



Empowering Women, Empowering Communities

Girls and Women Empowerment profile

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About Etijah

Youth and Development Consultancy Institute (Etijah) was founded in 2006 aiming at empowering youth by providing them with the skills, know-how and aptitudes, as well as contributing in building the capacity of governmental and non-governmental youth-serving organizations. Etijah works toward enhancing understanding and valuing youth as one of the most important assets a country could have.

Etijah's primary concern is to create and tailor up-to-date and high-quality development methodologies, research tools, applicable practices of youth development and training delivery models. Its role is to provide youth and marginalized groups with direct access to unconditional participation by providing them with practical tools and models for developing community-wide initiatives.

Since its establishment, Etijah has been striving to realize its vision. Etijah is working hard to promote and facilitate an equitable society in which all members (individuals, families and communities) have an equal opportunity to participate in building the social, political and economic infrastructure of Egypt. Etijah's projects are geared towards creating an environment, in which all community members have the opportunity for advancement and to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and the subsequent society. In addition, Etijah strongly believes in and advocates for social inclusion of disenfranchised and under-represented groups that span across the social stratifications of race, sex, gender, age and religion.

Foreword

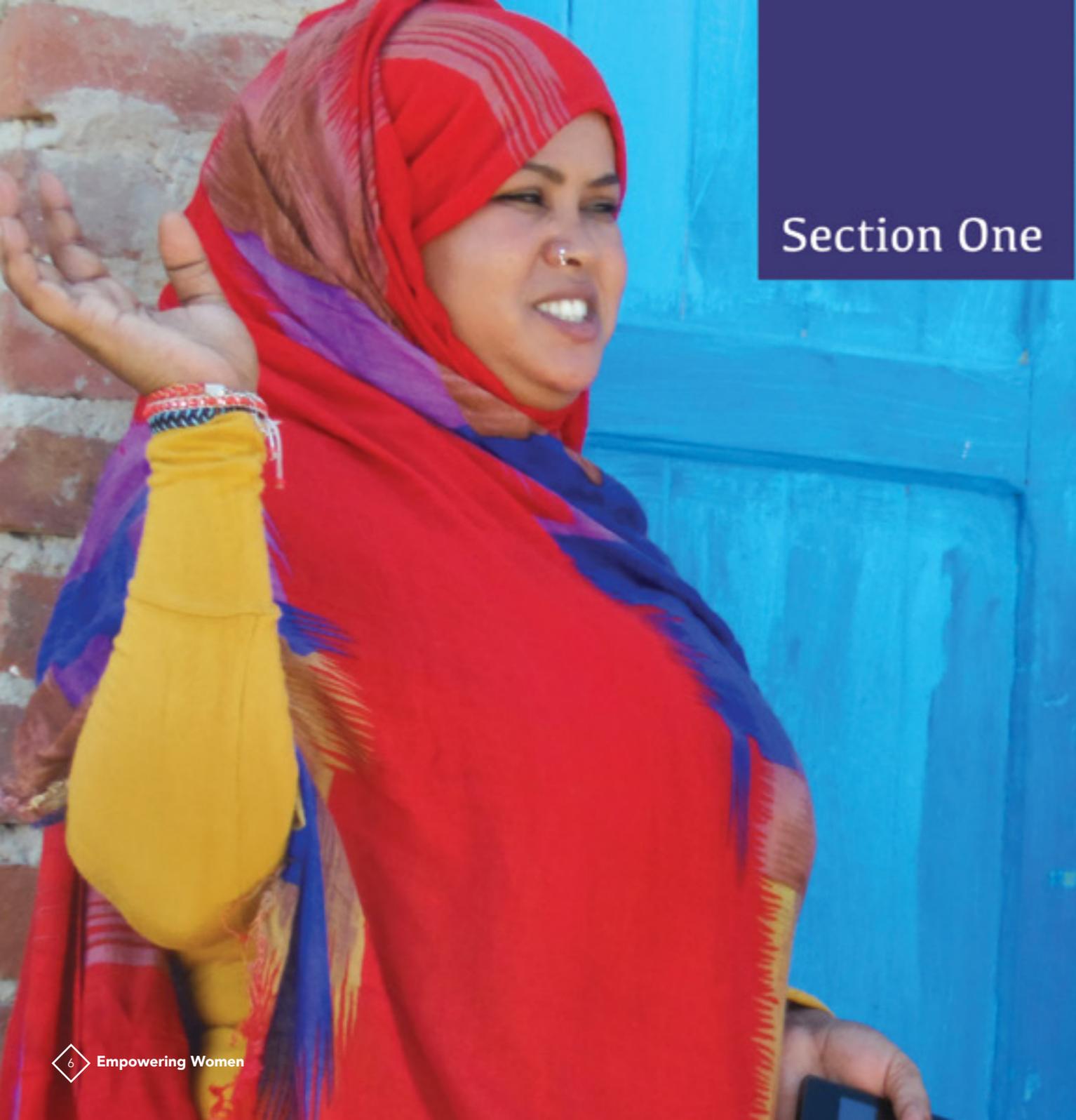
Egypt ranks low in gender equity compared to other countries worldwide. The 2015 Global Gender Gap Index ranks Egypt at 136 out of 145 countries worldwide. Also it ranks 77 out of 88 countries on the gender empowerment and political participation. Women have significantly lower participation in the labor force than men (26% vs. 79%) and lower literacy (65% literacy for women vs. 82% of males).

It is still long way to go to eliminate the harmful practices that women face in their daily lives. The 2014 Demographic and Health Survey revealed that 92% of the ever-married women ages 15-49 interviewed have been circumcised. A 2013 Government study revealed that over 99.3% of Egyptian women and girls surveyed reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment in their lifetime.

