

2.5 The Economy of Social Protection

Different arguments have been made in different studies about the relationship between equity, equality, social protection, and economic growth. One argument is that economic growth is important for social protection because it finances it. However, social protection is also essential for economic growth because it does not only protect the poor, but it also works on improving their capacity to be productive and hence contributing to the economic growth of the country (Raghbendra, 2014). This line of thought shows that inequality is bad for growth because it breeds social and political unrest, and people who fall into poverty will find it very difficult to get out and find employment or improve their

livelihood without enabling conditions, and hence, their productivity will be low and growth will decrease (Arjona et al., 2003) . Moreover, elements like exports, foreign direct investment, political institutions and democracy, incentives, labor protection legislations, and strong social protection systems were found to have a positive relationship with economic growth because evidence shows that worker compensation, retirement benefits, and labor rights promote productive working environments and job creation. This is because there are three players in the economy and they are the government, the employers, and the labor force. As the economy works, labor forces form unions and start demanding their rights. The employers naturally resist because it means more costs for them, and the government comes in to create equilibrium and social protection. Workers who have social protection, are more likely to produce better and, therefore, the economy is more likely to grow producing prosperity for all. The government should ideally play a role in setting policies that reduce risks of people falling into poverty, help those who fell into poverty to better manage risks, and finally ensure that everyone has a minimum standard of living (Patterson and Patterson, 2012). Hence, social spending and social protection are viewed as positive by these advocates because they enable investments in health, education, and employability of people, as well as increases solidarity and cohesiveness in society (Arjona et al., 2003).

Meanwhile, others view spending on social protection as unnecessary spending and tax increases and giving incentives for people to stay unemployed since they are supported by the state. There are some views that inequality is good for growth because it stimulates competition, rewards effort, and promotes savings (Arjona et al., 2003). The financing of social protection programs has been criticized by especially because in Latin America, countries have been aided by international financial institutions like the World Bank through loans (Midgley, 2013). Arguments come out against these mechanisms given that loans have to be repaid and that states who do not receive loans to finance these schemes, resort to unsustainably raising the taxes to cover the poor population. Some arguments also come out to state that cash transfers and income maintenance for the poor and needy does not yield economic development and growth goals (Midgley, 2013).

There are factors influencing social protection spending which include the economic capability of the country, social and demographic characteristics of the population as well as the political, institutional, and cultural context of the country in question. Countries calculate their spending through identifying the population the country covers, the risks they cover and its incidence rate among the population, the benefits given to the population, and the timeframe of coverage for that risk (Bilbao-Ubillos, 2012).

2.6 Issues with the Implementation of Social Protection Programs

The available studies almost reaches to a consensus on the need for enhanced capacities in developing good social protection programs starting with how policy makers measure poverty, design and implement, monitor, and assess programs and policies (Bilbao-Ubillos, 2012). Good social protection programs require integration between research, policy making, financing, information systems, social workers, and communities. They also require accurate targeting measures, consistent monitoring and evaluation, data availability and reliability for both the families being targeted and government expenditure to ensure efficiency and effectiveness (Barrientos, 2011). The M&E is also critical to enable governments to identify whether governmental social protection programs has positive impacts on poverty and vulnerability indicators and hence playing a role in deciding how much governments should invest and spend on social protection programs.

Case studies of countries such as India, Bangladesh, and Chile examine spending on social protection, and their impacts on economic growth as well as challenges to the implementation of efficient and effective social protection program. Raghbendra (2014) shows that while India's economic performance outdoes many other countries, its indicators when it comes to health, nutrition, and other social indicators are lacking, especially with regards to females. Raghbendra's study contrasts spending in OECD countries to the spending in India, which is 20 per cent of GDP versus 8 per cent of GDP respectively, but notes that deprivation and poverty in India is much higher than that of OECD countries. This study argues that more attention needs to be given to equitable growth and to the efficiency and effectiveness of welfare programs. Redirecting spending from inefficient programs and improving the effectiveness and efficiency through

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programs that are well targeted to reach the poor along with avoiding inclusion errors where families that are not deserving being included and exclusion errors for families that are deserving being excluded, corruption, administrative inefficiency and leakages in procurement are all issues that need to be addressed. More importantly, he concludes that India might need to further instill good governance and bring in the private sector to participate in the social welfare schemes.

The case of Bangladesh is similar to India's and is explained by All-Kamal and Saha and they argued that while Bangladesh made progress in several human development indicators including increasing school enrollment in primary and secondary education, declining child mortality rates, and increased participation for women in development. However, the poverty rate is still quite high compared to other countries with similar income per capita (All-Kamal and Saha, 2014). For that cause, the Government of Bangladesh, with the help of the World Bank, started implementing Social Safety Net Programs. This Program in Bangladesh provides the poor with transfers of food resources, and cash. However, All-Kamal and Saha show that different factors play a role in the transfers not reaching the people that actually deserve it and the poorest of the poor because of the prevalence of corruption, weak governance for the programs, a lack of accountability and transparency, administrative complexities, high costs for the families applying for the program, as well as leakages and weak and mis-targeting of families and households (All-Kamal and Saha, 2014).

Governments face difficulties in identifying "deserving" persons when implementing transfer programs because of the difficulties that governments face in observing income levels and productivity levels of individuals. This is specifically for developing countries where a large majority of the population who apply for transfers are self-employed or work in informal markets (Nakamura, 2014). Self-selection methods have been proposed as ways to accurately target deserving groups. Self-selection policies can include monitoring by social workers, price controls, in-kind transfers, and workfare (Nakamura, 2014).

Borzutzky (2014) provides an assessment of the Chile Solidario Program. This study mentions that the program has some limitations including the small amounts of money being transferred to the families and being insufficient to get them out of poverty cycles.

This study further shows problem related to the identification of which families are poor and with data accuracy and availability. The article mentions how poverty affects women more severely and the importance of including women in development for better development goals.

The implementation of social protection programs could also have political implications, which is highlighted in Devereux and White (2010) explaining how social protection might influence politics especially with regards to vote winning potential of cash transfers and social programs .

2.7 The role of International Institutions in implementing Social Protection Programs

While governments are the main implementors of social protection programs, globalization has also greatly affected how social policies are formulated and are conceived around the world. International organizations, specifically the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the OECD, have greatly influenced the making, implementation, and development of social policies in light of neo-liberal policies and their implementation across countries. Many social protection programs have been financed and subsequently monitored by institutions like the World Bank. Arguments have been made that these institutions, act as think tanks, and interfere in the making of social policy through imposing conditionality on grants and loans in ways that reflect their ideas and diffuse them. Therefore, the claim is that conditionality is not the only way through which these institutions impose policies on countries, rather there are other mechanisms such as the formulation of ideas on poverty, provision of technical assistance and training, publications, conferences, research and think tank publications through which social policy is influenced in the developing world (Foli and Béland, 2014).

2.8 Monitoring and Evaluation

Gogens and Kusek (2009) explain that the processes of M&E are often done internally by the project team and organization's staff and externally by independent evaluators. It can also happen at different levels of governments (central or local) as well as at different stages of the project, program, or policy. An effective monitoring and evaluation system provides a feedback mechanism on how governments achieve results, targets, and goals. Furthermore, it also helps in identifying challenges and success

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factors, provides a ground for better future planning and implementation, and allows for more accountability and transparency which are important elements of good governance.

Kusek and Rist (2004) hypothesize that there are 10 main steps towards results based monitoring and evaluation. These steps include Conduct Readiness Assessment to identify barriers, political will, existing capacity, ownership, stakeholder involvement; agreeing on outcomes to monitor and evaluate; developing key indicators to monitor agreed upon outcomes; gathering baseline data; planning for improvement through interim and long term targets identification; monitoring for results; collecting evaluative information; analyzing and reporting findings; using the findings in a timely, clear, and concise way to decision makers; and finally sustaining M&E system.

While Kusek and Rist focus on 10 steps towards results based M&E, Gogens and Kusek explain that there are 12 steps towards functional M&E systems. These steps are structure and organizational alignment for M&E systems, having human capacity for managing and sustaining M&E systems, forming M&E partnerships, forming M&E plans, having costed M&E work plans, focusing on advocacy, communication, and culture for M&E systems, conducting routine monitoring, doing periodic surveys, having databases useful to M&E systems, ensuring supportive supervision, and data auditing, conducting Evaluation and research, and finally using information to improve results. Some of the elements of Gogens and Kusek's arguments are similar and fit into the 10 steps; however, other builds on them and completes the details of the steps.

2.9 Literature Gap and Research Justification

The literature review identified that there is a gap in academic literature on social protection in Egypt and the programs that are associated with it. There are some sources on social insurance programs in Egypt; however, available sources on social pensions and cash transfers are meager. There is also lack of in-depth research on the MoSS's pension programs targeting the poor families as well as M&E of social protection programs in Egypt. This study is an attempt to bridge the gap currently exists in this area.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework, Methodology and Research Questions

3.1 Conceptual Framework

Social protection is an emerging topic in development literature, social policy, and development practice across the world. Different international organizations and scholars define social protection in different ways. the UNICEF's definition as listed on their website focuses on social exclusion and vulnerability through defining social protection as "a set of public actions which address not only income poverty and economic shocks, but also social vulnerability, thus taking into account the inter-relationship between exclusion and poverty" (UNICEF, 2015).

Monitoring, as defined by the OECD, is a process whereby data is continuously collected on specific indicators to give organizations information on ongoing developments in a certain program or project as well as the extent of progress in terms of objectives and financial spending on this intervention (OECD, 2009). Evaluation on the other hand is a distinct but related process and it is one where there is an assessment of a program, policy, or project. The assessment can be for the design, implementation, results, or impacts of the program. Evaluations determine whether projects and programs are efficient, effective, and sustainable and have achieved the desired outcomes and impact.

Rossi, Freedman, and Lipsey (2003: 20) define evaluation for social programs as "the use of social research procedures to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs".. This means that evaluation tackles social problems at large, the conceptualization and program design, the process of implementation and administration, as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of the programs in reaching desired outcomes. The process accordingly sees whether a certain social intervention is appropriate to tackle a certain social problem, whether that intervention adequately reaches target population and beneficiaries, the feasibility of the program, its cost effectiveness, how well it is designed and implemented, and if it yields the required benefits and outcomes (Rossi et al., 2003)

The main distinction between monitoring and evaluation is explained by Gogens and Kusek (2009: 5) where they explain that "Monitoring gives information on where a policy, program, or project is at any given time (and over an extended period) relative to its targets and outcome goals. It is descriptive. Evaluation gives evidence about why targets and outcomes are, or are not, being achieved. It explores causality."

Based on the concepts and ideas discussed above, the working definition this study developed for M & E for social protection programs is the following:

The continuous process of data collection on social protection program performance and the change in the status of beneficiaries against a set of indicators and baselines to evaluate the extent of success of the programs in helping beneficiaries overcome poverty, vulnerability, and exclusion.

The process of results-based M & E denoted here follows Kusek and Rist's (2009) explanation. According to Kusek and Rist (2004), the first step towards a result based monitoring and evaluation process starts with a readiness assessment to evaluate whether the organization or the country is prepared and willing to conduct results based monitoring and evaluation (RBME). This study further describes readiness assessments conducted in Bangladesh, Romania, and most importantly, Egypt. The readiness assessment explores whether countries or organizations actually have a need and demand for RBME. It also considers the existence of political will and champions for the process, stakeholder dynamics and the existence or absence of resistance, having the necessary resources (for example, human, financial, tools, and time), as well as possessing the necessary capacities to do so, and the ability to link the results to actual reforms.

The second step manifests in the need to agree on outcomes to monitor and evaluate. These outcomes need to reflect strategic priorities of the organization, as well as be formulated through a consultative and participatory multi-stakeholder process and translate the concerns and problems facing key stakeholders into improved and desired outcomes. The process of choosing outcomes also required the planning process to include inputs, outputs, processes that are used to reach these outcomes.

The third step is about developing key indicators to measure the progress towards the agreed upon outcomes. These indicators can be quantitative or qualitative with

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different pros and cons for each, but in all cases, they should be reliable and simple and help in the measurement of achievements, changes, or performance of an organization against specified outcomes. Indicators should be developed for all levels of a program including inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes. Indicators should be measurable and the process of their development should involve different stakeholders and consider their interests. The Kusek and Rist (2004) suggest a "CREAM" method which states that indicators should be clear, relevant, economic, adequate, and monitorable. Proxy indicators can also be used when direct indicators are unavailable.

The fourth step includes the gathering of baseline data to measure progress against that baseline data. The baseline data collection step is where the first data on the set indicators is collected for the first time. In this step, professionals determine the sources of data whether primary or secondary. The methods and sources of data used should depend on the context of the organization and the country, as well as the cost, and the capacity of the personnel administering the data collection.

