PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

When women and girls have equal rights and access to resources and services, societies thrive. In Egypt, the United States 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 stable, sustainable future.

Despite the efforts of USAID, the Egyptian Government, and others, significant hurdles to equality remain—particularly in terms of gender gaps, violence against women, rapid rates of population growth, and high levels of poverty. In 2020, Egypt ranked 134th out of the 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index. It ranked 140th out of 153 countries in women’s economic participation and opportunity. Only 18% of the working-age women are participating in the economy, compared to 65% of men.

In partnership with the Egyptian Government, USAID promotes gender equality and women’s empowerment through a multidisciplinary approach 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, and 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.

**Supporting Women to Succeed as Entrepreneurs:** USAID supports female entrepreneurs in developing their businesses and improving productivity. This is achieved through training, business incubators, 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 the workforce, including harassment, gender-based violence, and early marriage. USAID is strengthening 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.

**Addressing the Impact of COVID-19:** To mitigate the socioeconomic effects of COVID-19 on women and girls, including increased violence against women, USAID implements activities that focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. USAID funds communications campaigns to prevent domestic violence while bolstering support for hotlines and women’s shelters.

**NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENTS**

- From 2019 to 2020, USAID 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 4,000 young women access jobs following graduation from technical and vocational schools.
- 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. Accordingly, in 2020, over 1,200 women had new or better employment through USAID support and 363 women-owned microenterprises strengthened their businesses through USAID-supported Business Development Service centers.
- In 2020 alone, over 220,000 women gained access to basic drinking water and sanitation services as a result of USAID’s assistance.
- From 2018-2020, USAID supported the National Family Planning Program, resulting in nearly 250,000 women starting using voluntary family planning methods in 11 governorates.
- USAID provided leadership training to 14,016 rural Egyptian women to participate in community education and have leadership roles.
- USAID trained 3,281 adult literacy facilitators, who engaged over 44,209 women in intergenerational adult literacy activities.
- USAID provided 27,114 girls living in rural communities, using high quality, engaging learning environments in community schools.
• 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.
• Over the past 5 years, USAID provided 156 university scholarships to young women studying science, technology, engineering, and math.
• In 2020, USAID investments in the Women Complaints Offices and the National Hotline supported a tenfold increase in legal cases filed.
• 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 over 50,000 in 2020.
• 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/C and child marriage.