



Rescuing a Greek Orthodox Church in Old Cairo

A high level of groundwater, resulting in part from leaking sewers and the rise and fall of the Nile, threatened the structural integrity of several buildings and monuments in Old Coptic Cairo, including Mar Girgis Greek Orthodox Church. USAID and the government of Egypt jointly allocated more than LE57 million (\$15 million) to rescue the ancient church through a broader effort to improve the area's sewage system.



Photo: Wafaa S. Faltaous

Before

For two decades, rising contaminated groundwater flooded the Roman fortress wall built in 300 AD (333 BH), located underneath Mar Girgis Greek Orthodox Church. The water, more than six feet deep, was gradually damaging the submerged structures and the site's lower levels could not be accessed by worshipers, visitors or restoration workers.

After

The project lowered the groundwater under the church's floor level, making the Roman fortress wall and other structural elements accessible for restoration and use by worshipers and visitors. Improved sewage services installed as part of the project benefit the 140,000 citizens who live near the mosque.



Photo: Wafaa S. Faltaous

Before and After

