

Adequate Housing for Households with Home-Based Enterprises in Upper Egypt

Partner: Assiut Businesswomen Association (ABWA)

Pilot Purpose & Context

This pilot responds to inadequate housing conditions and limited access to finance for low-income rural and peri-urban households in Upper Egypt, particularly women-led households with home-based enterprises (HBEs). Egyptian microfinance regulations prohibit loans for housing improvements, restricting financing to enterprise development, hence the focus on home-based enterprises.



During implementation, the project team identified a clear gap in the housing value chain and a demand for enterprise development finance for micro and small businesses with housing-related services and products. The partner responded by focusing on a product version to finance housing value-chain enterprises and connect them with households in need of housing support services in the targeted communities.

In partnership with ABWA, the project tests an integrated housing finance and services model that combines:

- Dual-purpose finance (housing improvements alongside enterprise support)
- Financial product that focuses on micro and small enterprises within the housing value chain that serve the community.
- and creates business links to clients
- Housing Support Services (HSS) (needs assessment, technical guidance, site monitoring).
- Awareness-raising on adequate, safe, and energy-conscious housing practices.



The pilot aims to demonstrate a scalable approach within a restrictive regulatory environment.

Key Achievements to Date:

- Product launch and uptake: 77 loans disbursed between Sept 2025 and January 2026 with a total value of 60,000 USD and an average loan size of 2000 USD.
- Systemic innovation: Establishment of Egypt's first Housing Support Services (HSS) unit within a financial service provider, a potential sector-wide milestone if replicated. The uptake of financial service providers – particularly those focused on low-income can mean an organic growth of market players combining housing finance and housing services.
- Institutional capacity strengthened: ABWA teams trained on habitability, climate-resilient construction, MEAL, gender inclusion, and technical housing; baseline data collection and field acceptance visits completed.
- Operational setup: the housing improvement loan is recognized as a high-demand, high-potential financial product and is now integrated within ABWA's lending portfolio.

Key Takeaway:

This pilot demonstrates early proof of concept for housing-inclusive microfinance in Egypt despite regulatory constraints. With the right partner, targeted capacity building, and regulatory navigation, the model has strong potential for scale and systemic change where more microfinance institutions are willing to include housing as core within its financial services and products offering.