Etijah has contributed in addressing the different multi-faceted challenges that are facing women and young girls in Egypt. Etijah is working on both the grass root and policy levels with full engagement of civil society and Egyptian Governmental bodies through supporting a number of initiatives targeting women empowerment.

Etijah believes in women's vital role in developing, empowering, boosting communities and has been adopting and leading several projects aiming at Empowering Women in different aspects. Gender equality has been also a mainstream in all Etijah projects and programs since its foundation.

These projects require developing special educational curriculum, a wide variety of training workshops and skills enhancement for youth as well as seminars, conferences, onsite trainings for participants and/or beneficiaries of the programs delivered; promoting national strategies and following international agreed on strategies and goals.



Section One

Etijah Perspective on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality

Long way to go as girls and women are still to a great extent left behind and discriminated against in different levels. Social norms lock girls and women into unequal power relations, leaving many girls and women with little control over decisions that affect their lives.

All along Etijah's journey, empowering women has been one of the objectives Etijah sets to contribute to through different methods. Etijah tries to contribute to different forms of empowerment for women and gender equality such as increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women to ensure equal-right to women, and to make them confident enough to claim their rights. Etijah aligns itself with the priorities identified at global and national level such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and recently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National population strategy of Egypt.

Etijah has been advocating for women empowerment and gender equality in different ways:

- Projects for Women Empowerment
- Gender Equality as a mainstream
- Sex Disaggregated data collection





Women Impacted

Throughout the long journey of Etijah, many women are impacted in different fields.

510,000

Health

Entrepreneurship

Education

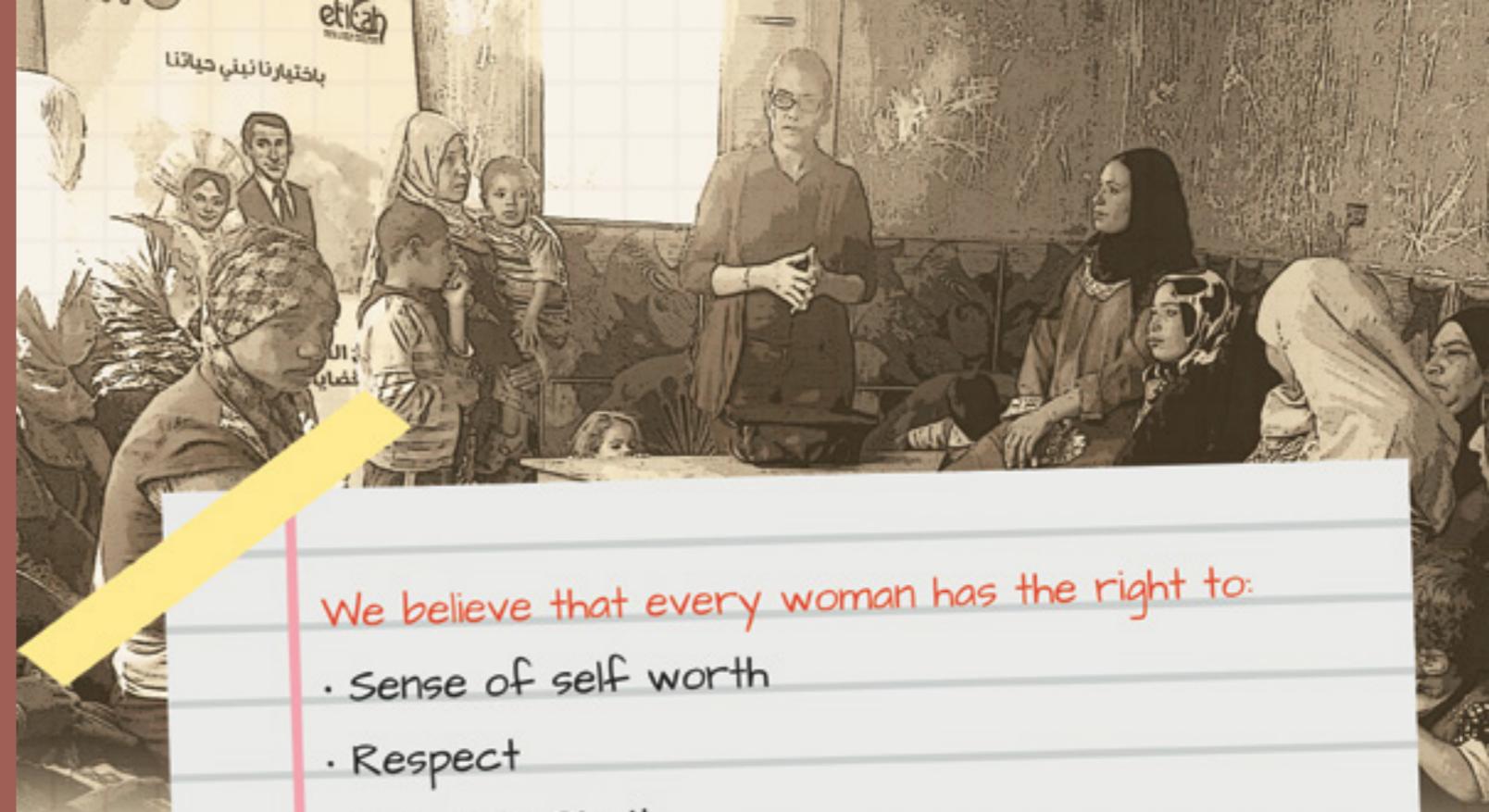
Civic
Engagement

Political
Participation

Leadership

Reproductive
Health

Empowering Women, Empowering Communities



We believe that every woman has the right to:

- Sense of self worth
- Respect
- Live with Dignity
- Make her own choice
- Take her own decision
- Participation in social, religious and public activities
- Equal rights for social and economic justice
- Equal right for education
- Equal employment opportunity
- To be safe and comfortable working environment



Section Two

Projects aiming at Empowering Women

Goals we have contributed to date:

Ensure women's full and **effective** participation and **equal** opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Ensure access to **sexual** and **reproductive** health and reproductive rights.

