



SUCCESS STORY

A Second Chance at Education for Girls

Multi-grade schools and scholarships give girls a real opportunity to learn



Photo: ERP

At this primary school in Komombo, scholarships as well as community outreach enable girls like Shaymaa (front left) to join the classroom once again.

“Now, I have a chance to teach my mom. We are learning the alphabet together. But I’m a strict teacher – she has to learn a letter a day!” said Sabreen, a beneficiary of a USAID-funded girls scholarship program in Egypt.

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Shaymaa’s shy smile grows into a grin when she shows her father the artwork she brought home from school. Her scrapbook is a collection of brightly colored images from her eight-year-old world – her school, her teacher, her best friend, the family portrait.

Shaymaa is one of 182 children in Komombo in Egypt’s Aswan Governorate receiving scholarships through the local Community Education Committee, which covers annual tuition, two uniforms, shoes, stationery and a school bag.

Despite his desire to keep his four children in school, Shaymaa’s father was injured at work and had to turn to relatives for financial support. Because of the expense to educate all the children, Shaymaa had to leave first grade so that her older siblings could continue

their education.

Research indicates that girls in particular face obstacles for entering and staying in school, such as inability to pay school expenses, family preference for educating sons over daughters, the mistreatment of girls by teachers, and the poor physical condition of schools (especially the lack of adequate bathrooms for girls). USAID-funded girls scholarship activities currently address some of these impediments.

One local development agency went door-to-door throughout five villages in Komombo to inform parents of the program and convince them of the worth of educating their daughters. “They need us to come and knock on their door,” said Samira Khalifa of Mother Village, the agency which did the outreach. “Many see past their circumstances and want their children to have a better life, so they are happy to enroll their children in the scholarship program.”

Twenty-eight schools now offer educational opportunities to more than 500 older girls who either dropped out or never enrolled.