



IMPROVING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CONDITIONS

PHASE 1 REPORT  
2014/2015



صندوق الأمم المتحدة للسكان



وزارة الشباب والرياضة



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# Foreword

Etijah gears its workforce towards more equitable society where individuals, families and communities have an equal opportunity to participate in laying down a compelling foundation of the economic, political, and social infrastructure of Egypt. Counting on Etijah's previous experience delivering counseling services to adolescent girls and boys in youth centers in Upper Egypt, in addition to Etijah's raising awareness initiative on HIV/AIDS (2008 – 2011). Etijah lengthened its commitment to healthy wellbeing of Egyptians; through offsetting the Reproductive Health and Gender Issues program in 2014 throughout 2017. Stimulating Country Programme forged between Egypt and UNFPA, Etijah takes resolving reproductive health challenges to heart. Stretching adequate reproductive health services reaching villages far-from-centralized health units. Etijah translated aims for quality basic services, by carrying out seminars led by medical doctors in the three governorates: Sohag, Assiut and Sharqia.

Goal-driven to activate the role youth play in their communities; Etijah promotes their civic engagement through building their capacity to cascade the content of Etijah's reproductive health management to their families and their local communities.

This booklet is issued to reflect on program's achievements in phase I, in recognition of exerted efforts and support from Ministry of Youth and Sports headed by Dr. Khaled Abdel-Aziz, Dr. Mahmoud Hassan – Deputy of Ministry of Youth and Sports. We take this opportunity to thank Dr. Magdy Khaled - UNFPA Assistant Representative, Dr. Ahmed Malah – Program Officer, Ms. Gehad Khalil – YPeer Coordinator. We express our thanks to the restless support of Etijah's CEO, Mr. Hisham El Rouby, Etijah's Programs Director – Mr. Karim Shawer and the collective support from Etijah's staff members. We acknowledge the striving ambitions of each volunteer and partner organization staff who participated directly and indirectly in the success of this program.

## About Etijah:

The Youth and Development Consultancy Institute (Etijah) is specialized in researching, designing and promoting high-quality Community Youth Development (CYD) methodologies by disseminating relevant tools and resources, applicable practices of adolescents by providing them with the skills, know-how and aptitudes, as well as to contribute in building the capacity of governmental and non-governmental youth-serving organizations. Based in Cairo, Etijah was founded and registered in 2006 by Egyptians to serve Egyptian (and Arab) youth on multiple levels using the local resources while being conscious of the cultural and religious traditions that exist.

Etijah's role is to provide youth with direct access to unconditional participation by providing them with practical tools and models for developing community-wide initiatives. In order to accomplish these ambitious goals, Etijah has consistently developed and led projects that promote youth empowerment and leadership. These projects require developing special educational curriculum, a wide variety of training workshops and skills enhancement of youth coordinators, seminars and conferences, onsite trainings of participants and/or beneficiaries of the services. This further promotes national and international accredited standards for development, capacity building for youth clubs and organizations and finally, widely accessible mentorship programs.

Etijah's projects are designed to primarily empower youth by targeting three main groups: youth, youth workers, and youth-serving organizations; Etijah considers youth to be the most vital asset a country can have, especially in the arab world, where youth make up more than half of its population and they are pivotal members in society.

Youth workers are provided with education and training, given necessary tools to work effectively with the youth. Recognizing this reality, Etijah aims to serve as an educational institute that develops and enhances this professional cadre in Egypt and the Arab world.

Third, Etijah works with governmental and non-governmental youth-serving organizations on building their capacity through enhancing and dispersing development methodologies. This further empowers these organizations, enables them to maximize their abilities to better serve youth in a proficient manner as well as ensures the sustainability of their programs; in doing so, these organizations can better serve youth by supporting a professional and safe environment for the development of young people in Egypt and the broader Middle East.

## About The Reproductive Health and Gender Issues Program

The Reproductive Health and Gender Issues program, funded by the UNFPA, aims at strengthening national capacities for community-based interventions to improve sexual and reproductive health conditions in collaboration with 18 local NGOs in Sohag, Assiut and Sharqia governorates. Etijah delivered trainings to a total number of 375 volunteers and 50 NGO staff members on a tailored reproductive health curriculum. The training was a goal-driven to empower young people through raising their awareness about reproductive health and gender-based challenges and to promote their civic engagement through activating their role in developing their local communities. The first phase of this project was promoting for sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) creating a strong relationship between SRHR and youth civic engagement in Egypt.