Eliminate all harmful practices, such as **child**, **early** and **forced** marriage and **female genital mutilation**.

2015-2016
Project title: Youth
Citizenship Ambassadors
Group (Phase I&II)
Location: Alexandria, Al-Beh
eira, Sohag, Assuit, Aswan,
Qena, Menya, Portsaid,
Al-Ismailia and Red-Sea
Outreach: 17500
Partner: UN WOMEN &
The National Council of
Women



2015
Project title: Youth
Coalition
Location: Aswan, Qena,
Red Sea, Al-Menya and
Al-Beheira
Outreach: 10000
Partner: UN WOMEN



2015
Project title: Women
Debate Club
Location: Cairo, Beheira,
and Qena
Outreach: 504
Partner: CFLI (Canada
fund for Local Initiatives)



2013
Project title: Monazra Land
Location: Cairo, Alexandria,
Mansoura and Aswan
Outreach: 1000
Partner: UN WOMEN

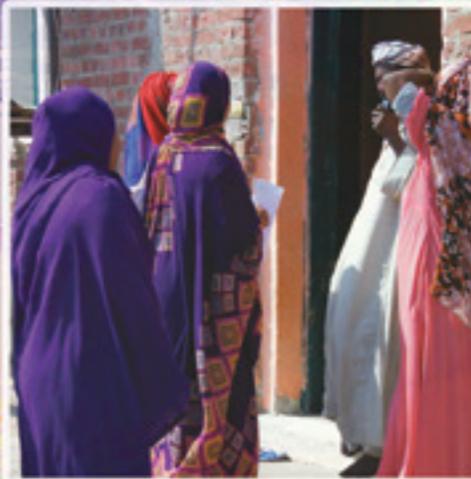


2014-2016
Project title: Raising
Awareness about
Population Issues
(Phase I&II)
Location: Sohag, Assiut
and Sharqia
Outreach: 30933
Partner: UNFPA and
Ministry of Youth



2012-2016
Project title: Reproductive
Health Matters Magazine
Location:
Outreach: 45000
Partner: "Reproductive
Health Matters Foundation
(RHM)" in England

2008
Project title: Egyptian
Youth Together Against
HIV/AIDS
Location: Cairo
Outreach: 165000
Partner: Ford Foundation



2008
Project Title: Raising
Awareness on FGM
Location: Cairo,
Alexandria, Ismalia,
Sharqia, Aswan, Menia,
Beni Suief, Gharbya
Partner: UNFPA



2006
Project Title: Combating
Sexual Harassment
Location: Cairo
Partner: HarassMap



Goal 1

Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life



Youth Citizenship Ambassadors Group (Phase I) - 2015

We believe in Women vital role in the Egyptian political reform and the enhancement of women's basic citizenship rights during the democratic transition in Egypt. One of the key obstacles against increasing women's participation in the community is having a national Identity card (ID). Therefore, the "Youth Citizenship Ambassadors Group" project was implemented in collaboration with UN WOMEN in 10 different governorates distributed to cover Egypt's most in need geographical areas: **Alexandria, Beheira, Ismailia, Port Said, Menya, Assuit, Sohag, Qena, Aswan and Red Sea Governorate.**

Etijah adopts the youth inclusion strategy in order to involve them in overcoming the challenges that they face at their local communities and impact the lives of the final beneficiaries. 150 young man and woman were volunteering in the project and formed Citizenship Ambassadors Groups in governorate. They have been equipped with tools and techniques to design, plan and implement community initiatives and awareness campaigns targeting women as final beneficiaries. The project raised awareness of those young people and the final beneficiaries on 7 main rights. By the end of the project, the Citizenship Ambassadors succeeded in empowering 7500 women by increasing their awareness on their rights and the National ID as a tool for reaching these rights in 10 governorates.