The fifth step revolves around planning for improvement through identifying interim and long term targets. Targets can only be correctly set if there is sound understanding of the starting point from baseline data collected in the previous step. Targets should also be realistic and consider resources and risks. The sixth step includes monitoring for results. Kusek and Rist (2004) distinguish between implementation monitoring and results monitoring. Implementation monitors deals with monitoring set work plans and inputs, outputs, processes while results monitoring is more about what results have been achieved. Performance based budgeting and monitoring also fall within this step. The study further goes into details about the different methods of collecting monitoring data and the importance of ensuring the validity, reliability, and timeliness of this data. The study also discusses the importance of ownership, management of information systems, and maintenance of monitoring systems. Following data collection for monitoring, there is a need to analyze the data.

The seventh step includes carrying out the evaluation process which guides the process of decision making, help in understanding the causes of problems, and assesses ways to do things better in terms of design, planning, strategy, implementation, and

outcomes. The study details seven different types of evaluation which are: impact evaluation, Meta evaluation, performance logic chain assessment, reimplementation assessment, process implementation assessment, rapid appraisals, and case studies with benefits and explanation of when to use each. It also shows that quality evaluations are impartial, useful, technically adequate and cost effective, involves stakeholders, and are adequately disseminated.

The eighth revolves around reporting the findings. The reporting process should be mindful of the target audience especially when delivering bad performance news. The ninth revolves around using these findings. Findings are used as a form of reporting and accountability to stakeholders & beneficiaries, as a way to enhance organizational learning and safeguard organizational memory, to settle on methods and approaches that work, and to convince stakeholders of future action.

The tenth and final step is about sustaining the M&E system in the organization. The sustainability feature of the systems comes from keeping up the demand for M&E information, setting clear responsibilities and roles with a formal structure within the organization and with clear lines of authority and accountability. Development of capacities is also essential to the sustainability of the system as is the introduction of incentives that encourage the use of M&E information. Furthermore, some organizations pursue M&E and publishing of these results as part of their accountability mechanisms and their governance structures. Political will and legislative environments should be supportive of the process while organizational culture should seek to discourage resistance.

Figure 4 below is an illustration of the framework Kusek and Rist (2004) have put forth.

Figure 4: Kusek and Rist (2004)'s RBME Model

Readiness Assessment

Agreeing on outcomes to monitor and evaluate

Developing key performance indicators

Gathering baseline data

Indetify interim and long term targets

Carry out monitoring for results

Carry out the evaluation process

Report on findings

Use the findings

Sustaining the M&E system
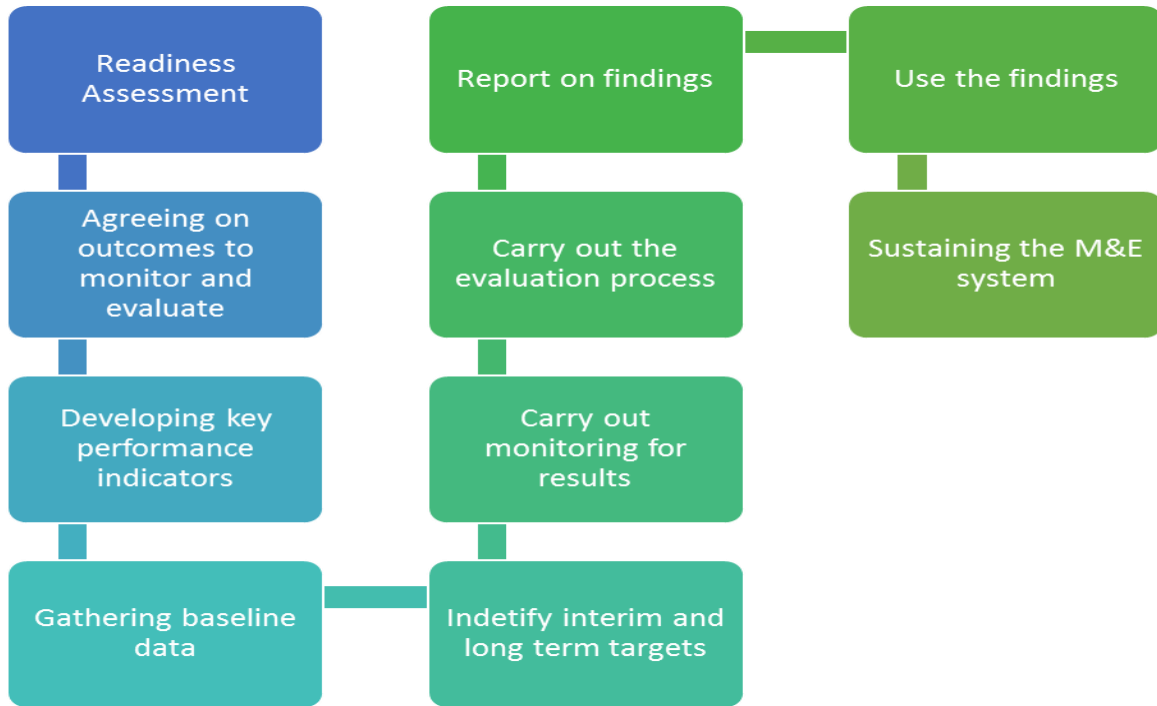
Source: Kusek and Rist (2004: 25)

In the context of Egyptian social policy making and also based on the experience of the researcher's experience as a professional working in MoSS, only some elements of this comprehensive model model can be fulfilled in practical terms.

The social pension program that is being examined is a very old program, and hence, there is an absence of program documents that set clear expected results, key performance indicators, as well as identification of interim and long term targets. The only program documents that are available include laws, bylaws, and decrees. The readiness assessment for RBME, set as the first step in Kusek and Rist's model, therefore, cannot be the first step in analyzing the social pension program in its current form, since the program does not set clear results nor does it currently rely on RBME. The readiness assessment used in this research was conducted at the end of the model to examine political will for reform and implementing RBME and sustainability of future reforms.

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Furthermore, the legal framework of the program, as illustrated in Cchapter 4, only tackles monitoring rather than evaluation. Hence, the analysis of the evaluation elements for the social pension program in this study will be limited.

Hence, the model that will be used follows the steps illustrated in Figure 5 below

Figure 5: Conceptual framework developed for this study

Source: Constructed by the researcher in light of Kusek and Rist (2004)

3.2 Methodology:

In this study the objective was to understand the process and implementation of M&E within the social pension program (Al-Daman Al-Igtimaay). It also sought to understand meanings and key issues faced on the field level by social workers and

beneficiaries with the social pension programs. These key issues, experiences, and meanings could only be discovered by qualitative interviews and focus group discussions. Hence, this study depended mainly on qualitative research methodology (Merriam, 2014).

The researcher currently works at the MoSS in the office of the Assistant Minister for Social Protection and Development. This gives the researcher an insider viewpoint of the status and implementation of the different programs that fall under this mandate, as well as improved access to data and resources for interviews and research. The research was formally authorized by the Assistant Minister, and also authorized from the security department at MoSS and the social pension department. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the American University in Cairo (AUC)'s approval was sought and attained for this study on November 26, 2015, and the research methodology was deemed by IRB to have minimal risk on human subjects and to contain adequate provisions of confidentiality and data anonymity of participants in this research.

The study focuses on two governorates in Egypt, namely Assiut and Qena. These governorates were chosen because Assiut has the highest rating on the 2013 poverty map (61.7 Percent) amounting up to almost (2,474,686) poor persons[2]. Assiut has the second largest number of poor people receiving social pensions (124,206 individuals) according to MoSS statistics released in August 2015. Qena follows Assiut on the poverty map with a (59.6 Percent) of the population being classified as poor according to the 2013 poverty map as well as a very high number of poor people amounting up to almost (2,044,257) poor persons and around (92,090) people receiving social pensions according to MoSS statistics released in August 2015.

Table 1 below shows the presence of MoSS in Social Units and Administration in the two governorates.

Table 1 – Number of Social Units and Administrations in Assiut and Qena

	Qena	Assiut
Social Units	112	103
Social Administrations	9	12

Source: MoSS 2015

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[2] The poverty maps were developed by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) and HIECS.

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www.manaraa.com

The study uses both primary and secondary sources to collect data. Primary sources included interviews with different layers of administrative and technical staff at MoSS along with some beneficiaries of the social pension system that the MoSS provides in two directorates. The interview questions used for the different groups are listed in Appendix 1.

Two interviews were held at the central level in December 2015. Interviews with high level officials and policy makers included the Assistant Minister for Social Protection and Development, and the General Manager of the General Department for social pensions at the central level. The interviews sought to examine political will, opportunities and challenges, program set up and plans, as well as the management of subordinates working on M&E for social protection.

Interviews and focus groups were held in December 2015 with 50 members of the technical staff on the local levels included the social pension specialists at the directorates and the social departments and social units. Selection was done on a random basis according to the social units and administrations visited based on a random choice. The social pension employees in the directorate were all invited to participate in a 10 person focus group that lasted for 45 minutes in each of the governorates. Selection of the 10 specialists was done on a random basis since they were all present in the directorate during my visit. The goal of these interviews was to provide assessments of current practices in the field level, the staff capacities, and the obstacles and opportunities in the process of M&E.

Finally, 60 short surveys were conducted with social pension beneficiaries in December 2015. The beneficiaries were picked on a random basis and were interviewed nearby and in social units, in front of post offices while receiving their social pension monthly transfer, as well as in some units, I was able to obtain a list of beneficiaries with their locations, and conduct home visits upon invitations from the beneficiaries. The survey questions tackled whether they have received visits from the M&E department or social protection staff to evaluate and monitor their progress and status improvement or lack of thereof and how these visits were conducted.

Secondary sources used in the methodology include a review of legislative documents and regulations on the social pension law, job descriptions of staff, forms that staff use in M & E social pensions, and other official documents produced by MoSS related to this topic. Secondary sources also include review of published academic literature and some reports from national and international organizations like the World Bank, OECD, and ILO. These reports and articles informed the research in terms of the conceptual framework, main issues, and the design of the methodology. They also provide information on the status of social protection around the world and in Egypt.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis of Findings

4.1 Program Design, Plans, and implementations

4.1.1 Examining the criteria for beneficiaries & Program Outcomes

The current law regulating the social pension program is Law 137 of 2010 and its bylaw 451 issued on December 20, 2010. The social pension is defined by the law as financial transfers, which can be transferred on either monthly or exceptional basis according to type of help/transfer. The law denotes that the main beneficiaries of the social pension program are poor individuals and families eligible according to the law and bylaw. The extent of poverty of the family is determined by a field based social research and the filling of a family file based on targeting indicators. According to an interview with the Social Pension Program Manager at the central level, the key outcome of the social pension program is helping poor families and individuals survive and provide transfers to cover basic needs. The social pension should also help beneficiaries to be productive and integrate them to the labor market and the economy[3]. The law also allows beneficiaries receiving social pensions to receive exceptional assistances.[4]

As mentioned in chapter one, program beneficiaries include the following groups:

- The family as a group composed of a husband and one wife or more, underage children if they live in the same place and share one source of income (Bylaw 451, 2010). A ministerial decree adds that the family is a group of a husband, wife, or more, underage children and other children. Males are counted as parts of the family if they are under 18, if they are under 21 and are still in education, training, unmarried and unemployed, and those that are under 26 and are still in

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[3] This can happen through training activities, providing small grants for a service or commercial project, helping families with access to microfinance, helping families attain tools and equipment that enable their productivity

[4] Educational expenses, funeral or birth costs, emergencies facing families, disasters and crises and Exceptional assistances can also be disbursed to provide a temporary sanctuary and providing needed clothes and blankets, and specify the loss in property and income as a result of these disasters and making plans to rehabilitate the families. It can also be used to improve the dwelling of the family, pay some bills, and help victims of disasters like fires, floods, earthquakes, landfalls. A committee for disasters and crises is formed led by the social solidarity directorate head and with the membership of a representative of the ministry of interior, the social administration head, the head of the social protection department in the directorate, the head of the social unit, a disaster relief specialist, a social pension specialist.

education and who are unmarried and unemployed. Girls are considered as part of the family until they are married or employed (Ministerial decree, 186, 2015).

- Underage children: boys and girls whose ages do not exceed 18 years

- Orphaned children: boys and girls who's both parents died, and whose father died, whose mother got remarried, and those that have unknown parents (law 137, 2010). These children should also not be covered by foster families or living in social care institutions. Orphaned children and children of widows under this amendment became eligible for the child pension (Ministerial Decree 186, 2015).

- Widows/divorcees/never married women: women who have not reached the official age of retirement, whose husbands died/divorced her, has left her with children or are childless and who have not gotten re-married. This also includes women who have never been married and who are unemployed and above the age of 50 years old.

- Disabled Children: Children who were born with a disability, or injured in a way that causes disability, no matter its kind or its degree of severity and whose disability is proven through a medical checkup (Law 137, 2010). Disabled children are deemed eligible for transfers if the child lives within a family that receives social pensions, or if the child lives within a family that is not eligible for the social pension provided that this child's portion of the family does not exceed double the amount of the transfer (Ministerial decree 186, 2015).