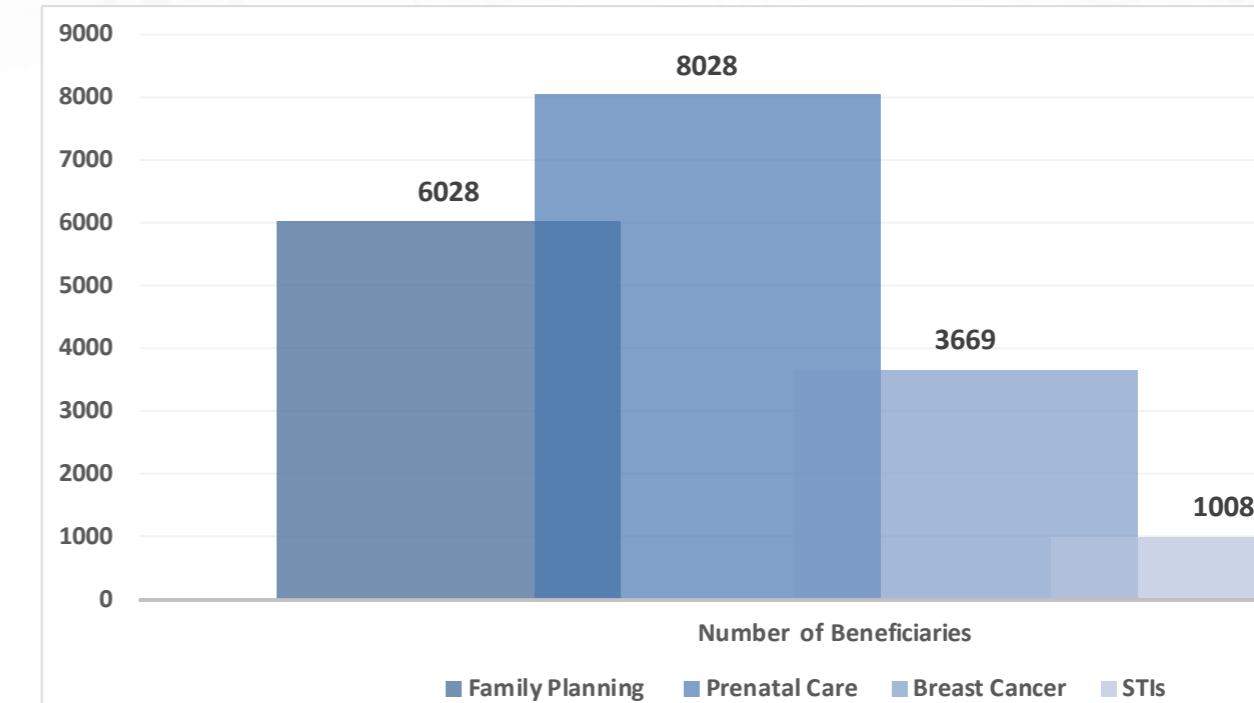
The project tried to respond to the needs of youth by providing them a safe space where they can work on developing themselves as well as their peers and community. The volunteers from 9 NGOs in Sohag, succeeded in reaching out to 9606 beneficiaries. Moving forward to the achievements realized in Sohag, our team delivered a series of trainings to 161 emerging leaders and created partnerships with 9 NGOs in both governorates Sharkeya and Assuit, reaching a total number of 9124 final beneficiaries.



## Community Initiatives

On the road, we learnt that it is a common misconception that Reproductive Health is a synonym for Family Planning. We took it to heart structuring Reproductive Health and Gender Issues training to familiarize the target group and the final beneficiaries with the various topics Reproductive Health accommodates. The four-day training took place in Sohag, Assiut and Sharqia, tackling Reproductive Health & Gender issues, in addition to initiative design. Community initiatives were rather specific in the topics they addressed: Family Planning, Prenatal Care, Breast Cancer, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

The Volunteer groups who focused on Family Planning have reached out to 6028 beneficiaries. Whereas, volunteers who selected Prenatal Care to be their core cause, reached 8028 beneficiaries. With an average reach, Breast Cancer initiative ventured out to 3669. Finally comes the hushed away topic in Egypt, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STIs) reaching 1008 beneficiaries.



# Where We Stand?



## #3 Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

during the four-day training, heated and debatable topics were brought to discussion, such as sexual response cycle, safe sex, STIs, GBV, etc... Introducing female and male participants to safety methods as in the usage of condoms which was an empowering method for them to know about their own bodies and how they could take control over it and negotiate with their partners using condoms as a contraceptive method when needed for example.

Additionally, identifying the various functions of the female and male reproductive systems, has been of a major priority for our team to deliver.

Familiarizing participants with sexuality in a non-procreational context, in general, represented our dissent towards GBV in the selected communities. Moreover, we

Since June 2014, we realized that there is a massive potential out there that if effectively employed, it can be channeled towards making a significant contribution to achieving each of the MDGs resolutions associated with SRHR. We have designed our training manual and co-planned community initiatives interpreting four resolutions of the MDGs:



perceive gender-based violence (GBV) as an ill-behavior birthed from a non-understanding of one's rights and their bodies. Hence, taking Child Marriage as a reality that young girls live in rural areas and Upper Egypt under the umbrella of traditions overlooks the very nature of adolescent girls' still-growing bodies and the every other potential they could be away from mothering another child.

Acknowledging our commitment to balancing out responsibilities towards complacent familial constructions for some of the marginalized groups of Sohag, Assiut and Sharqia; from the outset, our team cordially encouraged young men to take part in the Reproductive Health and Gender Issues training and engaging them in community initiatives.



Despite the severe social assignment of male responsibility in bringing food to the table, mostly imposing a rural-urban migration; leaving women the responsibility of child rearing and family planning, the project paid attention to the inclusion of men to contribute to raising awareness on gender equality and promote women empowerment. Such a burdening responsibility has been carefully addressed throughout the training and boldly stated through the project's slogan, "Our Choices, Our Lives" interpreting a healthy relationship that leans on informed decisions made by both spouses.

**#5 Improve Maternal Health.** Shedding light on the harms of Child Marriage, FGM, Breast Cancer, and skipping Premarital Tests, were defining deliverable topics to our target group within the Reproductive Health training.

**#6 Combat HIV/AIDS;** Sexual wellbeing is a nonexistent topic in public discourse. Having volunteers in the village of Tonis in Sohag transferring messages on STIs- including HIV/AIDs to 1008 beneficiaries, has optimized this program's presence in Sohag. On one hand it could contribute to erasing out the stereotypes and on the other hand it is establishing a foundation for phase II of this program to intensify discussions around this topic.