Youth Citizenship Ambassadors Group (Phase II) 2015-2016

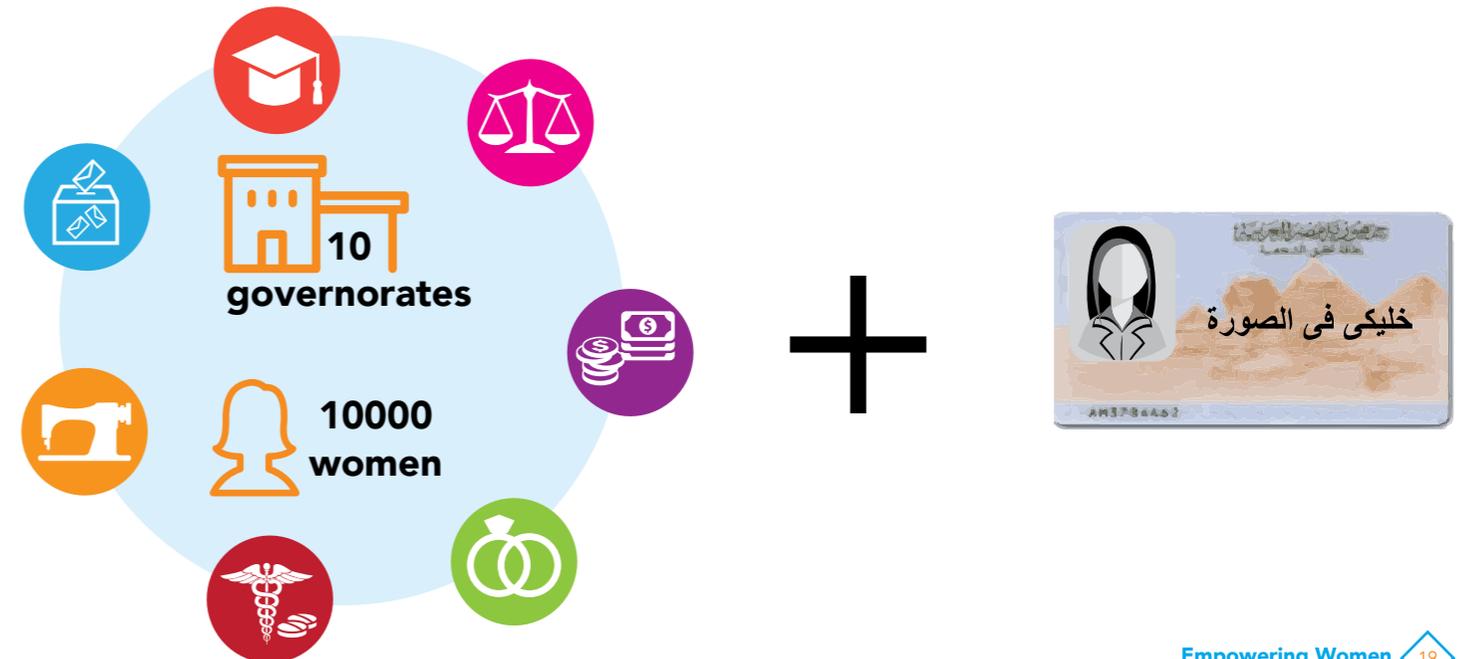
Building on the success of the "Youth Citizenship Ambassadors Group", a second phase was launched and funded by the UN Women and in cooperation with the National Council of Women. The phase was built on the skills gained by young leaders who have participated in phase I. New volunteers were also selected to build the capacities of more young people in the 10 governorates.

During the trainings that were held in each of the 10 governorates, the youth skills were enhanced by having them participating in more advanced trainings. They were trained on simulating actual community study on women lacking ID cards, and getting familiar with the main obstacles women face and prevent them from issuing IDs, resources management, as well as advanced communication and leadership skills.

By the end of the phase, the ambassadors managed to

Raise awareness of 10000 women about reasons that prevent women from issuing National Identity cards and the importance of having an ID.

Issue 2450 Identity Cards for those who do not possess ones free of charge.



Public Debate and Dialogue (Monazra Land)- 2013

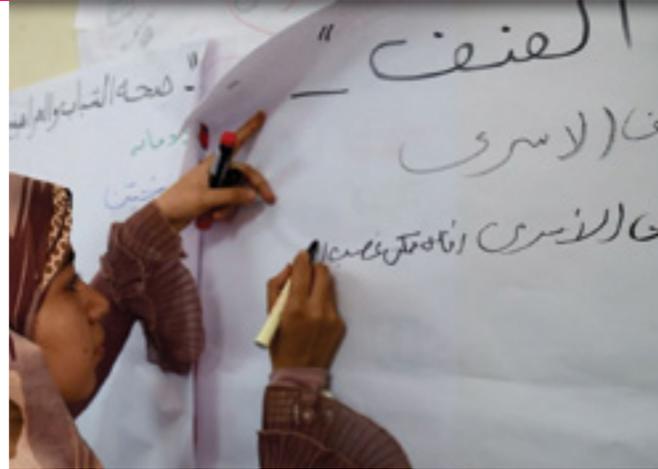
Aiming at empowering Girls and Women using the debate art as a tool that has a high effect on promoting creative thinking and accepting others, the "Public Debate and Dialogue Program (MonazraLand)" was implemented. The project was funded by UN Women.

The project provided a series of trainings and activities on public debates for young people females and males between 15 and 30 years old to learn and practice leadership and public debate.

Through Monazra land, Etijah used simulations to provide a real-like learning environment and hands on experience for the young people building on its experience of working with youth. The training was a TOT tailored around international practices of debates, leadership, community service and volunteerism. Twenty Five participants from **Alexandria, Cairo, Mansoura, Assuit and Aswan** joined the training. These participants were selected from the wide volunteer's network that Etijah has built since 2006.

All along the training, participants learned through a Rich edutainment game the debating skills, foundation of human rights and peaceful coexistence. 'Monazraland' game was designed to be unique interactive life stimulation game that enabled participants to live in a micro representation of our world highlighting the importance of dialogue as a tool to face the challenges women encounter.

The trained trainers outreached more **120** young people to teach them the Art of Debate. To enhance more skills of those young people and raise awareness of more about the challenges women face in everyday life, **5 public debates** in the **5** governorates were organized in addition to a Public Debate Event in Cairo that was attended by many stakeholders. About **600** young men and women attended these Debates events.