- Disabled/Injured persons who are unable to work: Persons over 18 and under the official age of retirement who were born with or have incurred a disability/injury/illness that deters them from work. The disability/injury/illness has to be in a degree that affects their ability to work by 50 Percent. This disability has to be proven by a medical checkup. Those who receive the social pension for disability/injury/illness, have to present a certificate from the medical commission or one of the Ministry of Health hospitals (as determined by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Social Solidarity through a ministerial decree. The medical commission is also in charge of looking at complaints/grievances for applicants in this group (Law 137, 2010). Disabled persons who are more than 26 years of age is considered a family on his/her own

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and can be given social pensions as an independent individual with the condition that this person's income does not exceed the amount given by the transfer (Ministerial Decree 186, 2015).

- Never married women over 50 of age, deserted women, and families of imprisoned men, elderly persons who are above 65 of age and who do not receive social insurance or other pensions.

- Table 2 shows the number and classification of beneficiaries in both governorates compared to the total of the 27 governorates (MoSS, 2015).

Table 2 – Numbers and Classifications of Social Pension Beneficiaries in Assiut, Qena, and Total in 27 directorates

	Assiut	Qena	Total in 27 Directorates	% Assiut Vs. Total	% Qena Vs. Total	% of Assiut & Qena to total
Disabled Child	500	1631	37413	1%	4%	6%
Never married women	9310	1484	25479	37%	6%	42%
Widows	20905	14905	314748	7%	5%	11%
Divorcees	11390	21799	279667	4%	8%	12%
Children of Divorcees	315	0	3579	9%	0%	9%
Elderly persons	10065	13467	216742	5%	6%	11%
PWDs	59480	35747	717018	8%	5%	13%
Families of prisoners	4540	674	19927	23%	3%	26%
Deserted women	224	680	8666	3%	8%	10%
Orphans	7477	1703	24995	30%	7%	37%
Total	124206	92090	1648234	8%	6%	13%

Source: MoSS, August 2015

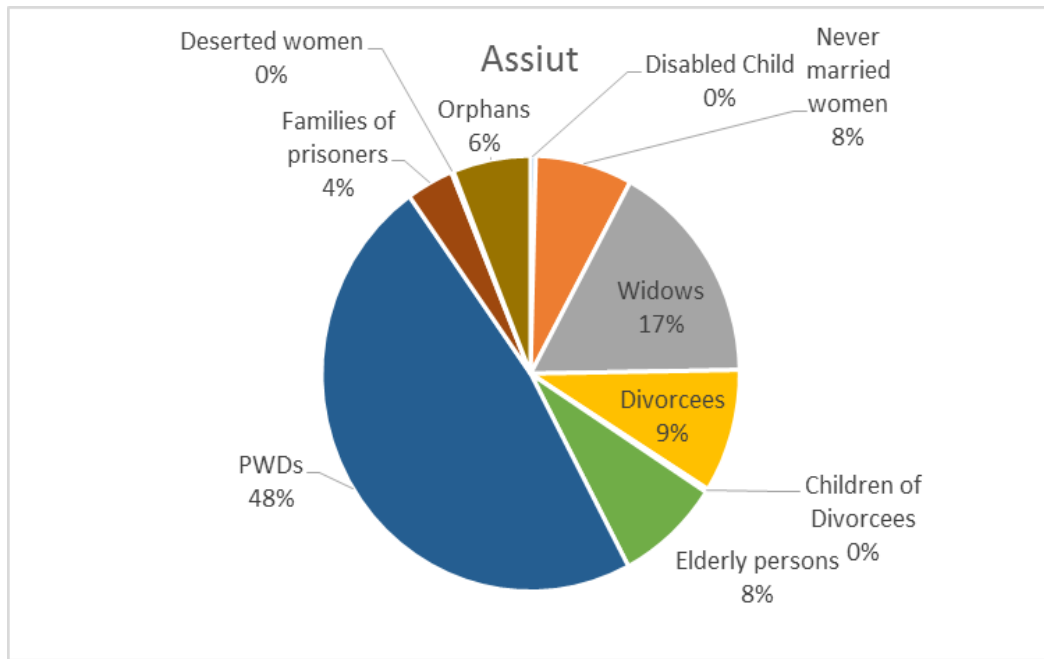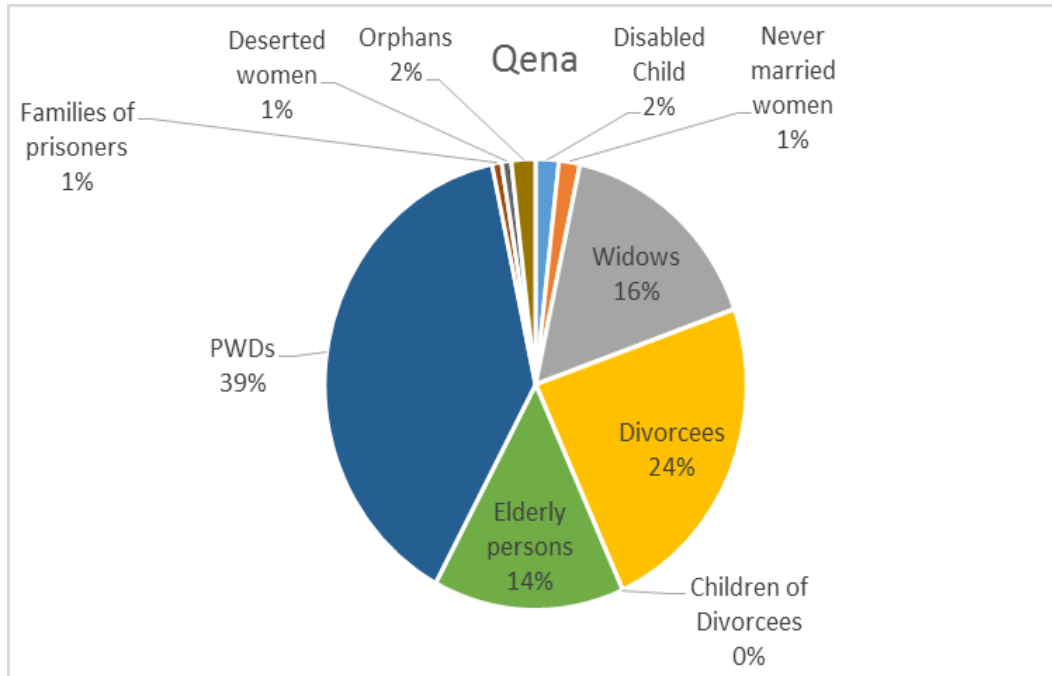**Figure 6** – Classification of Social Pension Beneficiaries in Assiut

Figure 7: Classification of Social Pension Beneficiaries in Qena

Source: MoSS, August 2015

4.1.2 Human Resources charged with the implementation of the program

The findings in this section included reviews of job descriptions for staff working on the social pension program. The staff are distributed across different levels and have different roles and tasks assigned. However, the analysis of the job description shows how the social researcher and the unit heads are the ones that are most involved with beneficiaries of the program, and are the ones burdened with a huge amount of different tasks and responsibilities, a small portion of which is for the social pension program. The workers in the program include:

- **First Grade social pension specialist (the head of the Social Pension department in the directorate):**

This job is located within the social pension department within the social pension directorates and is supervised by the deputy head of the directorate, and supervises those who work in the social pension department. This person should conduct visits to social administrations and social units to ensure the workflow is running efficiently and consistently. This person also participates in social pension and disaster relief committees, grievances committees, one time assistance committees, and the committee that supervises the local social pension fund. This person is allowed to present recommendations about increasing the efficiency of the workflow and ensure that the workflow corresponds to the plans, laws, and general policies. This person is also in charge of suggesting the distribution of funds to local levels, reviewing monthly statistics and reports sent by the social administrations and units, answering any questions from social administrations and units about the social pension program, and making sure that any obstacles faced on the local levels are resolved. The qualifications for this position include a bachelor degree, six years of experience as a second grade specialist, and passing the training for this job.

- **Second Grade social pension specialist in the directorate and administrations:**

This job is located within the social pension department within the social pension directorates and administration. This specialist is in-charge of carrying out laws, bylaws and decrees issued for the social pension. The person can also suggest the distribution of

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financial amounts and transfers to social administrations and their local units. The specialist receives monthly statistics for social pensions from the social administrations and should prepare a memo with the financial status, the status of disbursements every three months and should present it to the general department for social pension and the board of directors for the local social pension fund. This specialist, according to the job description should train other employees in the specified areas. A second grade specialist should have a bachelor's degree, at least eight years of work experience, and to pass the training given by the directorate for the job.

- **Second Grade social pension specialist in the social administration (head of the social pension section):**

This job is located within the social pension department in the social administration level. This person works under the supervision of the head of the social administration. His/her duties include following up with social units, participating in the social pension committee responsible for deciding on eligibility, increases, decreases in transfer amounts, delivering reports including the needs and obstacles facing social units to the directorate, supervises the registration of beneficiaries in records (record #4 for the social pension and reviews record #6 for the social pension). Supervise the distribution of financial allocations to social units, supervises and records the results of grievances and communicating the results to the social units, ensure that record #6 for the social pension is correct and makes sure that the disbursement was done adequately. This job requires a bachelor degree, and at least six years of experience as a third grade specialist.

- **Third Grade social pension specialist (directorate)**

This job can be located within the directorate in case of which the person supervises the disbursement of funds to administrations and units. The job duties include recording grievances, approval and rejection of applicants, preparation of financial status and disbursement reports on a quarterly basis and assisting second degree specialists who supervise them in any other duties. The job requires a bachelor degree and doesn't specify years of experience.

- **Third grade social researcher/social unit head**

This person is located within the social unit and works directly under the supervision of the social administration head. The social unit head supervises directly all those who work in the social unit. The job requires direct contact with the public and with different agencies. The social unit head is mandated with putting a work plan for the social unit employees and supervising its implementation, collecting data about the environment to identify resources, capabilities, and needs, local leaderships, and working on harnessing social capital for the benefit of society. The social unit head should suggest types of income generating projects that are suited to the local communities. The unit head should supervise and help in the field based social research for families seeking MoSS services especially the social pension program. The unit head follows up with productive families projects, rehabilitation of disabled persons projects, supervise social service volunteers and conscripts and prepare periodical and final reports about their performance, hold community awareness seminars for social and economic development, receives applications of NGOs for registration and for collection of donations and sends them with all necessary documentations to the administration and directorate. The social unit head also gives their opinion about the registration of NGOs, its disbandment, or suspension from work as well as give technical assistance to NGOs working in its geographical areas and ensure that they are following the law. The social unit head also supervises the rural community workers "*ra'ida refeyya*" mandated with spreading awareness about different topics and sets a work plan for them. The unit head should also follow up with MoSS projects including nurseries, foster families, social care and rehabilitation institutions. The social unit head also looks into grievances and complaints and tries to solve them along with participating in the distribution of in kind donations to poor families when available.

- **Third grade social researcher/worker**

This person is located within the social unit and works directly under the supervision of the social unit head. This person works with the social unit head in collection of data about the local community and making community researches and statistics, as well as in the visits to NGOs and foundations, attending meetings, and making meeting minutes

reports. The social worker is mandated with doing the field based social research and collection of supporting documents for social pension applicants, families of conscripted soldiers and martyrs. The social researcher is also required to do researches as asked for by universities, NGOs, judicial authorities and so on. The person should refer clients to types of services that correspond to their needs and capabilities and work with them to facilitate their acquisition of these services. The social worker should also research about grievances and complaints and work on solving problems that can be resolved on the social unit level. This person should also revise the disbursed amounts from the post office to ensure that they correspond to the correct amounts and beneficiaries of the social pension program, record data in different records, prepare statistics and reports as required by the heads of social departments or social directorates, try to resolve family problems and disputes and refer families to counselling centers if needed, work with the social unit head in holding seminars for social and economic empowerment for families. Follow up with social pension beneficiaries to ensure that their status has not changed and follow up with income generating projects obtained through MoSS. This job requires a bachelor degree.