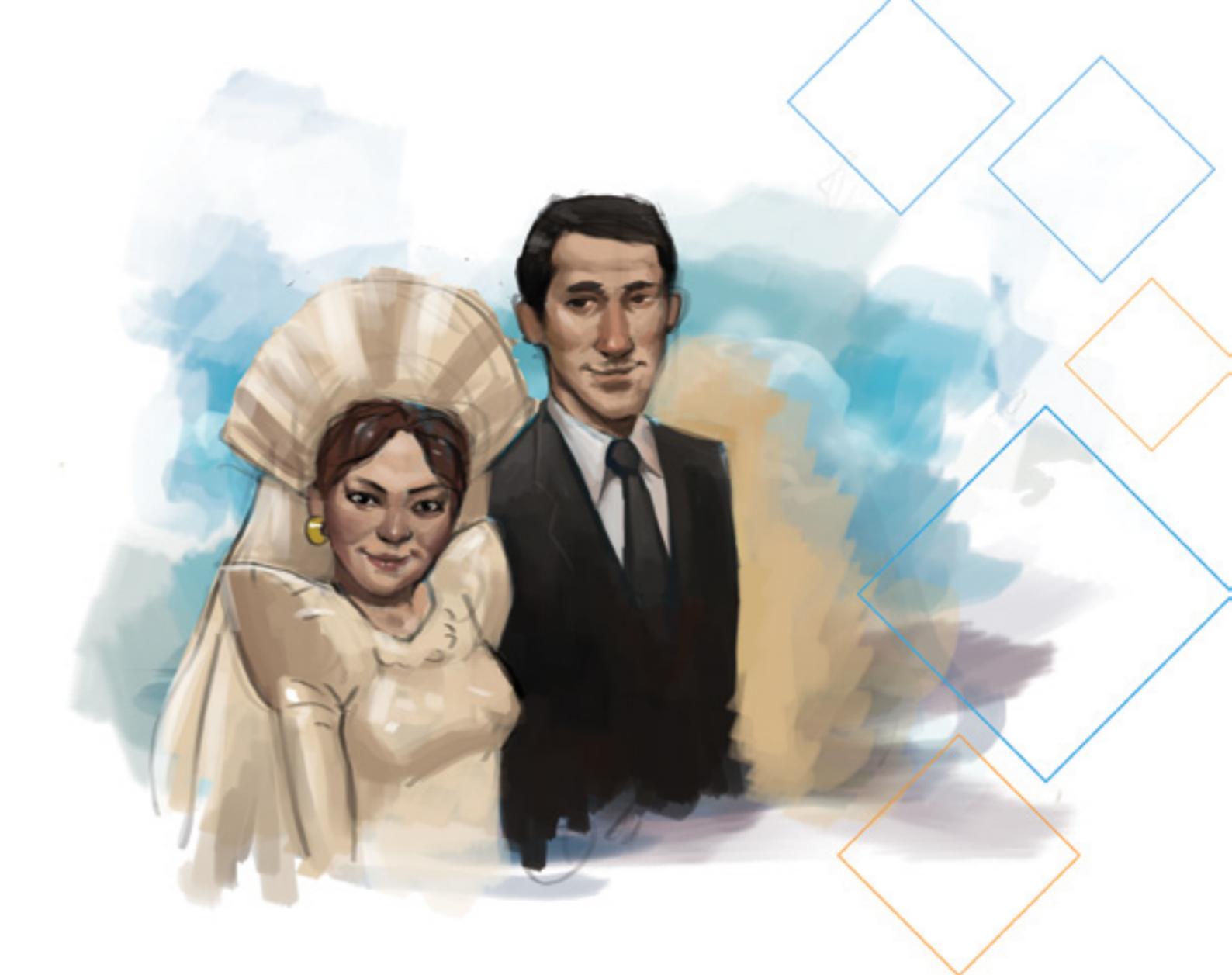


## Our Approach

We believe the Participatory approach is both an empowerment strategy and a means of ensuring that interventions are appropriate to the context of the selected communities. The project engaged 375 volunteers in Sohag, Assiut and Sharqia who participated in researching, planning, deciding, delivering, and monitoring the initiatives. Since day one, the participants were involved in the decision making process, by:

- 1) Selecting reproductive health most pressing topics in their communities,
- 2) Planning activities and outputs for their community initiatives,
- 3) Conducting a community mapping for available resources and assets.

In addition, we compassed this program's implementation around Volunteerism. Incorporating people centered approach through community volunteerism to ensure the program's sustainability has been the gauge for this program's progression. The intersecting inequalities touching down on various fields: Education, Health, Active Citizenship, and Economy in these communities, were impossible to address holistically. However, nurturing the sense of community to gain agency over the myriad of social issues they face daily; is quintessential outcome of this program.



## Project's steps

**Building Capacity of Partner NGOs Staff**

**NGOs Recruiting Volunteers**

**Delivering Reproductive Health Training for Volunteers**

**Volunteers Designing Community Initiatives**

**Community Initiatives Implementation**

# What's Next?

The second phase of this program, in compliance with the Egyptian Ministry of Youth & Sports (MoYS) and its mutual agreement with UNFPA, together with Etijah; 17 partnerships are forged with Youth Centers in Sharqia, Assiut and Sohag

Phase II includes establishing Population Awareness Club (PAC) in the selected Youth Centers in the 3 governorates. The PACs act as a decentralized center for disseminating awareness on population issues, defined by National Population Council (NPC): Reproductive Health and Family Planning, Education, Media, Adolescents and Young People Health, and Women Empowerment. In additions, to amplify the previous results in the aforementioned governorates, it is planned to cooperate with more NGOs in the 3 governorates. This should contribute to realizing the program final objective which is strengthening national capacities for community-based interventions in reproductive health, gender issues to empower young people along with advancing awareness on population issues as defined by NPC.

# 2016



## Target Groups



17 Youth Centers



48 Youth Centers staff members



255 young people attending PAC training

## Final Beneficiaries



8000 young people aged from 18 - 35



Inhabitants of YCs' communities



## Testimonials

"I built a good network with multiple NGOs"

**Ahmed Abdel-Jawad, Coordinator in Sharqia**

"I have filled my knowledge gaps and corrected some common misconceptions on SRH by coordinating this program locally."

**Bahaa Salah, Coordinator in Assiut**

"Besides the invaluable technical knowledge I gained on SRH, my family changed the way they perceive my career. Now they appreciate my community contribution by being one of Sohag's local coordinators."

**Azza Mohamed, Coordinator in Sohag**

"Despite the tiring commute following up with community initiatives, I'm glad I got to interact with a diversity of backgrounds in the volunteers, NGOs, trainers and beneficiaries I met."

**Salma El Khayat, Coordinator in Sharqia**

"Being part of this program, was an opportunity for me to rediscover my community."

**Mahmoud Abdel-Zaher, Coordinator in Sohag**

"Working on extremely marginalized villages in Upper Egypt, is what so distinctive about this program."

**Ahmed Qashqoush, SRH Trainer**

"The stories I collected from trainees about FGM and Cousin Marriage were conflictingly interesting and shocking; I became determined to abolish these issues from our society."

**Omnia El-Arakey, SRH Trainer**

"Realizing cultural differences between Sohag and Assiut, their public tolerance to heated topics through debates was such a great experience."

**Riham Shenawy, Physician and SRH Trainer**



"Participating in this program and getting exposed to local communities in Upper Egypt was totally worthwhile."

**Karim Sallam, Medical Student and SRH Trainer**

"The engaging questions, experiences of young people we trained in Upper Egypt, have broadened my perception and highlighted new areas in SRHR that need to be tackled promptly in Egypt."

**Mohamed Essam Refaat, Physician and SRH Trainer**

"What's so special about this program, I got to interact with different settings and cultures from what I'm familiar with."

**Mostafa Abdel-Kereem, Physician and SRH Trainer**



[www.etijah.org](http://www.etijah.org)



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