Youth Coalition- 2015

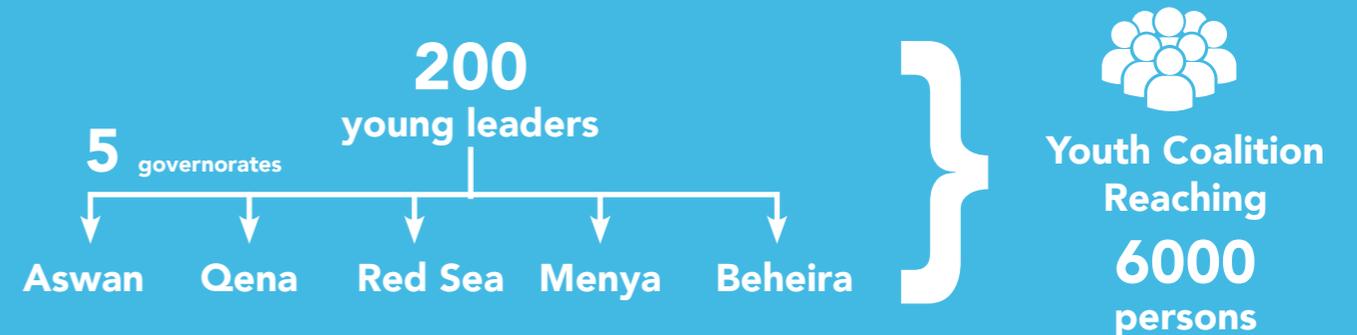
Believing in the power of youth to develop communities, Etijah planned for this project that aimed at creating a coalition of youth to act as advocates for women rights in their local communities building on the well established network of youth ambassadors who have been volunteering in the "**Youth Citizenship Ambassadors Group**" to be change agents and valuable assets in their local communities.

The project implemented in collaboration with UN WOMEN was a good opportunity to utilize the improved networking and advocacy skills of those youth who are passionate to do more to serve national women agenda. Given that Egypt was at this time at a turning point, it was the right time to join forces and try to face some of the issues of the marginalized women. It was thus essential to identify the key obstacles against increasing women's participation in the civic society and ensure that women have their basic citizenship rights. These obstacles stem from different cultural, social, economic and political reasons.



The project trained **200** young leaders at **5** local governorates: **Aswan, Qena, Red Sea, Menya and Beheira** on designing development workshops and the technicalities of coalition building, resources management for holding local initiatives, collective advocacy and communication strategies, building synergies among coalition members, and building strategy for the coalition.

Following these trainings, a coalition was formed of the young trained leaders where they started advocating for the national women agenda at their governorates. They were able to design and implement different awareness campaigns on the local community level on women empowerment and access their rights that outreached **6000 persons**.



Debate Club For Women Challenges - 2015

In collaboration with Canada Fund and to address the challenges that women face, the “Women Debate Club” was implemented aiming at empowering girls and women.

Etijah has designed and held a **“Public debate and dialogue”** training in Cairo gathering **30** participants from **3** governorates: **Cairo, Beheira and Qena**. The training included active youth leaders in the civil society field while the final beneficiaries were young women and girls in marginalized rural areas. The participants were trained on Art of Debate with focusing on the “British Parliamentary Debate style” as a reference all along the training. It highlighted Women challenges that they face in their daily lives and how to have active role in addressing these challenges and reject stereotyping.

The participants held different public events in their governorates that covered different issues:

1. Qena

Women right to report violence

2. Beheira

Sexual Harassers should be subject to prison penal

3. Cairo

The poor situation of the Egyptian Economy is the main reason behind the increase of the sexual harassment percentage



30
Young Leaders



3 Public Debates
Reaching
504
persons

Parallel to that an online campaign that raised different challenges was launched to outreach more audiences.

Another public event in Cairo was organized by the young participants and held a debate about Women’s ability in assuming leading positions in our society” which aimed at raising the public awareness about the value of the social and political inclusion of women in the decision making process.

Debates covered

2 main topics

1. Violence Against Women

2. Sexual Harassment problem



Goal 2

Ensure Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights



Raising awareness about reproductive health issues (2014-2015)

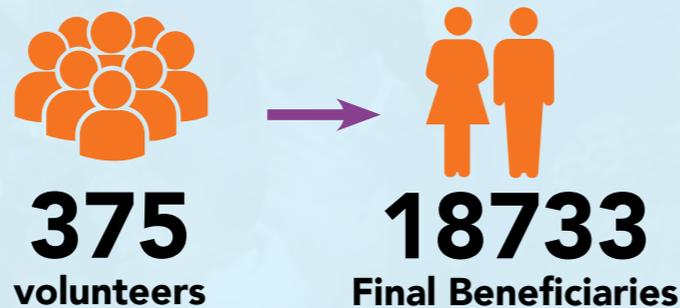


Access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and understanding SRH rights are essential to achieve sustainable development and to ensure communities welfare.

The Reproductive Health and Gender Issues program was funded by the UNFPA and aimed 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 developed and delivered several trainings to a total number of **375 volunteers** on a tailored training that is 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 volunteers from the **3** governorates managed through different local initiatives to raise awareness of **18733**. The Community initiatives planned were specific in the topics that young people considered priority such as: Family Planning, Prenatal Care, Breast Cancer, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).



Raising awareness about Population Issues- Nawah Project (2015-2016)

Nawah - a project funded by the UNFPA and in cooperation with the Youth and Sports Ministry was launched in 2015. It embraced to a great extent the goal number 3 and 5 in the SDGs and two main pillars of the NPS namely: Adolescents Health and women empowerment. The goals addresses all major health priorities affects young people and women in particular. Nawah project was launched to act as a channel that raises awareness in the local community while linking them to the universal SDGs and the National Population Strategy pillars.

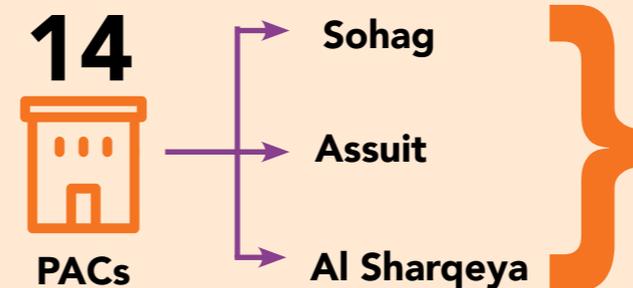
Nawah established a club (population Awareness Club-PAC) within each of the selected Youth Centers and NGOs to disseminate awareness about the selected goals. Forces were gathered with local NGOs and Youth Centers to address Adolescence and youth health and women health challenges faced by local communities and act as a knowledge-oriented hub for the local inhabitants.