The field visits to social units has also shown that there are very few social researchers available compared to the number of secretaries. Furthermore, some units have a large amount of staff for the cases they handle while others have very few staff with a much higher number of beneficiaries. The table below shows some findings from the interviews with social units' staff:

Table 3 – Information on researched social units in Assiut and Qena

Governorate	Unit Name	Staff Distribution	#of social pension beneficiaries	Number of new applicants per month
Assiut	El-Sakaneyya social unit in El-Waldya	Nine employees including one Social Unit Head/researcher, six secretaries, one financial teller, one part time cleaning services person.	500	30
Assiut	Thani Social Unit – Gharb Administration	Seven employees including 4 secretaries, a part time cleaning person, a financial teller, and the head of the social unit/social researcher.	340	7-10
Assiut	**Dewaina**[5]	Two employees; social unit head/researcher, financial teller	-	-
Qena	Belad El-Mal Social unit in– Abou Tesht social administration	Four employees including the social unit/researcher, a technician for the productive families and vocational training centers, a secretary, and a financial teller.	1050	20
Qena	Qusir Bakhanis social unit	Four employees including a unit head, two researchers, a financial teller	2952	45
Qena	El-Dir El-Sharqy Unit – Markaz Qena	Three employees including one assistant researcher (Secretary who received a research methods training), one social researcher and social unit head, and a financial teller.	-	-
Qena	Dandara Social Unit	Sixteen employees including the unit head who is also the main social researcher, three	1897	30

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[5] The visit was conducted while there were 20-30 beneficiaries in the unit waiting for services, and hence, the researcher was unable to interview the social unit head, who is also the only researcher at the unit.

		assistant researchers, one teller, one vocational technician, and the rest are secretaries		
Qena	El-Taramsa Social unit – Qena	Eleven persons made up from the unit head, two researchers, secretaries, technician, and a teller.	689	10-15

Source: Interviews with Social Researchers and Social Unit Heads, December 2015

According to an interview with social administration heads and directorate heads in the two governorates, they do not have the authority to reallocate staff from unit to unit according to the needs of the communities, because employees want to work in the area close to their residence, and because the employee can make a complaint and actually go to court over an order of relocation from the social administration or the directorate, and almost always win the case. Hence, the social administration head says that there are units that overstaffed and that have very few cases of social pension beneficiaries, while there are other units that only have the social unit head serving as a social researcher too and have more that thousands of social pension beneficiaries. In the same social administration, there were 51 employees; however, most of these employees are close to the age of retirement. In an interview with me, the social administration head said that "we currently don't have a problem with the number of employees; however, in the next year or two, most employees in the administration will retire and there are no new hires to train or build capacity to take over their work".

When asked about the trainings provided for staff, the general manager for the general department for social pension at MoSS said that they have devised a training course to develop the capacities of the social worker. This is done through training them on the use of the family file, legal regulations, bylaws, and operational issues in the social pension, as well as giving them computer literacy training. This is done for the specialists in the directorates. According to the focus groups, the directorates do not send requests for specific trainings, and instead the central training administration at MoSS is the one that specifies the training topics and budgets.

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According to an interview with a social administration head, he said that he believes that staff should be further trained on how to handle citizens, how to conduct field research and follow up of families; however, he said that because the budget allocated for the trainings is too little, and because the training is almost always carried out at the directorate, the per diems do not cover coffee breaks, or transportation costs to attend the trainings. Hence, even if trainings are held, employees tend to not go because of the distances and because of the high price of the transportation.

According to the interviews with the technical staff and the focus groups, none of the staff has received technical training on monitoring, evaluation, or poverty measurement. Rather all the trainings were restricted to social researchers and especially unit heads and were all on the laws and bylaws of the programs, the use of family files, and on answering common questions. Only one social unit of those visited received transformative training for secretaries to build their capacity as assistant researchers.

Interviewees from the monitoring department at the directorates said that interviewee has said that they have not received any trainings but continues to be trained by her colleagues and boss in a friendly manner. The employees said that the heads of the monitoring departments are very friendly and open to training junior staff about workflow, and operational matters. The trainings that are received come from the central agency for organization and administration (CAOA) and these are tailored for those transitioning from one administrative level to another and hence are tailored for more senior staff rather than juniors. The trainings provided by this agency is not specifically on monitoring, but is rather on how to be a better manager, managerial and motivation skills, and so on. Other trainings that are received are purely on laws and regulations, as well as on different kinds of violations that they could monitor. The trainings are received on an annual basis, but not all employees attend them, there's selectivity according to who attended previous trainings to give chances to everyone to participate.

4.1.3 Planning for M&E

On the central level and in both governorates, the social pension and the monitoring departments prepare an annual visits plan for monitoring where each department plans for 3-4 visits per month to the different administrations and their social

units. In Assiut, the social pension and the monitoring department at the directorate issue a monthly plan in a form that they have composed specifying dates of monitoring visits, and the social units or social administrations that they will visit. Qena adds to these the purpose behind the visit, and the person in charge of conducting the visit.

Similarly, staff in the monitoring and social pension departments at the social administrations are asked to follow a similar visits plan for monitoring. The visit plan in the social unit on the other hand, is the one that is different because that includes beneficiaries. The plans developed by the units include bi-annual follow up visitation plans. Spot checks on beneficiaries that the social researcher in the unit was informed to have had a change in status, are not formulated in plans, but are rather randomly visited based on the information the social researcher receives from the community and their observation.

4.1.4 Program Financing and planning

The law elaborates on how social pensions are funded. It specifies that a central social pension fund is to be formed within the MoSS (Law 137, 2010). This fund contains the transfers from the state budget (funds can be accumulated from year to year), donations from agencies and persons, the funds collected from applications and transfers, some fines as decided by the law. The central fund is supervised by a committee that includes the head of the social care and the social development sector, the head of the central administration for social protection, the central administration for financial and administrative affairs, general administration for financial affairs, the head of the social pension and crises department, and the head of the budgeting department. This committee is headed by the minister of social solidarity and is mandated to put the general policies of the central fund, draw the public policy for the social pension program and distributing it to the service directorates, follow up with spending and disbursements by sub accounts in the directorates, and specifying the amounts that are to be disbursed to the local levels according to the number of eligible beneficiaries, the number of residents in a certain governorates, the waiting lists for the program and so on. The committee also prepares quarterly reports for the designated finances, the actual spending, and so on. Heads of directorates are also given access to other accounts for social pension funded from the

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central fund. The distribution of funds to different directorates is made based upon a request from the MoSS to the prime minister. The funds are then distributed through the governorate popular council and the local council to reach the different social units.

During an interview, the general manager for the general department for social pension at the MoSS was asked about the kinds of information she currently receives about the program in order to make plans and decisions. She stated that the most important was the monthly statistical sheet including the number of beneficiaries, their classifications, and the financial amounts dedicated to them. She said that she receives the information on a monthly basis from the social pension departments in 27 directorates. This information is critical because she plans for the next year's activities and budgets accordingly. Every year, the social pension department at the central level decides on the financial amounts dedicated to each governorate based on this statistic and adds a 25 Percent in the amounts that they request from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) each year taking into consideration the annual increase in the number of beneficiaries. Other important information that is needed, is the opinions of social pension specialists at the local level. This is why the central department schedules visits to the different directorates to understand about the issues that are faced by practitioners on the local levels and whether the implementations of laws and regulations is practical, or if there need be any changes to cope with the reality on the field level. Another issue is the grievances that are sent to the central level, whereby specialists in the MoSS work on analyzing if there are certain trends in complaints and grievances, and work on scheduling visits to resolve them.

According to the law and bylaw, the financial amounts given to beneficiaries are decided upon jointly by the minister of social solidarity and the minister of finance and to be presented to the prime minister to approve and issue a decree with minimum and maximum standards. The prime minister's decree is then sent to the parliament to take into consideration when formulating the State Budget.

The most recent legal document specifying financial amounts that can be disbursed for social pension beneficiaries is the prime ministerial decree number 375 of

2014. Table 4 shows how the amount of social pension monthly transfers depending on the number of family members.

Table 3 Monthly transfer amounts to social pension beneficiaries

Number of family members	Amount of social pension monthly transfer
One individual	323 EGP
Two individuals	360 EGP
Three individuals	413 EGP
Four individuals	450 EGP

Source: Prime Ministerial Decree Document from the Official State Newspaper, 2014

According to the social pension law, families who do not have any income, receive the full pension; however, families that receive an income less that the social pension and are deemed eligible of the social pension, also receive part of the social pension until they have a full amount formed from the income and the pension.

If the social worker deems the beneficiary to be spending their transfer unwisely or unable to spend the transfer, then a report is giving to the social unit head to take to the social pension committee and specify a legal guardian who should spend the money on the beneficiary.

4.1.5 Stakeholder involvement in the program

The law allows for seeking the help of agencies that provide social care services and social development. This includes NGOs and CSOs that abide by Law 84 of 2002 for NGOs and that work on developing families and beneficiaries of the program. The heads of directorates are mandated to prepare lists of active NGOs and ensuring it reaches the heads of social units who can refer families to these organizations to get them out of the cycle of poverty or to provide services that are not provided by MoSS.

The law and bylaw specify that the social solidarity directorates should be the entity collaborating with NGOs and other governmental service providers in the production of family social research to ensure that families are not probed and researched

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by different entities without receiving services, and to ensure that those who receive NGO services are those who actually need them.

The bylaw states that it is also the role of the social unit head to strengthen the ties between social researchers and others working in different social services including governmental and non-governmental organizations and to conduct a process of community resource mapping with a list of NGOs and CSOs with their main activities to help applicants to the social pension attain other services and help to improve their living status. The social unit head should also prepare researches on the community main problems and needs to be presented to the needed governmental and non-governmental actors to aid with solutions to these problems.

4.2 Key Performance Indicators, poverty indicators and calculation

The law, bylaws, and ministerial decrees are the only program documents available for the social pension program. These documents do not contain any results frameworks or set forth clear indicators for the performance of the program; However, they emphasizes the importance of targeting poor and vulnerable groups, and denotes certain groups and elements that should be considered when deciding whether the family is poor and eligible or not.

The bylaw specifies the priority of targeting and registration in pensions to be for families and individuals in extreme poverty followed by families and individuals in poverty and finally for families and individuals near poverty; however, it does not give clear definitions of what extreme poverty, poverty, and near poverty means.

The indicators of poverty and deprivation according to the law are income, level of education, the number of individuals in the family, the state of the family's dwelling, health status especially for people/children with disability, and any other indicators or elements used to measure the poverty of families as issued in decrees by the prime minister. The bylaw builds upon the poverty measurements through putting several guidelines for assessments of poverty. These include indications of whether the source of income is steady or not, the level of education for the household head and whether that household head is employed or not, the number of family members and the percentages of children among the family, the status of the dwelling which is identified by the type of

materials used in the construction of the house, the share of each household member of rooms, the presence of a private bathroom, the area of residence, the average cost of the electricity bill, if available, the average of the phone bill, if available. The bylaw also considers the health status of family members especially debilitating illness or disability as well as the presence of vulnerable groups and allows for the addition of more indicators as determined by the prime minister decrees. The family income is also determined according to an average of what the family has attained in the six months prior to the social research from the following sources: (wage from a regular job, insurance pension, income from owned agricultural land, income from owned properties, income from owned cattle or income generating project, transportation methods, or any other sources of income). Some sources of income should not be counted as sources of income in determining eligibility for the program. This includes the wage received from irregular labor, aids from relatives and other persons, amounts received during training or vocational rehabilitation, allowances for children in schools or universities and institutes, financial help from NGOs and foundations, as well as financial amounts received as alimony for children of widowed women (Ministerial decree 186, 2015).

An analysis of the family file shows that it is very extensive and contains important information about families applying for the social pension. However, the family file is not digitized and cannot be used for tabulations of poverty indicators. The social researcher and the social pension committee can be subjective in deciding the eligibility of the family for the program. Many items that are filled in by the social researcher allow for subjectivity and cannot be truly verified except with the statement given by the applicant family. The measurement of poverty and depravation are not put in a quantifiable manner and do not have any set standards and will depend on the social researcher's perception and that of the social pension committee. The other important element is that since social researcher's perceptions and opinions are taken into consideration, results for families with similar social and economic conditions may vary according to information gathered by different social researchers or looked into by different social pension committees in the different directorates.

According to the focus group discussions, the social pension specialists in both directorates stated that after 2011, many applicants who perceive themselves as poor but were neither eligible nor poor.

During visits to beneficiaries of the social pension beneficiaries in Assiut and Qena, it was found that the families were indeed very poor, judging by the quality of the houses and living, which were roofless in 40 of the cases, and contained cracks in the walls, and most of them were dilapidated. The houses were overcrowded by an average of 6-8 people living in around an average of 60 meters of space. Many of the houses I visited contained 3 families living in the same house. Most of the cases I visited were widows and elderly persons in Assiut, and in Qena, disability and divorce were very common. According to researchers in Qena, disability is very common due to marriage between relatives. All the houses that had disability cases had more than one eligible beneficiary, either from the divorce criteria or another disability case. The families possessed almost no assets in their homes, and they were all illiterate. Furthermore, most of them were not even clear on the amounts they received or why they received them. Some families thought they received the pension from the social insurance organization, and others thought they received it from the post office itself rather than it being from MoSS. The families said that they mainly spent the money they got from the social pension on food, water, and medicine, and covering costs of their children's marriage.

4.3 Conducting beneficiary registration, and collection of baseline data

The bylaw lists the necessary steps required for the application for the social pension program. An application is submitted to the social unit in the geographic area that the applicant permanently resides in. The social unit is defined by the bylaw as a governmental outlet that provides comprehensive social services on the local levels for the families living in the geographic area of the unit[6]. The applications are kept in a record kept for that purpose, and applicants for disability causes are referred by the social unit to the medical commission to conduct the medical check-up. The only exception for

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[6] To apply for the social pension program, the beneficiary pays one pound that is refunded if the family is deemed eligible with the first monthly transfer.

the medical commission referral is obvious disability cases such as the case of amputation of one of the limbs or the loss of two eyes.

