



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS

When women and girls have equal rights and access to resources and services, societies thrive. In Egypt, the U.S. Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is working to reduce gender disparities, empower women and girls, and help Egypt build an economically prosperous, sustainable future.

### OUR WORK

Despite the efforts of USAID, the Egyptian Government, and others, significant hurdles to women's equality remain—particularly in terms of gender gaps, violence against women, rapid rates of population growth, and high levels of poverty. In 2021, Egypt ranked 129th out of the 156 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index. It ranked 146th out of 156 countries in women's economic participation and opportunity. Only 20% of Egypt's working-age women are participating in the economy, compared to 75% of men.

In partnership with the Egyptian Government, USAID promotes gender equality and women's empowerment in a wide range of sectors and activities. USAID's gender equality and women's empowerment programs focus on youth, women of low socio-economic background or status, people with disabilities, survivors of violence against women and girls, and victims of trafficking.

### AREAS OF FOCUS

**Supporting Women and Girls' Education:** USAID's basic, technical, and higher education programs improve the learning, skills, and workforce readiness of all students, including women and girls. Scholarship programs expand access to high-quality education for youth with high financial need, and intergenerational literacy programming in rural areas supports girls and their mothers to learn to read.

**Assisting Women to Succeed as Entrepreneurs:** USAID assists female entrepreneurs in growing and expanding their businesses. This is achieved through training, business incubators, accelerators, entrepreneurship networks, career fairs, and business-to-business matchmaking events.

**Enabling Women's Participation in the Economy:** Women face numerous challenges that may discourage them from entering and staying in the workforce, including harassment, family expectations, gender-based violence, and early marriage. USAID strengthens the legal environment around these challenges to decrease barriers to employment. USAID also supports GOE institutions, micro, small and medium enterprises, and promotes information and communication technology to empower women.

**Supporting Women as Emerging Community Leaders:** USAID seeks to expand the influence of women within their communities, so they can identify and address community needs, and become mediators of local disputes. This is achieved by engaging young women and girls in cross-community dialogues, by building the capacity of community champions, and by creating safe spaces for young girls.

**Improving Women's Health:** Building on decades of investments in voluntary family planning and maternal health, USAID supports Egypt's National Family Planning Program to improve the quality of voluntary family planning services and strengthen decision-making and policy formation at the national level. USAID also works with private sector partners, such as private pharmacists and apparel manufacturers, to provide training on family planning services and peer mentoring for factory workers.

**Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women:** USAID works to end violence against women and girls by combating all forms of violence including sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, and child marriage; strengthening policy and legal frameworks; changing perceptions of the roles of women and girls in society; and improving support and quality of services for survivors of violence.

## NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENTS

- In 2022, USAID launched a new \$39 million Women's Economic and Social Empowerment Program to increase women's access to economic opportunities in Egypt and remove barriers to women's participation in the economy.
- Decades of sustained USAID support to education for girls has helped lift girls' enrollment in primary school from just over 50 percent in 1978 to 100 percent by 2009. Innovative USAID programs, including establishing nontraditional schools and providing scholarships to more than 185,000 girls, helped change community attitudes and made primary education virtually universal. Today, girls finish secondary school at higher rates than boys.
- Since 2016, USAID has supported Egypt's technical secondary schools, reaching over 58,000 female teachers, students, principals, and employees with technical and vocational training. During this period, USAID also helped over 5,400 young women access jobs following graduation from technical and vocational schools.
- Over the past 7 years, USAID provided 519 university scholarships to young women studying science, technology, engineering, and math.
- Since 2017, USAID provided leadership training to 14,000 rural Egyptian women to participate in community education and assume leadership roles.
- Since 2017, USAID trained 4,490 adult literacy facilitators, who engaged over 58,049 women in intergenerational adult literacy activities.

- Since 2017, USAID provided access to education for 38,290 girls living in rural communities, using high quality, engaging learning environments in community schools.
- Over the last four decades, more than 12 million women gained access to clean drinking water and sanitation services as a result of USAID's assistance.
- Through decades of support to Egypt's National Family Planning Program, USAID contributed to dramatic improvements in women's health. Between 1976 and 2008, contraceptive use rose from 18 to 60 percent—dropping the average number of children per woman from 5.6 to 3. Reducing the frequency of births, as well as increasing access to timely medical care, dropped maternal mortality rates by 78% and infant deaths by 88%. More recently, from 2018-2021, USAID's support to Egypt's National Family Planning Program resulted in nearly 7 million women starting to use voluntary family planning methods.
- USAID helped establish the Women Entrepreneurs Network and Tiye Angels, the first women's angel investor network in Egypt, to provide financial and non-financial services to women. Since 2017, 600 women have launched and grown their businesses, and 650 women-owned micro-enterprises strengthened their business through USAID-supported Business Development Service Centers.
- Since 2017, USAID provided more than 21,000 young women and girls in Assiut, Sohag, Qena, and Aswan with an array of capacity building training sessions on leadership, skills development, career guidance, employability and entrepreneurship skills.
- From 2019 - 2021, the USAID-supported "Dawwie" initiative, which promotes girls' empowerment, reached 42 million people and trained more than 35,000 youth on digital skills.
- In 2021, USAID provided food assistance to 40,000 vulnerable pregnant and nursing women and children, and connected 500 mothers who are under the social safety net system with micro-loans and business training so they can support themselves and their families.
- USAID enabled Egypt's nationwide referral system to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls by training more than 3,000 service providers and increasing the number of women and girls receiving services each year from approximately 1,000 in 2015 to nearly 90,000 in 2021. Also, USAID has supported Women Complaints Office-affiliated volunteer lawyers to provide free legal assistance, with almost 5,000 court cases filed.
- In 2021, USAID supported the National Council for Women, the Ministry of Justice, and the national prosecutors office in drafting and adopting amendments to articles criminalizing sexual harassment in the National Penal Code, to classify all forms of sexual harassment as felonies rather than misdemeanors. The penalty for sexual harassment was also increased from a minimum of one year in prison to a minimum of five years, and a penalty of up to 300,000 Egyptian pounds (\$19,100), up from 20,000 pounds (\$1,080).
- In 2021, USAID supported the National Committee for the Eradication of FGM and the National Council for Women to identify gaps and suggest amendments to legislation focused on violence against women, including FGM. As a result of these efforts, in March 2021, the Egyptian Cabinet approved a legislative amendment to increase the penalty for FGM to up to 20 years in prison.
- USAID trained more than 3,000 law enforcement officials, health care providers, and social workers to provide health, counseling, legal, and protection services to women and girls.
- USAID supported the training of 14,000 community health outreach workers affiliated with the Ministry of Health and Population to increase awareness around all forms of violence against women including traditional harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage.