



SUCCESS STORY

Expanding Global Trade Capacity

Helping Egypt's trade ministry take advantage of global trade



Photo: Nathan Associates Inc./Tim Buehrer

Iman Abdel Kahlek, an MBA graduate, addresses participants at a graduation ceremony. Her MBA was sponsored through USAID.

Graduates of professional degree programs who received USAID-sponsored scholarships will provide Egypt's trade ministry with leadership and vision for years to come.

In an effort to strengthen its economy, Egypt was looking for ways to use its membership in the World Trade Organization to leverage more international trading opportunities. The trade ministry turned to USAID, asking for help in creating a trade reform program that would achieve concrete results.

In cooperation with the ministry, USAID developed a program that utilizes professional relationships in building Egyptian capacity in the world of international trade. Early in the project, the ministry sought advanced training for the staff of its new World Trade Organization liaison department. The ministry's ambitious young professionals competed for opportunities to pursue masters degrees through USAID-sponsored scholarships.

The graduates of these degree programs will provide the ministry with leadership and vision for years to come. USAID also helped the ministry arrange intensive technical, language, managerial, and computer training for its staff. In addition training and internships abroad broadened staff experience and exposed them to international best practices. To round out the program, USAID experts served as mentors to ministry personnel on technical and managerial issues.

The program's results demonstrate its success. First, Egypt became one of the World Trade Organization's first countries to submit offers for trade in the service sectors. Second, Egypt has improved notification processes that ensure faster transit of agricultural exports, which benefits farmers, distributors, and clients alike. Third, Egypt's trade ministry has built a strong reputation as having a capable mechanism for dispute resolution and consultations on trade issues. And finally, even the World Trade Organization's staff has praised Egypt's trade policy review, conducted in 2005, for improvements over earlier reviews.

As USAID helps Egypt get more from global trade, the country's economy is improving and its people are benefitting every day.