According to the bylaw, the social unit employee is in-charge of looking up the applicant and ensuring that they do not receive any other pension, specifically insurance pensions (Bylaw 451, 2010). The bylaw also mandates social researchers to conduct a field based research which the bylaw defines as a study of the living conditions of the family and knowledge of its capacities and needs, and suggestions of appropriate services through a field visit that is conducted in the family's residence and through collecting necessary data and putting it in the social file for the family. The social file for the family is a form that includes detailed family characteristics, and needs prepared by MoSS through a comprehensive lens that includes social care, social protection and social development for the whole family and that is filled through the social researcher. It should record any committee decisions for approvals, rejection, and amendments of the family in the social pension program, tracking social services provided to the family by MoSS or other entities like NGOs, the Nasser Bank, and other governmental and non-governmental entities. Families who are not accepted into the program are allowed to present complaints/grievances.[7]

The first section of the family file is an application for a service from MoSS. The services that can be provided can be filled through picking a certain service denoted in another section of the file. Services are classified to be in the social protection area (monthly social assistances, loans, exceptional assistances, assistances for disasters, supply cards, loans from the Nasser Bank, social loans, child pension and others), the development area (projects for rural women, training and educational services, eradication of illiteracy, rehabilitation, providing employment, vocational training, productive families, projects that serve working women, and so on), the social care area

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[7] To present a grievance, the beneficiary pays two EGP that are refunded if the grievance turns out to be correct. A committee looks into grievances on decisions issued by the committee that decides the eligibility. The grievance committee is formed from a counselor in the state council, the head of the social directorate, the head of the social department, representative from the ministry of population, representatives from each of the health, education, once of the deputies in the local council, and the head of the regional federation of NGOs and CSOs. The person/family presenting the grievance through a template that the bylaw specifies and it has to be submitted within one month of the notification of rejection date and it should include all necessary supporting documents.

(institutions for street children, nurseries, elderly homes or clubs, women clubs, cultural clubs, family counseling centers, disability rehabilitation offices and physiotherapy, shelters for survivors of violence, different institutions for the disabled, institutions for juvenile children), as well as services that can be provided by other agencies (Educational, health services, employment, connections to electricity, water, and sanitation, housing, and rebuilding and renovation of houses susceptible to collapsing).

The applicant can apply for themselves or those in their custody if unable to present themselves at the social unit and is asked to give details about social, educational, health status, status of dwelling, employment, asset ownership, income, and the existence of insurance[8]. The applicant is then given a slip certifying that the social unit has received a certain amount of money to process the application and gives the applicant a phone number for the social unit, and the social administration to inquire about the status of application. The slip also provides the applicant with the option of contacting the administrative control agency, the ministry of administrative development through regular mail and the MoSS through contacting the hotline or through mail in case of delays or holding of the requested services or in case of requested amendments to the application.

The second section of the family file is the section that the social researcher uses during the field based social research for the family. The required areas are the basic information for the household head, a detailed description of the family residence including area, type of ownership, the presence of a bathroom, potable water, sanitation, furniture, kitchen, asset ownership, and electronics ownership, amount of electricity, gas, and phone bills if available. The social researcher also fills details about each member of the family, the health status of members with disability and chronic illnesses, services received by families from MoSS, NGOs, churches and mosques, Nasser Bank, and others. The social researcher asks the family through the form on the sources of income. This is calculated through a listing of assets (agricultural land, income generating projects, real estate, cattle, alimony, and income from employment, income from

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[8] In case the data that the applicant gave in the initial application is inconsistent with the social worker report from the field visit, the opinion of the social unit head is sought and is written and presented to the social pension committee.

additional employment, pensions, and assistances from others and filling in the income generated from these sources on a monthly basis. The social researcher then lists the monthly spending upon which deprivation is supposed to be calculated. This includes spending on dwelling, nutrition, medicine, education, transportation, consumption of electricity, phone, water, natural gas, clothing, and other areas as determined by the family. The social researcher here also fills in the name of the family members, their qualifications, and suggestions for capacity building and collects necessary supporting documents. The social researcher is then asked to provide any notes from the field visit and provide his/her opinion in a short paragraph as well as summarize the social, economic, health, living, and dwelling standard and status of the family, and then insert the services that he/she sees fit. The form of the field based social research is then signed by the social researcher, and handed in to the social unit head to sign and stamp.

The law specifies that after the field based social researcher issues the report, a committee formed by the governor on the social administration level is formed to look into the reports and decide on the eligibility of beneficiaries. They also look into the reports issued by the bi-annual follow up of families to decide whether they are still eligible as time goes by. The by-law further describes the role of the committee to include planning for families to be integrated in economic and social development activities, training eligibility and deciding on the eligibility of families for school assistances and income generating projects. The committee that looks into the cases is composed of representatives from the following entities: The head of the Social Administration, the head of the Social Pension in the Social Administration, the head of the Motherhood and Childhood Department of the Social Administration, the head of the Health Department, the head of the Educational Department, the head of one of the NGOs working in the geographical area, a representative of the local council, and a public personality known for social work and activity. The committee convenes at least twice a month and whenever else the head of the committee sees fit provided that it has at least five members along with the committee head. It issues decisions with a majority of the votes, in case of a tie, the side that has the head of the committee is the one whose decision goes. The committee has to respond to the applicant, by acceptance or rejection with adequate reasons for both. The beneficiary gets the financial transfer a month after the

committee decision. The committee also has a general secretariat that is mandated by the bylaw to receive the social research file, present each case after being recorded on the database to be decided on, writing down meeting minutes and decisions, notify the social unit of the decisions for the applicants in the unit's geographical area within a week and notify the applicants of the decisions and receive a signature from them to certify that the applicant has received the result of their eligibility, recoding data on the social protection database, prepare monthly statistics about committee achievements and giving it to the head of the social solidarity directorate. The committee should have two main records available at all times, one for the applicants and committee decisions about them and the date, and a record for the committee meetings.

The third section of the family file is the part that is filled in the social administration by the social pension committee. This section is the one where the committee issues a decision according to the field based social research and the supporting documents and application, to either grant or reject the social pension application, to amend the amount of the monthly social assistance, either due to the increase/ decrease of family members, graduation of children from schools, stopping the monthly social pension, or continue the monthly social pension. Reasons are listed for each type. The decision can also include granting of school tuition assistance for children, or exceptional assistances, or training and a project to the family. This decision lists a condition that families should follow up with going to the health unit for a health check up every six months. This decision is then recorded on the social protection network database and is kept in the social family file.

The final section of the family file has a section related to indicating whether the family falls within extreme poverty or not according to targeting. This is filled at the social administration level and has a column called (poverty indicator). This indicator, according to the explanation in the form, is inversely related to poverty. For example, if a family gets a lower score on the poverty indicator, it indicates that it is in more severe poverty.

According to the bylaw, field based social researchers should be conducted by a well trained and certified social workers mandated by an order from the social unit head

to go to the residence of the applicant to ensure the eligibility of the family and for the filling of the family file (Bylaw 451, 2010). The field social work research has to be conducted within two weeks from the date of application and the social worker has to prepare a weekly report with the social researches that were conducted and present this report to the social unit head. The social unit head is then responsible for giving the social pension committee the applicant files in the social administration.

During the surveys conducted with the beneficiaries, they all stated that they had known about the social pension program from relatives and good willed people. The families said that they have come to the social unit and filled in applications, with the help of the social researchers because they could neither read nor write. The social researcher then paid them a visit and they started receiving the monthly transfer almost 1.5 months after that visit. Forty of the beneficiaries were inaccurate or unaware about the papers they submitted during the application.

4.4 Carrying out the monitoring of the program

4.4.1 Follow up of the families

The social worker is mandated by the law to ensure that beneficiaries actually receive the transfers on a monthly basis and families are obliged to notify the social workers and social unit in case any change happens to the economic and social status of the family. This should happen through a follow up on the status of families at least once every six months to ensure that they still deserve the social assistance, and the commitments of families in keeping children in schools, giving children immunization shots, and engaging in productive, and training activities. This is done through two sections of the family file is the follow up forms for the family. These forms are filled on a biannual basis. One form is filled in and signed by the household head with an update on their status including whether the number of family members has changed, whether the household head has been employed, and whether the household head is prepared to work in certain fields. The second form is filled in by the social researcher at the social unit. It includes any changes that happened to family members, any changes to the state of the family dwelling, and the family's status in social care and social development service enrollment. The social researcher then is asked to give an opinion on whether the

family deserves the continuation of assistances or not. The researcher then signs the form and submits it to the social unit head who approves, signs, and stamps it and keeps it in the family file.

The law specifies that the monitoring and supervision departments be in charge of carrying out a 10 Percent random sample of beneficiaries to make sure that they still deserve the assistance. The bylaw here specifies this further stating that a committee is to be formed in each directorate headed by the head of the directorate and with memberships of the head of the monitoring department in the directorate, a monitoring specialist, and this committee is mandated to put a random monitoring plan on a 10 Percent random sample annually. This task is done through the random choosing of 10 Percent of families that had social researches done for, and conducting field based levels for the families, and filling in a follow up form and inserting its data on the database. Another monitoring is supposed to be conducted by the central administration for directorate affairs, along with social pension specialists who validate the 10 Percent sampling and monitoring done on the directorate levels.

Since according to the law and bylaw, the social pension beneficiary can apply for an assistance to start an income generating project with conditions that the project be suitable to the applicant's skills, in line with environmental regulations, has a suitable headquarters to start the project, and has the ability to operate and continue running the project. The social workers should follow up on the projects given by the MoSS to social pension beneficiaries every three months to ensure that it is still ongoing and to ensure that the project owner can have access to necessary technical assistance. The law gives the MoSS the ability to stop social pension transfers for those who are able to work and who refuse to integrate in training or vocational rehabilitation when offered three times without valid reasons. The social assistance can also stop if the beneficiary attained the ability to make double the amount of the transfer.

The bylaw specifies that if the beneficiary is late in receiving the transfer during the month, he/she can apply for a refund and the transfer is received in the following month, if the beneficiary does not receive the amount for two months, the social worker has to conduct a field visit to see the reason for the delay.

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During an interview, the general manager for the general department for social pension in the MoSS stated that the central ministry team devises an annual visits plan, where they conduct spot checks on different directorates, administrations and units. There's also a monthly adjustment for that plan that the General Manager she authorizes each month. In addition, the MoSS team conducts a random 10 Percent sample on beneficiaries of the social pension to make sure that they are deserving of the transfer as well as that they are actually residing and in conditions similar to those listed in the family files. Furthermore, the team also looks into any units that have complaints or grievances.

When asked about the importance of monitoring and evaluation, during an interview, the general manager for the general department for social pension at MoSS stated that said that it was very important, and that the laws and bylaws require the families to be monitored on a bi-annual basis; however, she is well aware that this is not done on a regular basis because of the understaffing of many social units, the lack of social researchers to conduct family assessments and follow ups, difficulties in transportation. Furthermore, the financial amounts are too little to actually contribute to lifting families from poverty.

In the focus groups, the specialists said that they conducted field visits to social units and to social administrations based on an annual and a monthly plan. For each visit, a report is produced. They rarely conducted visits to the houses of families, unless there are complaints and grievances that they needed to look into. The visits to the social unit administration are mainly for inspecting the work flow, the records, and the grievances.

Observations during field visits showed that in some units, family follow up files were not stamped with the client's finger print, and others were stamped but did not include any information at all indicating that they had the client stamp it in advance without actually conducting the follow up. Upon checking the records, many of the follow up visit records were missing from files at the unit.

During the interviews and focus groups; the following issues were expressed in consensus from all interviews in social units, administrations, directorates, and the two

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focus groups, and the general manager of the social pension program at the central ministry:

- There were no job descriptions or clear performance indicators given to the staff in the social units; hence, the managers of the social unit are responsible for dividing and evaluating the work done by the staff according to their management style. The job descriptions are only available at the directorate

- The social units are severely understaffed when it comes to social workers who should be helping the unit head to register cases, conduct field work, and conduct the biannual follow up of the families, as well as other researches[9]. Secretaries are found in abundance in most social units. Secretaries are only used to fill in records from the field social research, and conducting administrative issues. When asked about the capacity of existing secretaries to receive training to help in the field social research and the follow up of the family, the social unit heads stated that all secretaries were above the age of 50 years old and hence were too old to be asked to be rehabilitated as social researchers and to move around among villages and houses to conduct the needed field work. This is again due to the lack of young and new hires in social units. However, secretaries are sometimes useful when the social unit heads/researchers have to go to tough or far away areas as travel companions especially for females.

- The social unit head is overloaded because he/she is requested to conduct all the duties specified in the job description of the unit head, while fulfilling all the social researcher job duties too and doing the follow up visits to NGOs, nurseries, rehabilitation centers, vocational training and productive family centers that are in the geographic jurisdiction of the social unit.

- There have been no new hires in the social units in a very long time and new hires in the MoSS were reserved to holders of master's and PhD degrees and were

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[9] Data about the status of families and individuals is often requested from NGOs, Schools, Universities, the ministry of supply, the courts. This is especially for individuals who ask for services from any of these entities, these entities require that the applicant to their services have a social research done by the social unit. Most social unit heads however said that these researches are done via disk work rather than field work because they do not have the time or capacity to conduct the field work for them.

hence appointed and placed in the directorate or in the central ministry because they deemed themselves or were deemed by the directorate and their connections as overqualified to be working in social units.