The project identified some of many issues that affect young people in Egypt. The team started by taking recommendations from partner NGOs and YCs followed by a desktop review to revise the recent statistics of some of the challenges that young people face.

Four main issues were selected in 2016 to raise awareness about and to contribute to improving the youth and in particular women situation. **14 PACs** were created to support these goals in **Sohag, Assiut and Sharqia**.

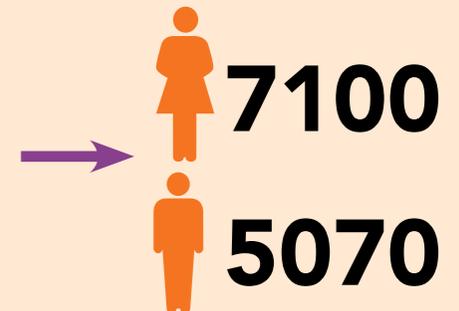
The four topics identified are:

Breast cancer, STIs, physiological and psychological changes for adolescents, and Gender based violence. The PACs managed to raise awareness of **7100 women and 5070 men**.



Four Topics:

1. Breast Cancer
2. STIs
3. Physiological and Psychological changes for adolescents.
4. Gender based violence



Reproductive Health Matters Magazine (2012-2013)



In collaboration with "Reproductive Health Matters Foundation (RHM)" in England, Etijah was responsible for translating the Arabic version of this journal. The first publication- issue number 15- tackled the privatization of health system. The journal was funded by RHM in England.

This international journal explores emerging, neglected and marginalized issues across the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

It aims to publish original, relevant, and contemporary research, particularly from a feminist perspective, that can help inform the development of policies, laws and services to fulfill the rights and meet the sexual and reproductive health needs of people of all ages, gender identities and sexual orientations. RHM publishes work that engages with fundamental dilemmas and debates in SRHR, highlighting multiple perspectives, acknowledging differences,

and searching for new forms of consensus. RHM strongly encourages research that explores experiences, values, information and issues from the point of view of those whose lives are affected.

Based on the distribution wide scale, it has been estimated that it distributed **45000** magazines in Egypt.

45000
Magazines.



Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

Sexuality and Sexual Rights

Maternal health

Gender-Based violence

Contraception

Gender

SRHR in Humanitarian Settings

Female Genital Mutilation

Family planning

HIV and other STIs

Abortion

Egyptian Youth Together Against HIV/AIDS (2008)



"Egyptian Youth Against HIV/AIDS" was implemented in Collaboration with Ford foundation in 2008. The project established Youth Clubs within **12** universities from **10** governorates to be a hub for awareness."

The project was implemented in cooperation between NGOs and universities to create opportunities for partnerships between civil society and universities on promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS. The Clubs organized comprehensive awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS among youth in these universities and especially among women and girls. Clubs were equipped by helpful tools such as computers, desks, lockers and administrative tools. The governorates included: **Cairo, Fayoum, Qena, Aswan, Luxor, Red Sea, Qalyoubeya, Menia, Alexandria and Giza**. The Club members attended intensive trainings and were provided with a toolkit for peer education to support them establish the clubs and raise awareness of their peers.

In addition to the aforementioned students, an additional core group members from the club located at the High Institute for Social Services in Cairo was created under the name of «Egyptian Youth Take a Stand against HIV/AIDS». The core group had the responsibility to manage the AIDS club activities. It consisted of **30 participants** from each faculty,

The total number of participating facilitators was **318** and they reached **10872** final beneficiaries.

12
Universities



318
Students

10872
Final Beneficiaries
Empowering Women 29

Goal 3

Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.



Harass Map (2005)

Since its foundation, Etijah has been supporting and building capacities of youth-led initiatives believing that they are the most passionate and the most striving to develop their own community and overcome the societal challenges that the community faces.

Having said this, Etijah has incubated the -back in time- recently founded initiative “Harass Map” that was born in 2005 as a response to the persistent problem of sexual harassment on the streets of Egypt, to which society has become increasingly tolerant.

According to a study conducted by UN WOMEN ⁽¹⁾, 99.3% of Egyptian women have experienced some form of sexual harassment.

The study indicates that 96.5% of women in their survey said that sexual harassment came in the form of touching, which was the most common manifestation of sexual harassment. Verbal sexual harassment had the second-highest rate experienced by women with 95.5% of women reporting cases.



[HTTP://HARASSMAP.ORG/EN/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2014/02/287_SUMMARYREPORT_ENG_LOW-1.PDF](http://harassmap.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/287_summaryreport_eng_low-1.pdf)

Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices of Medical Doctors towards the Practice of FGM/C (2008)

Various practices are spread in the Egyptian community; FGM is one of these harmful practices against girls and women. The project was implemented by Etijah in collaboration with the UNFPA and UNICEF aiming at examining the knowledge, attitude, and practices of medical doctors towards the practice of FGM/C including all the procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia. The project team reviewed some literature and analyzed how some RH topics are tackled and provided recommendations to develop updated curricula tackling different RH issues. The project also provided a profound analysis of doctors' opinion, attitude, practice and knowledge toward reproductive and sexual rights and choices and FGM/C.

According to the national 2014 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 92 per cent of Egyptian married women between the ages of 15 and 49 have undergone FGM, 72 per cent of them by doctors ². The 2008 DHS showed that 63 per cent of women aged 15-49 believed the practice should continue. Despite the aforementioned figures, Etijah is still gathering forces between active volunteers and partners striving to end these harmful acts against women.

