

A Roadmap to Social Change

Strategic Plan 2010-2012

Asmaa Society for Development

Introduction

Our Mission

We are a voluntary non-for-profit society striving to consolidate the values of social justice through civic education and conceptual literacy among women.

The significance of our strategic plan (2010 – 2012), stems from its timing, thematic focus and link to the current projects Asmaa Society for Development is implementing. The first factor is timing which is characterized by the following: A significant leap into a national democratic form of governance. The shift was made possible by virtues of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which was signed on January 9th, 2005. Since the signature of the CPA, a rather unsteady democratic process has been taking place, but most importantly an Interim Constitution to govern all of the country during the transitional period, was collectively endorsed. In our opinion, The Constitution legitimized the set of international human rights, through its chapter II, The Bill of Rights. This particular milestone helped us to identify, clearly, the thematic focus of the strategy.

The second factor is the thematic focus which is conceptual literacy as a human right and as a means to know and act upon other rights as stated in the constitution. In item 44 of the Interim Constitution of Sudan it clearly stated right to education. It reads as follows:

1. Education is the right of every citizen and the state should provide education without discrimination as to religion, race, ethnicity, gender or disability.
2. Primary education is compulsory, and the state shall provide it for free.

In article 32 other rights of women and children were constitutionally assured:

1. The state shall guarantee equal rights for men and women to the enjoyment of all civil, political, social, cultural and economic rights

- including the right to equal pay for equal work and other related benefits;
- 2. The state shall promote women rights through affirmative action;
- 3. The state shall compact harmful customs and traditions which undermine the dignity and status of women;
- 4. Right of women and children to health care.

The Bill of Rights is an essential pillar of the enjoyment of a decent standard of living notably for women and children. These constitutional rights need to be known by every citizen, not only as information but they need to be clearly articulated and internalized so that chronic issues of failure of development and associated manifestations can be overcome through using the anticipated future democratic institutions. This assumption involves risks such as what if the democratic process is aborted, what if the country falls back into war, what if violent conflicts are ignited as a result of the agitated political scene etc. All these risks are put into consideration when choosing our strategic approach, however civic education remains as a strong safeguard in different circumstances.

The approach we are using to organise communities around their constitutional rights is conceptual literacy for change at the grassroots, especially among the illiterates as illiteracy is hitting a high record and it is on the increase as the right to compulsory and free education is not realized thus number of the illiterates got to be increasing. The last official reports indicated that illiteracy is around 51%. We very much doubt these figures however as the way this percentage is calculated makes it unreliable and data presented is an aggregate of the whole country without taking into consideration the socio-political and economic geography. Some parts of the country are historically enjoying better educational opportunities. This is a class issue that is quite related to the complex political topography of Sudan. Sudan is not a marginal political territory, if it develops, it would make a significant difference in the force-field of the continent and the Arab entities, and hence the international power relations. The emerging oil economy is just an addition to the natural resources including population. The last census of 2008 counted the population of Sudan as about 40 million, the vast majority of it are illiterates, the level of literacy among women is higher than that among men, however for both sexes the rates are below the minimum standards as stated by the United Nation Human Development Report's indicators. It is a risky assumption to associate the two variables of literacy and consciousness as there are other determinants of consciousness and

literacy is indeed one of them. However, we are living in an era of information revolution which marks this millennium, the illiterates need to catch-up with the literates in Sudan and the hence the rest of the world, especially when it comes to rights.

Our Strategic Vision

A social movement for change is formulated around the Bill of rights as a commitment of the state towards its citizen; targeted illiterates are able these rights to a lived situation of development.

Catching-up will always remain of a human strive for a better standard of living, also putting in consideration the different levels of exposures and aspirations. Our strategy is a contribution towards human development of the illiterates. To that end we will design a literacy manual that is meant to introduce notion of rights in a clear way as key words for discussions and as planned development actions. The manual will be designed to cover articles of the Bill of Rights as they correspond to the needs of the targeted groups.

The third significant factor in the strategy is its strong link to the current projects Asmaa is implementing. This strategy did not emerge in a vacuum. It is strongly related to almost every activity Asmaa has been implementing since its establishment in 2001; the focus on women has always been there we have always targeted women; we have always been involved in the promotion of women's rights as citizenship

rights, whether through direct political discourse such as promotion of involvement of women in public life or through touching other developmental issues, and that is as well... a political discourse.

The most significant link this strategy has with the current projects of Asmaa is the link to the project of Promotion of Citizenship Rights in Kassala, Gudarif and Khartoum which is funded by the European Commission. The project focused on the right of Education so did this strategy.

Since the establishment of Asmaa we have been focusing on issues of promoting civic and political rights not only among the illiterates but among other women formations especially in urban centres and displaced areas. Such a legacy will be used during this strategy through linking literacy for change to other activities and communities we have been

investing in during the last decade. We will focus in linking previous groups with future activities wherever applicable.

Programmatic Approach

Expected Results

- 1. 1.25.000 women in the 6 named states are able to read and write;**
- 2. 1.250.000 women are able to analyse the context where they live, design and manage project to change negative undesired situations;**
- 3. 1.250.000 women know their civic and political rights, able to articulate and achieve them,**
- 4. Fifty percent participants are able to organize themselves in strong civic formations which are able to represent women in public life.**

We will utilize a 4 dimensional approach to realize aspired results. The dimensions of which are:

1. Capacity Building;
2. Literacy for change;
3. Networking, Advocacy and Solidarity;
4. Generation of knowledge and documentation.

1. Capacity Building

It includes conceptual abilities regarding right;

- 1.1. Organizational abilities;
- 1.2. Technical skills;
- 1.3. Networking channels.

2. Literacy for Change

- 2.1. Developing literacy for change Teaching, manual, including concepts and, developmental skills;
- 2.2. Training of facilitators;
- 2.3. Dissemination of knowledge on civil rights using supporting means such as music and drama and folklore.

3. Networking, Advocacy and Solidarity

Strong partnerships are in the process of establishment with sister organizations. The strength of this strategy will be realized through a well established partnership between Asmaa Society for Development and the legendary Sudanese Women Union.

Our Strategic Objective

Contribution to consolidation of a women's movement to enjoy citizenship rights as indicated in the constitution, through civic education and conceptual literacy to 1.250.000 women above the age of 17 in the following states: Khartoum, Blue Nile ,River Nile, South Kordufan, Sinnar and White Nile states.

What we are striving to achieve is not an easy walk. We are addressing formation of a movement for social change; which is a complex process. Many factors need to be put in consideration for the success of achieving the desired objective and realize the expected results. As we have strengths we also have our weaknesses, and as much as there are opportunities there are associated threats.

Strengths

1. The ongoing project of Promotion of Citizenship Rights;
2. Growing network with community based organizations;
3. An existing focus on conceptual literacy;
4. A sound reputation among the Sudanese civil society and international organizations.

Opportunities

1. A widening window of opportunities through the democratic transformation;
2. A growing interest in civic education as result of the elections processes;
3. Data and information base availed through the national census;
4. A growing interest between civil society organizations as such and political parties;

Weaknesses

1. Scanty resources and absence of institutional funding;
2. Poor documentation and short institutional memory;

Threats

3. A staggering democratic processes given the existing undemocratic laws;
4. The ambiguity regarding the results of the upcoming referendum of unity between South and North Sudan;
5. The tight security surveillance of the work of pro-people civil society organizations.