- Some units are also facing problems when it comes to security of the unit and the employees. Families and community members have attacked the unit several times because they were found to be ineligible for the program. Sometimes, applicants and citizens also get very violent and aggressive with the staff and the staff have no way of protecting themselves because they are obliged to invite citizens asking for the service to sit with them in the social unit when applying rather than doing it from a secured window for example due to the type of social work involved. Unless the social unit head is very well connected and comes from a strong and reputable family, the citizens do not respect him/her and can get violent and aggressive when denied services.

- The social unit does not have a computer not an internet connection. The social units suffer from the absence of a copying machine, as well as the absence of some publications. They are also facing a severe shortage in the family research files. The family research files are very limited, and since the law and regulations oblige the researcher to conduct and fill the family file for all beneficiaries and applicants, many cases will be put on the waiting list every month because of the lack of available publications and necessary forms. Similarly, the focus group in Assiut complained that there were no family files available in order to register and record families' conditions according to the required legal procedures. The printing process of the family files is done through the central level in the "Amireyya Print House". The directorate has no budget line item for printing family files and hence a lot of families end up on waiting lists until the monthly supply of family files gets to them.

- The social unit heads also said that the follow up of the family results in the verification that their status has not changed, and that sometimes, because the social researchers/unit heads are residing and originally from the area that the unit is located in, they personally know a lot of the beneficiaries and hence sometimes notice changes in the economic status of families for the better or worse. They are

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also sometimes informed by the community that one of the widowed beneficiaries for example got married and hence she is no longer eligible for the social pension. Changes in status and through this follow up can result in increasing, decreasing, or stopping the social pension. Some citizens cheat and get incorrect papers to prove that their husbands left them for example from the police station as required by the law; however, through connections in the area, the social unit head is sometimes notified that these cases are not true.

- The employees perceive themselves as underpaid, and have a lack of incentives, both financial and motivational. The distances are great between houses and villages which requires transportations mostly via microbuses and TokToks which are costly for the amount of money the social researchers currently receive. The social unit does not possess a transportation method, nor do they possess per diem for internal transportation. The administrations also said that there are issues in transportation, as well as the lack of incentives used for transportation. One social administration head said in interview with me that he got, at his own cost, a motorcycle to be able to move between the 16 units he supervises, follow up on field research, grievances, and follow up of families. However, it is still very difficult to follow up, especially because of the large number of cases.

- According to the focus groups in both Assiut and Qena directorates, the social pension staff said that transportation was not a problem for them, since the directorate had cars that could transport them to wherever they plan to go based on an approval from the deputy head or the head of the directorate. When asked about the possibility of providing cars or transportation methods to employees in the social administrations and social units, they argued that these employees would misuse the cars and motorcycles for their own errands, that there would be no maintenance for these items that these transportation methods would need gas allowance.

- Slow communication after family follow up also presents a problem. Some social unit heads also said that they faced some issues with the post office, which is the agency in charge of disbursing the amounts to citizens on a monthly basis from the 1st to the 15th of each month. The post offices near some units are not very

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cooperative, and sometimes one of the old age beneficiaries dies or a widow gets married for example, and hence since the social unit head knows that, he/she tries to inform the post office, but it usually takes a couple of months before she is able to communicate through the social administration to the post office and to stop further payments[10].

- The social unit heads said that they would like to monitor families more, because they see an importance for doing that; however, they cannot handle all the new cases' registration and field research in addition to the follow up of the families in addition to their other role in producing researches on the environment, researches on people for the ministry of supply or NGOs considering giving services to them, monitor NGOs and MoSS supervised institutions.

- The law requires the social unit to direct applicants for disability and chronic illnesses to the medical commission. Some unit heads have many complaints from certain medical commission offices because of corruption on passing off cases as disabled when they were not[11].

- Some units have issues with medical commissions delaying the medical checkups for applicants and some have issues with the distance between the villages to the medical commissions because of the difficulty disabled applicants face in reaching these commissions as well as requiring a lot of costs from people already applying for a pension directed to people in poverty.[12] Other units have reached an agreement to have a special committee on Fridays with the medical commission to hasten up the medical checks for disabled applicants, and hence there were no people on the waiting list because of medical commission issues.[13]

- Some units faced problems in the follow up of the families represented in the lack of follow up forms and questionnaires and their inability to photocopy them because of the budget limitations.[14]

- Sometimes, the social researchers did not give clear instructions to social pension applicants on how the program works and how the application process goes. If

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[10] According to an Interview with the social unit head at Thani Social Unit – Gharb Administration- Assiut.
[11] According to an interview with the social unit head at Belad El-Maal Social Unit- Qena
[12] According to an interview with the social unit head at Belad El-Maal Social Unit- Qena
[13] According to an interview in Dandara social unit - Qena
[14] El- Taramsa Social unit- Qena

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there is any service that the social unit does not provide, the social researchers did not refer families to other NGOs who could provide services. The social workers had complained profusely about the state of the unit, said that it was inhumane, and that they do not do their work efficiently because the space they were in did not allow for it.[15]

During the visits that were conducted to Assiut and Qena, and according to the surveys of the beneficiaries of the social pension program, only 10 out of 60 beneficiaries said that they have received a follow up visit after their initial eligibility clearance, and these visits were few (once or twice in an average of three years), the others have not received any follow up visits at all. Many cases (45 out of 60) had said that they have started getting the social pension when it was 90 EGP and that it continued to increase each year until they reached the maximum of 450 EGP per month meaning that they have been in the program for quite some time, and despite that, they have not received the visits mandated by the law.

4.4.2 Monitoring of program implementation and technical staff

The monitoring process of the technical staff and program implementation is done by both the social pension and the monitoring department at their different central and local levels. According to interviews with the specialists in the monitoring departments of each directorate, the monitoring department does not deal directly with citizens, unless there is a grievance that is presented to them to solve. In case a grievance is submitted, they conduct a visit to the social administration and the social unit to figure out what went wrong. If the records and the investigations they conduct do not produce any results, only then do they meet the citizens. Most of the work that the department does is to conduct visits to social units and administrations to make sure that the employees commit to the working hours and are present, examine the performance of employees, examine records, grievances, and financial records, and see if there are any delays from the social pension committee or from the social researchers.

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[15] According to an interview with a social researcher in Qusir Bakhanis Social Unit in Qena

The social pension department staff examine:

- Form #1 for social pension[16]
- Record #2 for social pension[17]
- Record #4 for social pensions[18]
- Monthly statistics on the numbers of social pension beneficiaries, their classifications, and the amounts disbursed to them.
- Records of beneficiaries who have actually received transfer from post office
- Availability of all publications, forms, files, templates, information, ministerial decrees and laws
- The completion, accuracy, and correlations and consistency between the different forms and records
- Records for amounts disbursed unduly
- Records for crises
- The manpower at the social unit
- The extent of the social unit's response to previous notes from other field visits
- Records for social pension projects
- Meeting minutes of the social pension committee that decided on eligibility of the program as well as the grievances committee
- Records of committees' decisions
- Other notes

Monitoring department templates reflecting visits for social administrations and social units to examine the following:

- Presence and absence of employees

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[16] Lists applications from clients to the social pension

[17] Lists the basic information about the applicant, those who have had the field research visit conducted, the cases that have not been field researched, the cases that have gotten a response by acceptance/rejection from the social pension committee and those that have not gotten a response yet.

[18] Lists the name of the beneficiary, the number and date of the acceptance decision, the date of the first installment, the amount of transfer, the names of children, their birthdates, and the date of them reaching the legal age, the national ID number, the amounts of transfers listed by month, and the results of the bi-annual monitoring and any social pension committee decisions following that.

- Excused and unexcused absences
- Incoming and outgoing records
- Vacation records for the workers
- Grievances and the responses to these grievances
- Other notes

Findings of monitoring processes showed that there were common field based issues while monitoring program implementation and staff performance included:

- Follow up of the families is not conducted in some cases at all, in other cases selectively, and not bi-annually as per the laws and regulations
- Records in the social unit do not match or correspond to each other and show discrepancies from each other
- Records are not filled in correctly, not stamped, hard to read, not organized.
- Family files are not complete and do not contain social pension committee decision numbers and dates,
- the social administration and the social unit are not communicating efficiently and the social unit is uninformed of the results of the social pension committee decisions and therefore, they cannot help citizens
- Some cases were chosen randomly from the list of beneficiaries and through the visit, the central team saw that social workers in the unit were not aware of where the beneficiaries reside, and when conducting a field visit to the address listed in the records, the beneficiaries were not present and the neighbors did not recognize their names, this indicated that either the cases were not actually residing in the area of the social unit and were not real or that the social workers did not conduct the follow up visits at all.
- Social pension projects are not conducted or given in the social units to social pension beneficiaries
- Grievance and social pension eligibility committees' Meeting minute records for the social pension committee is not numbered and stamped correctly, the plans for visiting social units do not correspond to the actual visits conducted

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- Delays in getting lists of beneficiaries with actual disbursed amounts from the Egyptian Post office to the social administration

- There were delays in the medical commission medical checkups causes delays in the approval of registering cases to the program

- The plans for visiting social units and social administrations do not correspond to the actual visits conducted

- there were no records and publications in the social pension section of the social administrations, certain units, and directorates

- Many cases have applied to the social pension and have not received an answer even though the deadline to do that has passed.

4.4.3 Datasets and databases

The law specifies that a central database is formed to include the data of social pension beneficiaries and the type and amounts of assistances they receive and this database should be connected to the database of the National Organization for Social Insurance and the Civil Status Organization and other relevant agencies. Sharing data is also required from governmental and non-governmental organizations for any type of social assistances that are given by these organizations when asked for by the MoSS. The data sharing on the local level should be with the service directorates. The bylaw specifies that this database should include the social files, the data of beneficiaries and applicants, the data of the follow up of beneficiaries, and the decisions of the social pension committees.

Paper based databases and datasets are relied on heavily in social units especially because these units do not contain computers, printers, or have access to internet connectivity. Hence, the unit heads fill all paperwork and databases on paper and then send them to the social administration that is in charge of entering this data on the databases. The main issues with paper based databases and datasets as noted from the interviews is the lack of available publications and records for the units' use, and hence, the units often delay recording in these records.

The monitoring reports gathered showed that sometimes, the malfunctioning of computers in the social administrations can result in delays in data entry and sending to

the different stakeholders. It also delays in registering approved cases and entry on databases and delays in the delivery of transfers to certain beneficiaries because of the inability to communicate with the post office through the databases.

4.5 The Evaluation Process

Through the interviews and focus groups with all levels of administrative authority in the two directorates and on the central level, the staff members have said that no evaluation process neither ever conducted for the program nor for how the families have developed from the date of receipt of transfers. The laws and bylaws only focus on M&E of whether families remain eligible for the program based on that monitoring. Evaluation reports in the two directorates and on the central level were non-existent for the social pension program.

4.6 Reporting on Findings

At various stages of the study, different reports by different departments and administrative levels were examined to see how the staff currently reports on the social pension program. What was noticeable in the two directorates, and in different departments, was that different departments reported on similar things and queries. However, the reporting templates differed according to the directorates and to the departments. The interviewed technical staff all stated that they do not receive any templates for reporting, and hence, they often develop their own templates and collect data based on these forms to fulfill their duties as listed in their job descriptions and in the legal documents of the program. This results in varying information from directorate to directorate. For example, the reports prepared in Assiut were more extensive that those of Qena.

The reports presented by all administrative levels were monitoring reports rather than evaluation reports. All the different reports collected data on how the social units were performing, the extent of staff's commitment to filling in the correct records, the attendance of staff, and other notes as the monitoring personnel saw fit.

One of the common reports across all administrative level in all governorates includes the beneficiary numbers, classifications, and amounts disbursed to each group. This report is issued monthly by each social unit, is collected by social administrations

that collect this report from all social units that they supervise, which then forwards it to the directorate which collects this statistic from all the social administrations they supervise, and finally forwards it to the central level which collects data from the twenty seven directorates.

Social Units also prepare a quarterly report including the following elements:

- o Manpower at the unit, trainings they've received
- o The number of residents in the unit's geographical area and the number of villages served by the unit
- o The number of complaints
- o Approved visits for the social unit head and the social researcher
- o Social pension related items:
  - Number of new applicants
  - Number of researches done for them
  - Number of accepted/rejected beneficiaries
  - Cases that have not been researched yet
  - The financial amount specified for the unit vs. spending on social pensions
- o Other items include reporting information on NGOs, social researches requested by different agencies, crises, productive families, care centers, visits received by the unit, data on those serving their community service time, and information on the numbers of families of conscripts.

