



FACT SHEET

Basic Education



Students from the USAID-funded Maadi STEM School for Girls have ranked among the top in the world in global science competitions. USAID helped the Ministry of Education to pilot two STEM schools; the Ministry is scaling this program nationwide. PHOTO: USAID/Claudia Gutierrez

USAID assistance since 2010 has:

- Trained 115,000 new public school teachers in induction courses for teacher certification.
- Trained 80,000 teachers to improve the reading fluency and comprehension of 4.5 million students in grades 1-3.
- Introduced two state-of-the-art science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) high schools (in 2011 for boys and 2012 for girls), supporting 500 of Egypt's gifted and talented students.
- All 85 graduates from the first graduating class of the boys STEM school were admitted to top colleges (e.g., engineering and medicine) in public and private Egyptian universities.
- Half of the STEM undergraduate scholarships for girls to study in the U.S. through the U.S.-Egypt Higher Education Initiative were competitively awarded to graduates from the STEM high school.

Overview

Basic education is fundamental to economic opportunity and gender equality. With the largest school system in the Middle East (over 18 million students), Egypt provides near-universal access to primary education. Boys and girls attend school at nearly equal rates, and enrollment is rising steadily at both the intermediate and secondary levels. However, rapid population growth has placed inordinate strain on the system. With one third of the population under the age of 15, the supply of schools and trained teachers simply cannot keep up. Moreover, instruction remains focused on helping students pass exams rather than on developing critical thinking and practical skills and virtually no primary school teachers have practical training before entering the classroom.

To help Egypt cope with this explosive growth, USAID works with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to align its education system more closely with the needs of a modern economy. This includes improving the quality of teachers at the primary level through mandatory practical training for all new teachers so they have guided experience in the classroom prior to full-time instruction. USAID also supports Egyptian government efforts to implement education programs that develop critical thinking and practical skills of primary and secondary school students.

USAID works with the MOE to improve reading, math, and English language skills in primary schools nationwide. The MOE has demonstrated strong commitment to expand, across all of Egypt, a pilot USAID-funded Early Grade Reading Program. To support this expansion, USAID is continuing technical assistance to the MOE to build integral and sustainable early grade reading and math systems, with a focus on improving curriculum and materials,

strengthening teacher professional development, and including early grade learning instruction in university faculties of education.

USAID is enhancing Egypt's talent pool and competitiveness by piloting and expanding science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education in secondary schools. Two pilot STEM high schools that USAID helped establish in Cairo have been so successful that the government is scaling up this program nationwide and establishing STEM schools in all 27 governorates. For the 2015-16 school year there were 4,300 students from around the country that applied for approximately 1,000 places in the schools.

Activities

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) School Project: In collaboration with the MOE and other stakeholders, USAID established STEM high schools (grades 10-12) in Maadi and 6 October City and will use the model to establish schools in Alexandria, Dakahleya, and Assuit governorates. While the MOE constructs, furnishes, and operates the schools, USAID provides training and capacity building for the MOE to sustain this program. USAID also supports curriculum and assessment development and provides science labs and essential technology infrastructure to support experiential learning. The project trains teachers and administrators of these high schools to develop and test innovative STEM teaching methods, curriculum, and assessments. USAID and the Egyptian government aim to transform the current pilot STEM high schools into a collaborative STEM network that serves as a catalyst for change, not only for future STEM schools, but also for nationwide improvements in math and science secondary education. Implementing Partner: World Learning; Life of Project: August 28, 2012-August 27, 2016; Total USAID Funding: \$25 million; Bilateral Agreement: Basic Education II.

U.S.-Egypt Primary Learning Program (PLP) provides targeted technical assistance and training to the Egyptian government to implement a sustainable, nationwide early grade learning program in reading and mathematics in primary school grades 1-3. The project will help the Ministry of Education to build reading and math systems that improve early grade learning curriculum and materials and strengthen the system for teacher professional development. The project will expand a previous USAID-financed remedial reading program to grades 4-9, establish inclusive classrooms, support students with disabilities, and create positive learning environments for all children. Implementing Partner: Research Triangle Institute; Life of Project: January 1, 2015-December 31, 2019; Total USAID Funding: \$19.8 million; Bilateral Agreement: Basic Education II.

