



SUCCESS STORY

Rebuilding a School for Rural Children

Renovation impacts lives in Egypt's most remote communities



Photo: LIFE Red Sea Project/Sue Savage

Seven-year-old Do'a Ali (center) has a favorite place in the new Hamata School in Egypt: the library. She is just learning to read, but she has already looked at all of the books, and her goal is to read every one. Before the renovation, she came to school only twice a week. Now, she attends daily, and is sad when it is closed for a holiday.

USAID helped renovate the only school in one of the Southern Red Sea's major communities in Egypt, which motivated administrators, teachers, students, and the community to ensure their children are educated.

“Just imagine the difference,” said Ahmed Hussein, the director of the renovated Hamata School, in the far south of Egypt near the Red Sea. “Before summer break, we left a school with broken walls and doors, no floors, windows, toilets, or playground. We returned to new walls and fresh paint, windows that close when there is a dust storm, a yard where students can play away from the highway and that keeps the goats out, toilets, water, floors. Students and teachers have more self-respect. The students have even begun to make paintings to decorate the walls,” he said.

A USAID-funded project renovated 10 classrooms for the area's 72 students, a library, science and computer labs, an activity room, offices, school grounds and sanitary facilities. A new vocational training center with three classrooms was built, as well as a wall to enclose the grounds and separate the playing field from the area's major highway. The project also furnished the facilities with new furniture, and the library with new books and shelving. Area residents carried out the renovation work, giving direct income to households and enabling them to learn new skills useful for future jobs.

Math teacher Souad Abd el Rahman is thrilled with the renovation, and has noticed teachers are much more motivated and the children are keeping the school clean, and treating the furniture and fixtures more carefully.

Hussein, the school's director, said he is now implementing guidelines for operating top-quality schools, and emphasizing the role of parents in developing the educational program and participating in school operations.