4.7 Using M&E Findings

The law specifies certain sanctions against those who intentionally give false information about their income, social and economic status in order to get the social pension assistance that they do not deserve. The sanction is immediately stopping the social assistance and could reach six months in jail and a fine that ranges between 500 EGP and 5,000 EGP. The same penalty applies to any employee who takes the amounts allocated for the beneficiaries for themselves rather than giving it to beneficiaries. Sanctions should also be enforced on citizens who receive a court sentence for human trafficking, endangering children, and other related cases. However, the Minister can

pardon people from these sentences and can allow for the return of amounts from those who do not deserve the assistance on installments.

The bylaw also specifies sanctions against social workers who do not commit to follow up and registering any changes that happens to beneficiaries, and against social unit heads who do not enforce sanctions against social workers or beneficiaries who commit violations of the law.

4.8 Planned reforms and readiness assessments for RBME

4.8.1 Leadership assessment of the current program and identifying demand for M&E information

During an interview, the general manager for the general department for social pension at the MoSS stated that the current system does not allow for proper monitoring because of the problems she mentioned; however, there are plans to expand the social protection network and include more monitoring and evaluation into the system. One of the most important elements that she sees is the importance of automating data in social units. Currently, only the directorate and the social administrations are automated; however, the state of the technological infrastructure is very shabby. The financial amounts given to the families need to increase in order to give them a chance of exiting from their poverty trap. Furthermore, the numbers of social researchers need to increase and they need to be given adequate performance based benefits to increase their efficiency. She also spoke about the *Takaful* and *Karama* program, currently being implemented by the department, where new monitoring indicators are set in place, since the program is fully automated from registration to eligibility checks, to verification and monitoring of families. This automation also allows for the exchange of data with relevant ministries and public sector organizations and thus enhances the whole process.

Similarly, during an interview was the Assistant Minister of Social Solidarity for Social Protection and Development and the manager of the new conditional cash program (CCT), *Takaful and Karama*, she said that for the old social pension system, there are hardly any output indicators that are being measured and there are no impact indicators. In addition, the impact of social pension was never monitored or evaluated by the MoSS. Evaluation is hardly considered by the different agencies, except the donor agencies as

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well as the high authority government agencies. However, there is an increasing demand from different organizations and sectors for M&E reports and results. Organizations that demand information about social protection programs were identified to include the following:

At the government level: The Ministry of Finance (MoF) to monitor efficiency and cost effectiveness and to continue the subsidy reform process, Ministry of Health and Food Supply to complement the package of social protection services; health and food rations, and Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Assistance to be provided with the data of families. Ministry of International Cooperation follows up systematically as long as there are external funds, grants, and loans used in any social pension or social protection program. Finally, the cabinet is also concerned with the performance of the program as long as it deals with the poverty profiles. The ministry of interior in its various sectors requests information about the old social pension program. The prison's authority requests information on families of prisoners, while the civil status organization requests data on those registered in social protection programs to ensure that they are alive.

At the level of civil society: Only the organizations that are working on social protection programs or on programs relevant to the poverty issues, and this is to unify the database of poor people receiving poverty and avoid duplicity of benefits. The media often requests information on certain cases that have media attention or that present complaints

At the level of international organizations: Especially if the organizations are contributing with funds or loans, they are highly concerned with the performance social protection programs. Examples are the World Bank, UNICEF, and World Food Program.

Parliament and Legislative entities: To ensure that their relevant areas are covered with social protection benefits, and to verify the transparency of the program information.

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Cabinet and President's Office: To ensure the results of the program are being reflected on the lives of the poor, and that the synchronized subsidy reform program is going on the right track.

The Assistant Minister explained how these agencies request budgets and forecasts in details, to be able to decide on budget allocations, information on program inputs and activities and outputs especially that the social pension activities and outputs are subject to public accountability on distribution of benefits among the poor and ensuring that equity and transparency are highly considered. Furthermore, monitoring reports are increasingly required by government agencies especially the higher authority like the cabinet and presidency as well as the Ministry of Finance (MoF). Same applies for donor agencies. Media is also very much concerned with the media reports.

4.8.2 Political will and planned reforms for RBME

According to an interview with the Assistant Minister, currently, and as part of the new suggested reforms to the social protection system, MoSS has developed a new program for CCTs based on the Ain El-Siera CCT model that is considered an evolution and improvement of the old social pension program. The new program is called *Takaful* and *Karama*.

Takaful and *Karama* is mainly based on information, as relies on the concept of "Targeting" to reach the poorest and the most vulnerable. She explained that this program requires and collects information at the start of the program. There is a need of input information to ensure the eligibility of the families applying for CCT, and to measure the performance of working employees:

1) Poverty maps that indicate where the poorest governorates, districts and villages.
2) Locating schools and health services in the target areas, as the program is based on another concept, which is "conditionality for education and health".

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3) Ensuring that the families applying for the CCT are not benefiting from other similar advantages from the ministry that eventually constitute duplication of the same benefits but with different names.

4) Persons with disabilities have to provide commission certificates that indicate their percentage of disability to endue their eligibility for the social pension/cash transfer.

5) Measuring the performance of employees, and how many families they registered and are monitoring to accordingly decide on their level of benefits that are based on performance indicators.

6) Measuring the number of eligible families and the cash that should be disbursed, and this helps in the financial decision making to provide the needed budget from MoF.

After families' enrollment, information is needed to monitor the output of the program to ensure that families are complying with conditionality and they are still eligible:

1) Follow up that children of families applying for cash transfer are being enrolled in schools and are using the health services to monitor the situation of women and children.

2) Periodically ensure that elderly beneficiaries are alive.

3) Ensure that the conditions of poverty are constant, and the family still needs support.

At later stages of the program, information is needed to monitor the results of the program and the impact on the lives of beneficiaries:

1) Children school retention and completion rates.

2) Children growth monitoring indicators to measure overall improvement in health.

3) Percentage of improvement in neo-natal care, infant and maternal mortality.

4) Economic conditions of the family.

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Information and reports on the progress of the program are collected at the beginning of the program when families register their data, to have their eligibility decided on by an application of a proxy mean tested (PMT) formula. Then reports are issued quarterly, annually, and the eligibility of families is reconsidered every three years.

The Assistant Minister explained that the input indicators are given in a timely manner, as is anything related to financial resources. Programmatic information regarding the input level is also given in timely manner. There are delays in output level information such as enrollment in schools and proof of life, which entails disbursing funds for non-eligible household or individuals.

In the newly developed social protection system, a well-structured monitoring system with concrete multi-level indicators is being implemented. Coordination with relevant ministries is currently being enhanced, which includes automation of the monitoring systems and establishing a network of regularly flowing information between the different ministries, especially those of Social Solidarity, Health and Population, Education and Civil Status in the Ministry of Interior. Hence, the monitoring system is inter-connected between different government players. It is developed in a way to be given in timely manner; however it is still under testing.

With regards to the newly developed social protection program, impact indicators are already integrated into the design of the program, but is not yet due measuring. When asked about the quality of information provided, the Assistant Minister said that this quality is questionable especially at the lower level of social units, where people mainly depend on manual systems and poor working conditions. The system relatively improves when it goes at upper administrative level; but the information is basically derived from the bottom administrative level. Financial information is much more of a better quality, as it entails administrative and legal responsibility.

In the newly developed social protection system, quality of information is largely better and more accurate as it is all automated. Yet, the information reported by families need to be verified to ensure the accurate and correct self-reporting. Verification system is established by the ministry at different administrative level and based on sample

selection to ensure the quality of information reported by families. Moreover, there is a completely structured logical framework with its multi-level indicators. It is worth highlighting that the program is mainly built "disbursement linked indicators", and thus if the indicators are not fulfilled, no disbursement is going to take place. She argued that the developed social protection program has a strong potential monitoring system that, to a large extent, would ensure relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

The interview showed that there was a commitment from the higher level officials to results based monitoring and evaluation and their importance in social protection programs. The Assistant Minister concluded the interview with highlighting that the new planned reforms intended to instill the following:

Targeting based on actual data: Targeting takes placed based on official information and national statistics.

Results based planning and budgeting: The newly developed system is results based, with a well-structured logical framework with its multi-level indicators. It is worth highlighting that the program is mainly built "disbursement linked indicators", and thus if the indicators are not fulfilled, there is no disbursement going to take place.

Automation and MIS development: The system is fully automated, and hence all the reform process is directly linked with automation, whether in the same ministry (MoSS), or among the different ministries. All information is saved on secured and structured database that is periodically analyzed and policy recommendations are formulated.

Quality assurance mechanisms: Cross checking information of applying families with existing social pension, social insurance and with civil status registrar is required before taking any decisions regarding the eligibility of the family.

Coordination with all stakeholders: Information on eligible families is shared with ministries of Health and of Supply to provide families with complementary benefits of free health care and food rations.

Capacity building: Capacity building programs are planned for the government staff, starting with training social workers on automated registration, eligibility testing, and system analysis and reporting as well as M&E.

National databases: Unified National Registry is being developed in coordination with the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform in order to develop national database on those who are eligible for subsidies.

The motives for instilling these reforms included providing services that are relevant to local communities; monitoring performance of working staff to ensure best use of civil servants; monitoring effectiveness and efficiency of the social protection program to ensure efficient use of government resources; and especially monitoring equitable distribution of benefits and services; ensuring the results of the program on the education, health and nutrition of the beneficiaries; to build better human resources that could later contribute to the production process and to achieving better economic results; assessing the impact of the program on improving the lives of the poor and most vulnerable to fulfill their integrated set of rights.

The Assistant Minister clarified that while the program's operations was partially funded by a World Bank loan, The system was nationally owned and was being constructed at the different administrative level; the local and central levels. It was also enhanced through the coordination with relevant ministries and under the unified national registry initiative. The main beneficiaries of the system will include the poor and vulnerable families to receive relevant and efficient benefits and services, the government to optimize the use of its budgets, the government employees to facilitate and ease their level of work, the policy makers to be able to take evidence based decision and policies, and budgets.

4.8.3 Assessment of institutional capacities and commitment

When asked if there were any advocates for the establishment of results based M & E for social protection programs, the Assistant Minister answered that the old system and many government staff are not advocating for establishing results based, though not necessarily because they are against transparency but could also be because the monitoring system requires resources that are not necessarily available and hence the

working rules and procedures are not harmonized with the requirement for monitoring. In addition, if the system is based on results, then employees' benefits will also be based on results; which is not necessarily wanted by inefficient employees.

Younger staff especially those who have high computer skills were more advocates of results based M&E systems. They were more exposed to contemporary systems, promoting the use of MIS to make easier for them especially with the electronic government. Finally, financial people would be pro-results based M&E, as they have a trend of not trusting the rewards of the high cost programs.

Policy makers and senior decision makers are definitely pro-results based M&E, as it indicates the level of the ministry performance and accordingly of the effectiveness of the policy makers in leading big programs that reflects its benefits on the poor and the most vulnerable.

4.8.4 Obstacles for RBME

Leadership expectations on what is to happen if the new M&E system generates negative information about performance or impacts, included speculations that staff will not be happy, as this indicates that the design might not have been relevant and effective, the performance could be weak and based on subjectivity, resources are not optimally used… thus on the whole results do not respond to the set plans. The beneficiaries will not be happy because the expected change in their lives did not take place. Policy makers and high decision makers will feel accountable for their effective and efficient management.

As for the greatest obstacles standing in front of establishing results based monitoring and evaluation, the Assistant Minister identified the following issues as the leading obstacles:

1) Lack of positive culture of monitoring, and the general sense that the information would involve legal responsibility. So, the less information, the more secured are the officials. M&E are mostly related to numbers and with very classic level of reporting that are not based on results or indicators but is rather based on amounts of money disbursed and amount of people benefiting.

2) Lack of results based planning: Plans, that precede establishing M&E systems, are not fundamentally based on results and indicators and budgets are not results based but are itemized, and hence building monitoring systems is hard, except if a stop is being made and systems are being adjusted to manage with a tailored system that is conducive to results based monitoring.

3) Limited capacities: no capacity building programs are available for the ministry staff on M&E, and hence their knowledge and skills are limited.

4) Absent or poor Management Information System: with the frail existing automation system, there is hardly management information existing. M&E that is not linked to MIS is weakly structured and hardly monitored.

5) M&E is not utilization based: even though when information is collected, it is hardly analyzed and policy papers are never drafted. Thus, officials do not see benefit of tough monitoring systems that requires lots of efforts but are not being optimally used to build structural decision, alter systems, change budgets, or put officials accountable.

The newly developed social protection program is endeavoring to deal with all the above mentioned obstacles.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine and analyze the process of M&E of social protection programs within the MoSS. The study also analyzed the methods and processes that MoSS uses in assessing families, monitoring and evaluation for the progress and results of the social pension program on different administrative levels, both local and central.

The main findings included the presence of baseline data on the families, the presence of some poverty indicators, and the presence of certain elements of monitoring and reporting. The findings also showed that there has been a growing importance for monitoring across different administrative levels; however, there's a general lack of resources available in order to conduct monitoring.