[HTTP://EGYPT.UNFPA.ORG/TOPICS/FEMALE-GENITAL-MUTILATION-0](http://egypt.unfpa.org/topics/female-genital-mutilation-0)





Section Three

**Gender Equality as a mainstream
in Etijah's projects**

Pioneers of Egypt (2013-2017)

Pioneers of Egypt follows a holistic approach in solving poverty and social inequity especially for women by supporting **female social innovators** at different stages; established social innovators, Start-ups in the idea phase and Volunteers aiming to develop their skills. The Pioneers program is supporting social entrepreneurs who are solving important societal issues for millions of people in poor and marginalized communities in Egypt in diverse sectors such as **education, health, the environment, sustainable development, and culture.**

One of Pioneers of Egypt's main aims is to increase women's economic participation in the Arab world which is considered among the lowest in the world. Half of all women and a third of all men are illiterate, and scientific attainment is generally low. We believe that a promising approach to improve the wellbeing of the people of the Arab world is social entrepreneurship

A great percentage of our social innovators are either women or working on enabling women to access equal opportunities in various fields, creating opportunities for employment, self-employment and social change in the Arab World.

Some of our Social innovators impacting women's participation and empowerment in Egypt are:

1- Bosta Bank : Bosta bank provides savings and loans services to reduce poverty and gender inequality by using community-based savings and loans groups, providing basic financial services to those unable to access the formal banking system. Bosta Bank gathers together groups of women in marginalized communities who each contribute one Egyptian pound per day into a collective savings pot. This can help increase families' incomes, allowing them to improve the quality of health care, nutrition and education for women and their children.

4- BuSSy: A performing arts project that documents and gives voice to censored untold stories about gender in different communities in Egypt. The project organizes storytelling workshops and performances where women and men step on stage to share stories about harassment, rape, gender discrimination, honor killing, forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), motherhood, domestic violence, child abuse, mass sexual assaults and many others, from different communities and cities in Egypt.

3- Maktaby: Maktaby is a website that facilitates online working and training. It helps freelancers by providing people and especially women and people with special needs with an online office so they can run their business from home. Through Maktaby, people with special needs, housewives, and also retired people can attain financial independence.

2- Turathiyat: offers a creative solution to two seemingly unrelated problems facing rural Egypt; lack of employment opportunities for women and the detrimental environmental impact of burning agricultural waste. After harvesting dates from palms, farmers typically burn the waste material from the trees, damaging both the environment and people's health. Turathiyat makes use of this waste material by teaching young women how to make handmade products out of the leftover date palm material.

5- Konoz Yadaweya: The first Egyptian e-commerce enterprise dedicated to marketing traditional Egyptian handicrafts, enhancing their competitiveness within the global market through fair-trade marketing, and investing in the capacity-building of artisan communities in Egypt specifically women. By marketing and promoting artisanal products, Konoz Yadaweya gives women artisans the opportunity to leverage their culture for economic growth and thus helping them achieve economic empowerment.

Pioneers of Egypt

50% of the targeted beneficiaries are women
One of the largest networks of social innovators in the Arab world , 75 Social Innovators , 250 Start-ups , 2000 Volunteers.

Pioneers

Established entrepreneurs who have proven success in solving social problems and are aspiring to scale up

75

Volunteers

Youth gaining experience from social innovators

2000



Start-ups

Youth taking first steps in solving their local community's major issues

250

Higher Education Initiative (Public Universities Scholarship) 2015

The USAID-funded Public University Scholarships program is a scholarship for public high school graduates to attend excellence programs at **5 public universities** in parallel with specially-designed supplementary enhancement activities such as English, leadership training and career planning, as well as internships, community service, and study abroad.

The program aims at interweaving the private sector and practical experiences so that graduates are primed to enter and contribute to the workforce in Egypt, in sectors that are critical to the economic development of the country such as: **Engineering, Information Technology, Science, Agriculture, Law, Commerce, Nursing, Mass Communication, and Economics.**

The scholarship targets Egyptian young women and men graduating from government schools, achieving 85% or more on their High School Degree "Thanaweya Amma". Applicants should demonstrate commitment, motivation, and leadership potential. The program aspires more to reach for students who cannot afford joining the excellence sections and especially girls from rural marginalized areas. On the first cohort **50.5%** of the total enrolled students were Girls while **49.5%** were Boys. In the second cohort, **49.6%** of the students enrolled were Girls while **50.4%** were Boys.



Cohort 1



50.5%

Cohort 2



49.6%

5
Public
Universities

9
Majors

3
Cohorts

Active Citizens (2009 - 2017)

Etijah in collaboration with the British Council in Cairo has been implementing the Active Citizens programme since 2009. The project aims at promoting for the **Active Citizenship** concept among youth from all over Egypt through a series of activities that start by conducting a Training of Trainers (ToT) for **25** young men and women from different governorates. During the 4-days trainings they get knowledge about the active citizenship concept known worldwide, communication skills, different tools to use during the training, different types of trainees, the active citizenship vision, trainers types, social action projects design and other topics that they need in order to cascade the training and design a Social Action Project (SAP).

The phase that follows is the cascading, where each of the ToT participants should cascade the training to **25** participants in his/her local community so the outreach would be by the end of the project **625** volunteers. The last phase in the project is the Social Action Project implementation where each group in one governorate shall design and implement small initiatives that address a certain societal challenge. Many social Action projects in various fields addressed different issues in local communities such as: Reviving a historical street in Al-Qusair City "Al Sakeefa Street", "Children more aware of their environment" in Cairo, Water consumption, Planting 1000 fruitful trees..etc.

The project outreached in its different phases 30000 and raised their awareness about various issues. 49% were girls and women



Section Four

Past – Present – Future



Empowering women is an ongoing endeavours we have been striving for and it is a major part of our current and future goals. A clear specific direction has been set for this...

