

Here I am

Although my name is Mansoura , which means "a winner" , but I didn't feel that I am mansoura at all !. I was not here before; yes I was invisible, especially after I get divorced. I am a poor divorced woman, what worse could happen to me!!

Like any girl in our village; Alkon which a village that is part of Kafr Elsheikh governorate; I grow up helping my parents in the farm work, the house work, and preparing my self for marriage.

In my twentieth, I got married and I born my little daughter. Two years later, my husband divorced me to marry another woman.

If I can hardly manage my self as a woman in our society, imagine the situation being divorced and had no source of income.



Our society always looks down for divorced women and of course I can see that in their eyes and in the way they treat me. As if I am guilty for what happened and deserve that my husband leaves me.

I had to work to live and to rise up my daughter. I work in the early morning as an officer, in the noon I work in my parent farm which is one Fadden, I plant the seeds, fight for my right in irrigation water, and I do the harvest work. The worst thing in the farm work is when I fight for the land's share in the irrigation water, especially in the summer time and when we plant the rice crop. The water distribution is badly managed here between the farmers, which eventually cause conflicts. Some of these conflicts end in the police station and some get injured and go to the hospitals. Most of the farmers who could not provide their lands with water get poor because the land here is the only source of income for most of us here. The reasons for most of these conflicts is that the amount of water needed is more than the water provided by the irrigation department, the bad behavior of the farmer especially in dealing with the irrigation water .

I witness many conflicts on irrigation water between the farmers and each other in one hand and between the farmers and the governmental irrigation engineers on the other hand. We always need water, and there is not always enough water.

If it is not my fight, I just watch. I feel so bad when I see that. When the land needs water you have to give it, it is like if your child is thirsty and you must help him with water. And the crop is the only source of income to the farmers.

Some leaders and good men in the village try to do their best to organize the situation and to solve the problems between the farmers.

One day, a man, who is member in the water user association in our village, invited me to a meeting and he informed me that there are researchers who would like to meet women in our village to ask about the irrigation water problems.

I was not confident that I can help them.

Normally I feel that I will never make a difference in anything, but anyway I went.

And it was a changing point in my life.

I meet with Care team; they explain to us their project which called Water and Stability project.

their goal is make farmers discuss with each other how to manage water between them instead of fighting. But first they told us that they will make a research on the reasons of the conflict over irrigation water in our village. They decided to select people from the village to be member in a local research team.

I was very happy to know that finally conflicts over water can be reduced.

I helped them as much as I can. And after two days they informed me that they

selected me to be member in the local research team. The team was consisted of natural leaders, active men, active women, irrigation engineer.

They trained us on how to make a research and how to work in a team.

Our task was to gather information from people, men and women, about the conflict causes. Care team helped us and I managed to make several interviews with women in my village.

In the beginning I was afraid that people may treat me badly as usual or even careless , but strangely when I meet women and ask them a bout their problems considering the irrigation water , they respected me saying that I will help them if I could tell their problems to who is responsible and may these problems be solved . I arranged several meetings for Water and stability team to meet women and to discuss with them their problems. I even participated in meetings with men and women

I was so ambitious and happy for knowing that I can do these things.

After we finished from gathering data, W&S team informed us that our village (ALKON) have been chosen to be the pilot to implement the project. In this project they will help us in solving conflicts between farmers with each other and to strengthen the relations with the governmental sector who can help us in the future; and to have better management for conflicts so every one can irrigate his land.

They gave us several trainings on how to talk, how to negotiate, and how to communicate with each others. They also trained us on conflict management and how to be active member in the society .They also conduct several workshops between our association and the irrigation governmental department to enhance the relations with them. And as a result the irrigation department helped us many time in providing the water needed. Men and women was part of this project. I can not describe how this project is helpful for us, and for me. I managed to solve a conflict between two men. One day I was leaving the land and going back home and I tried to solve a conflict between two men , I went there and talked with their wives to convince them to stop the fight and to set later to solve this problems , after few arguments , they were convinced .

I was so happy, I felt that I can do what I have learned and I felt that I can do something to stop these conflicts.



I attended a workshop conducted by the project about the women role in developing herself and her society. in this workshop I met a lady who work as coordinator for women association .I talked with here that I want to establish a small project in mushrooms plant to support my income and she helped me .

I am now and after one year of participating in this project one of two women who is members in conflict management committee in our Water Users association.

Although I work hard to have money to rise my daughter, but I am also a volunteer also in this association. I believe now that I can make a difference. Thanks to Water and stability project and its team. I have learned how work in a team , I am encouraging other women to participate in the project and to have a good role in solving conflicts.

I believe that may my daughter have better future than mine because of what we do. And here I am, a strong confident woman.