It was clear from the collected data and that the legal documents were the only program documents that were available and used to set the outcomes to monitor and evaluate followed by setting key performance indicators, and identifying long and short term targets. Furthermore, this legal framework also decides on the periodical monitoring of families, mentions how the financial inputs are provided in the program as well as how the activities should be carried out through the social worker as a human resource, placing the social units, social administrations, and directorates as institutions responsible for carrying out and overseeing the social researchers, as well as the social pension committees, and the grievances committees that are responsible for deciding on eligibility, changes in status, and increases or decreases in the social pension.

The family file and the initial field research serve as baseline data for family status, and hence the legal framework and current practice only puts emphasis on monitoring of the status of the families based on that initial assessment in order to make sure that they are not receiving aid that they do not deserve if there is a change of status. The assessment of families does not put into consideration the positive impacts or lack thereof on the living standards of families. Furthermore, the elements that were used to judge the poverty of the family and that were put forth in the laws, bylaws, and the family file did not follow the CREAM- Clear, Relevant, Economical, Adequate, and Monitorable framework. They were also somewhat subjective and could simply change

with the change in the social worker and the social pension committee's backgrounds, perceptions of poverty, and other factors. There was no formula or scientific manner in which poverty was decided on or calculated, rather, the social researcher was asked to fill in a file, with many fields and queries about the family's status, without being able to quantify poverty.

The lack of resources includes human resources and specifically the small number of social researchers available in social units. There was also a problem with the distribution of staff across different administrative and geographic areas and levels in ways that did not correspond with community needs or work load. The findings showed that while the current system obliges the social worker to conduct the monitoring of the family twice a year; however, when looking at the field and the practical applications from the interviews and focus groups, social unit heads were often the only social researchers at social units, and might have thousands of families that they needed to register, monitor twice a year, and write reports on them and give them to higher administrative levels, along with their duties in following up with other ministries projects listed in the background section of this thesis. The application of this part of the law was hence impossible with the current human resources layout where directorates, the central level, and the social administrations are mostly over staffed while social units, which have the most work since they were the closest to the citizens were severely understaffed.

Job descriptions were not found in lower administrative levels, and especially in local social units. This result in social unit head developing their own performance measures for employees rather than having a specific set of indicators to assess employees based on their performance. There were some investment in training; however, that training and capacity development was reserved for higher administrative levels and only tackles general management or trainings on laws and bylaws rather than training on technical job relevant tasks like how to conduct monitoring, reporting, and evaluations of poverty.

The findings showed that there was a general lack of financial resources, with the exception of amounts reserved for monthly transfers to beneficiaries. The lack of

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financial resources results in a lack of incentives and low pay for social researchers, especially in covering transportation and paperwork costs needed to conduct research and monitoring. The findings also showed that there was an absence of a unified monitoring and evaluation systems across all administrative levels especially because of non-existent key performance indicators, as well as long and interim goals for the program. Staff in each directorate tends to develop some forms and templates upon which they collect data, conduct monitoring visits, and report on, and are not provided with knowledge about how these issues should be tackled to pour into a unified database for social protection.

It was found that monitoring and reporting on beneficiary numbers, classifications, and financial spending was done periodically. These monitoring reports, along with occasional monitoring reports on the administrative and technical conditions of the service provider institutions, staff working in administrative layers provide somewhat valuable but were dependent on visits from social pension or monitoring department staff to particular units or administrations that receive most grievances and complaints rather than being a systematic review. Different kinds of evaluation processes are also not currently conducted on the old social pension program, and the findings that result from available monitoring reports are somewhat used through speaking to direct supervisors through official letters and reports to correct errors, inefficiencies, and negligence.

The interviews with high level staff aimed at exploring their perception of RBME, search for champions to push the process forward, as well as assess the existence of capacity to advocate and implement the system. The interviews with the two high level officials illustrated that while the social pension program does not adequately fulfill the RBME system and framework; however, the high level leadership in MoSS was committed to institutional and programmatic reforms to change that through the introduction of *Takaful and Karama* in the CCT program.

These interviews also illustrated the strengths and weaknesses of the old social pension program and also recognized the role of leadership to capitalize on strengths and work on weaknesses to effectively expand the social protection network. The interviews also touched upon the availability of human resources, capacities, time, and finances to

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carry out these reforms. Both officials acknowledged the lack of human resources and capacities on the local levels; however, both mentioned extensive plans and acknowledgments that if things were to improve, capacities need to be built, automation needs to be introduced, and awareness must be raised. Both also acknowledged the resistance to changes in the system; however, through inclusiveness in decision making, participatory approaches, and introducing young generations with adaptability to change, might help push things forward.

In conclusion, the social pension program is a very old program, and it has sustained and evolved many times thus far; however, it has many shortcomings, and unless practical matters are taken into consideration in planning and setting of bylaws and regulations, the impact of the social pension on poverty and vulnerability of families will be limited, as will the capacities of staff working on the program. The recommendations this research has attained are inspired by the interviewees at the different administrative levels and include the following:

- Setting clear and objective measurements of poverty
- Increasing available resources at the local levels, and allow for the redistribution of staff according to the needs of communities and monitoring tasks
- Increasing financial resources available for transportation for staff tasked with the monitoring of families and field research based on key performance indicators and performance based incentives
- Establishing a unified monitoring and evaluation system applicable in practical implementation terms to be generalized across all directorates
- Building the capacities of social researchers and staff on technical aspects of monitoring and evaluation, poverty mapping and measurement according to the latest studies and practices
- Building consensus and ownership of monitoring and evaluation systems within the staff in the different directorates.

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Interview Questions - Decision Makers:

Basic Information:

1. Position: _____

2. Organization: _____

3. Years in Current Position: _____

4. Years in Current Organization: _____

5. Date of Interview: _____

Incentives and Demands for the implementation of M&E in the Social Pension program:

1. How do you conduct annual planning for the social pension program?

2. Are these plans based on collected information?

3. What kind of information is this planning based on?

4. Can you identify any organizations that regularly ask for information on how well the social pension program is performing? (Identified organizations could include: civil society organization, Donor Agencies, media and public opinion, legislative organizations, judicial organizations, other state agencies and ministries)

5. Do these agencies require any type of performance based information on the social pension program especially with regards to the following:

a. Budget allocations, spending, and proposals for coming financial years?

b. Information on program activities and outputs?

c. Evaluation and monitoring reports or program reviews?

6. Are there any advocates within the ministry for establishing results based M&E systems for social protection programs?

7. What do you think is the greatest obstacle standing in front of producing performance based information on the social pension programs? Would you say that there is facilitation or resistance from officials on producing these kinds of information?

8. Is there a specific entity/department/staff in the ministry who undertake or commission other entities to conduct evaluations and monitoring of the social pension programs?

9. Are any audits conducted on the social pension program? If so, who conducts the audit (Independent or non-independent organization?)

10. Are there any public sector reforms (with or without donor support) that are taking place in the ministry of social solidarity that include efforts to strengthen systems to collect and manage information related to social pension program performance

11. Are local levels of MoSS collecting information on the performance of the social pension program? What are their roles?

12. Do you have a specific budget and plan for M&E data collection on the social pension program?

Information needs

13. Are there currently any indicators or performance measures for the social pension program?

14. How do you currently assess the social pension program?

15. What kind of information do you want/need on the social pension program for policy and decision making?

16. How much information do you want/need about the social pension program?

17. Does the current system provide you with the information you want/need about the process and impact of the social pension program? How so?

Assessing Capacities:

18. Is everybody clear on their monitoring and evaluation responsibilities?

19. Does the social protection department and the monitoring department have relevant job descriptions that include adequately defined M&E functions, and are these posts filled?

20. Does MoSS and its staff feel responsible for monitoring and evaluation functions just as they do for other aspects of the work?

21. Are staff supported by their managers in carrying out their M&E tasks?

22. How would you evaluate the capacity of staff working in the social pension program with regards to M&E skills and knowledge?

23. Is there any technical assistance, capacity building, or training in M&E now underway or that was done for the social pension program during the past two years?

    a. If so, who provided this help and under what framework or reform process?

Reforms and Plans:

24. What proposed/existing government reforms are underway or planned to which a results-based M&E in the social pension program?

25. If there are proposed/existing reforms towards a results based M&E approach in the social pension program, please answer the following questions:

    a. What is driving the need for building an M&E system

    b. Who will own the system?

    c. Who will benefit from the system?

    d. What kinds of resistance are you facing/ expecting to face?

    e. If the new M&E system generates negative information about performance or impact, how do you think the organization, staff, and stakeholders will react?

Social Protection and Poverty

26. Who in the government is responsible for the collection of socioeconomic and poverty data for the country?

27. With whom are these data shared?

28. Are these data used in the planning/implementation processes for the social pension program?

29. Does the social pension program/workers produce or use any data on poverty, vulnerability, and marginalization?

Basic Information:

1. Position: _____
2. Organization & Governorate): _____
3. Years in Current Position: _____
4. Years in Current Organization: _____
5. Date of Interview: _____

Information on staff awareness of goals, indicators, and key activities of the program:

6. What are the main goals of the social pension program?
7. What are the main activities of the social pension programs?
8. What are the main processes in the social pension programs?
9. What is the expected impact of the social pension program?

Structure and Organizational Alignment for M&E Systems

10. Are there staff in MoSS (Across different levels) specified for monitoring and evaluation for social pension program performance or for families? If yes:
    a. Does that person have a clear job description?
    b. What are the numbers of people doing that function?
    c. How do they conduct this function
11. Do you perceive an importance of having such a person or the monitoring and evaluation function in general for the social pension program

Assessing Capacities for M&E

1. What are your educational qualifications?
2. What kinds of trainings or capacity building have you received? How long since each?
3. Have you received any capacity building training on Monitoring and Evaluation either for the social pension process or for the families that are applying for social pensions?

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4. How do you assess the staff's capacities in monitoring and evaluating of the families registered in the program?

Baseline data collection:

5. Do you conduct a baseline or a preliminary assessment for the families applying for the program assessing their socioeconomic status? If yes:
    a. By whom is that assessment conducted?
    b. How is that assessment conducted?
    c. What are the main factors used to measure a family's poverty/vulnerability?
    d. How are the results of that assessment reported?
6. How is a family deemed worthy/unworthy of social pensions?

Monitoring process:

7. After the baseline assessment, and if the family is deemed worthy of a social pension, do you conduct follow up visits to the families? If yes, please answer the following:
    a. How do you choose the sample of families you follow up with?
    b. Are these visits scheduled in plans?
    c. Who conducts these follow up visits?
    d. How often are the follow up visits conducted?
    e. What do the follow up visits collect data on?
    f. Who analyzes the collected data?
    g. How is the reporting done for these follow up visits?
    h. What are the costs or difficulties you face in conducting the assessment?
8. What kind of data do you collect on social unit/department/directorate performance in the social pension program? (Financially, Technically, Administratively)
    a. How regularly do you collect these data?
    b. How are these data collected?
    c. By whom are these data collected?

d. Who analyzes these data?

e. Who uses these data or who do you send these data to?

9. Do you have any databases in your organization? If yes:

a. What kind of databases are there?

b. Who enters data into these databases

c. How often are these databases updated?

d. Who uses the data in these databases?

Evaluation Process:

10. Do you evaluate the performance of the social pension program?

a. How do you evaluate the social pension program's performance?

b. How often do you evaluate the social pension program?

c. Do you take corrective measure based on the evaluation?

11. Do you evaluate the families registered in the program?

d. How often do you do that

e. Who does that

f. How do you conduct this evaluation?

Reporting Process

12. What kinds of reports do you produce/Are you usually asked for on the social pension program? (Financial, technical, administrative)

a. How often do you produce these reports?

b. Who do you present these reports to?

c. Do you usually get a response on these reports?

d. What kinds of responses do you usually receive on these reports?

e. What are the costs or difficulties you face in collecting and producing these reports?

Interview Questions - Beneficiary of social pension

Basic Information:

Governorate: _____

Years receiving social pension: _____

Type of beneficiary group (Widowed, orphans, elderly, disabled according to social pension bylaws)_____

Initial Enrollment into the program:

1. How did you initially apply for the social pension program?
    a. How were you initially evaluated by MoSS staff?
    b. What kinds of questions did the social worker ask you?
    c. Did the social worker ask you to submit any paper work? If yes, what kind?
2. How easy/difficult was the process of getting the MoSS social pension?
3. How long did it take you to get the social pension from application to first transfer?

Monitoring and Evaluation follow up visits

4. Were you visited since then by MoSS staff? If yes:
    a. How many times were you visited by MoSS staff?
    b. What happened during these visits?
    c. What kinds of questions did MoSS staff ask you during these visits?
    d. Did the social worker/Staff worker ask you to submit any paper work?
    e. Did anything happen following that visit? Was your pension increased, decreased, or stopped?
5. Do you receive your pension regularly and completely
    a. If not, have you complained to MoSS social units?
6. Have you submitted any other complaints to MoSS social units?
    a. If yes, were these complaints followed by a visit from MoSS staff?

Role of social Pension in Improving Living standard and alleviating poverty

7. Do you find the social pension Useful? How so?
8. Has the social pension helped you financially or helped in improving your livelihood? How so?

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