To create an online networking hub for organizations and individuals working on the women empowerment cause

To work on Combating the spreading of misconceptions about women role and capabilities

To Include men and community leaders in all women empowerment projects

To Design girls-targeting projects to empower them at young age

To Raise awareness of girls and women on their sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and facilitate access to these rights

To contribute to the economic empowerment of women

To raise awareness on gender equality

To intensify our efforts on women civic engagement and volunteerism as a key strategy to community development

To Introduce and facilitate voluntary opportunities in the civil society organizations to guarantee women engagement and familiarize them within its context

To Design women empowerment oriented projects

To Design women empowerment oriented projects

To equip women with information they lack specially those living in marginalized/ slum areas

To Facilitate and support women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life through building their capacities

To contribute to eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres

To enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote women empowerment





Section Five

Glimpses from the field

Raise Awareness on Reproductive Health

Hala is an 18 years old girl from Hashim El Eseri village in Dar El Sallam in Sohag governorate. Dar El Salam is a city in North of Sohag. She is a student in the high school.

Hala belongs to Al Hawarah Tribe. Hawarah which is a major tribe that belongs originally to Amazigh, who came from Al Maghreb & Libya is distributed among Upper Egypt, mainly in Souhag and Qena. They are very proud of their origins, history and their vast agricultural lands from which they extend power and exercise patronage over their families. Al Hawarah has very strict rules when it comes to marriage. Endogamy is the only approved form of marriage, yet men can occasionally marry outsiders.

At the same time, if a woman did the same she is exposing herself to punishment which could even lead to death. The most challenging factor in that group is the rigid mindset concerning customs and traditions. They become very sensitive when it comes to endogamy, FGM, child-marriage or any issue concerning women rights.

Although Hala is about to get married, she was surprised to realize what she was missing before the RH training. She made fun of herself commenting on the training "I was unqualified for marriage before your training; it was my first time to hear like 90% of that".

"It was my first time to hear about it from a doctor. People only talk about traditions when it comes to explaining why we have to undergo this. The physiological and psychological changes for adolescents started to be logical and within a clearer context. She remembered how confused she was when she started this process few years ago and the unanswered questions she always had in her mind. "My mother thought it was impolite

for girls to talk about these things" (referring to the physiological changes for girls). She kept thinking of how she can do anything.

She got motivated by the establishment the PAC within "Hashim El Eseiry") Youth Center. She seized an opportunity to discuss with her Arabic teacher the training she attended and how important it is for her and it could also be useful for her classmates. The teacher gave her a hard time at the beginning with different level of debates when it came to FGM in particular with reference sometimes to religion, traditions, girls' protection ...etc. After a while, he was convinced to let her discuss these topics with her peers within the class time. He agreed with her that he will give her some time during his class and let her share this knowledge with her classmates. She gave 3 sessions to her classmates that covered Reproductive Health definition, FGM and The physiological and psychological changes for adolescents.

"Honestly, although, FGM happened to me when I was little, I was not sure what it is exactly. I only used to be told that it is to protect girls so they won't be bad girls, their behavior I mean" said Ekram one of Hala's classmates who attended the sessions. She continued, "Last year, Ms. Nora gave us a lecture about the importance of FGM which made me confused between what Hala said and what our teacher said, I couldn't tell where is the truth?"

Rasiya sadly commented "I do wish I could protect my daughter from this but I know it will be in vain efforts. I cannot stand against the wind alone, I cannot understand why they do not understand and see the point as we and you see it."

Hala agreed that she also cannot stand against the wind alone but at least she is contributing to putting a seed, "NAWAH" of knowledge and awareness around her.



Empower women through understanding healthy practices

Yara, is a young student at University of Assiut. She is one of the active volunteers at the Population Awareness Club (PAC) of "Mesre'e" youth center. After the training, Yara decided to share the training materials with her colleagues at the university. The Breast Cancer topic caught their attention. A close friend of Yara kept asking her different questions and asked her to teach her how to do the self-examination by herself which Yara did.

"It was very touching...it all brought to her the sad memories of losing her dear mother because of the breast cancer and I remember exactly what she said-maybe that would have saved her life".

This friend took the responsibility to share knowledge with others. She started talking to her first cousin that by her turn told her mother about the self-examination. None of them knew that it was the right time as the mother of the cousin realized that she-the sister of the deceased mother- has some clear symptoms which the doctor later confirmed.

"When my friend told me this, I cried a lot. I could not believe that the impact of this training could be that huge and outreach people I myself have never met".



Including men in combating harmful practices against women and empower women with knowledge

Mahmoud is a lawyer residing in Dir El Ganadla, Assiut.

"Believe it or not, it is going to stop one day and very soon". Although we did not talk in details about FGM but all the beneficiaries we met during the sessions were so curious and pushed us to talk about it. Luckily your training was really informative and covered both medical and religious point of views".

The Population Awareness Club (PAC) of Dir Al Ganadla youth center attracted many schools students and many young people around. The volunteers also became known in the neighborhood as the ones who have some answers about different adolescents' health topics. Some neighbors approached them with questions already.

"I did not know that our PAC is getting known that way. One girl came to the YC one day telling us about a doctor in the village who is going to do FGM to some young girls in her family"

We were surprised that she remembers so many details that we covered during one of the sessions"

Mohamed was proactive and headed to the doctor and clearly threatened him that he is going to report this to the police if he did it. Luckily the doctor then rejected to do the operation to those girls.

"Unfortunately, I am sure he might be still doing it, but we are trying hard and it might work one day, this time we saved 2 girls, hopefully next time it will be more and more."





