

VEGA Member Egypt Experience



About Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA):

A 501 (c) (3) nonprofit, founded in 2004 through a Leader with Associate (LWA) cooperative agreement, VEGA is an agile vehicle for USAID Economic Growth Officers to tap the Alliance's 17 Member NGOs in building capacity for private, public and NGO sector development. VEGA is the world's largest consortium of economic growth volunteer organizations that collectively have assisted 140 developing countries & mobilized more than 67,000 experts to promote economic growth activities. VEGA's track record of delivering sustainable solutions throughout the developing world includes over 20 programs worth more than \$100 million

The following descriptions highlight VEGA members' current and past experience implementing programs in Egypt in the areas of agriculture, microfinance, financial reform, education, trade, and environment:

ACDI/VOCA

Alliance for Progress in Egyptian Horticulture. ACDI/VOCA has joined with the H.J. Heinz Company and USAID to form the Alliance for Progress in Egyptian Horticulture, a public-private partnership designed to stimulate the potential for process tomato production and value-added horticulture in Egypt. This \$7 million program, which began in 2008 and will run to September 30, 2012, applies a market-driven value chain approach. It invests in the vast but largely unrealized potential of thousands of Upper Egypt's small farmers to meet modern-day market demands for product quality and quantity.

MicroStart. A global initiative by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), MicroStart was designed to help improve the access of the working poor to appropriate financial services offered by local organizations, in order to enhance their economic activities, increase their revenues and create employment. ACDI/VOCA served as the technical service provider (TSP) to MicroStart-Egypt, which strengthened the capacity of three microfinance institutions in Upper Egypt to provide loans to the poor, including women and other disadvantaged individuals.

Agribusiness Linkages. Agribusiness Linkages for Egypt (AgLink) was a six-year program designed to build stronger commercial ties between the United States and Egypt. AgLink provided technical expertise to Egyptian agribusinesses and promoted trade and investment through consulting and outreach activities.

Farmer to Farmer. ACDI/VOCA's much-lauded Farmer-to-Farmer program in Egypt began in 1987. It supported increased investment, productivity and income generation in nearly half of Egypt's governorates and contributed markedly to the expansion of the country's agricultural sector. FtF provided technical assistance to farmers and extension agents in farm management, production and post-harvest handling covering a wide variety of fruit, vegetable, livestock, honey and dairy products.

Aid to Artisans

Handmade in Egypt. ATA is the lead organization on the USAID-funded "Handmade in Egypt" initiative, a three-year, \$3 million-dollar project. The program expects to generate US \$1.5 million in artisan craft sales (domestic and international), benefitting up to 8,000 artisans. Focus areas include market-driven product development; improved production methods; increased organizational capacity and competitiveness; and the creation of strong and sustainable market links, both within Egypt and to international markets. The project was developed to contribute to long-term sustainable poverty alleviation strategies, particularly among women, through the support of entrepreneurship and income generating activities in the handcraft sector.

Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs

Agribusiness Roundtable with Egyptian Agriculture Minister. October 2009. As part of his tour of the United States, His Excellency Amin Abaza, the Egyptian Minister of Agriculture and Land Reclamation, participated in a roundtable discussion at CNFA's Washington, D.C., headquarters. His Excellency Sameh Shoukry, Egypt's Ambassador to the United States, also attended the event. The roundtable centered on how the United States and Egypt can work together to strengthen the Egyptian agricultural sector and brought the minister and ambassador together with senior executives from many American agribusinesses, including the U.S. Grains Council, the American Soybean Association, Dow AgroSciences, Monsanto, the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, CropLife America, Case New Holland and Cargill.

Financial Services Volunteer Corps

Various Programs. FSVC has played a vital role in Egypt's financial reform process for more than four years. FSVC's work with in-country partners, including strengthening monetary policy and capital markets has led to increased public confidence and investment in the system. Entrepreneurs, private companies and individuals not only find banks more responsive to their needs, but also have a wider range of options as they seek capital to fund business creation and expansion.

HSBC Partnership. In Egypt, FSVC initiated a partnership with HSBC to strengthen entrepreneurship and support greater access to finance for small businesses. A keystone of that program is www.yallabusiness.com, a unique web portal in Arabic and English designed to help Egyptian small businesses improve their financial management, expand their markets and become more "bankable". Over the past year, FSVC also utilized volunteer resources from the U.S. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to assist the Central Bank of Egypt and Egyptian Banking Institute in adapting a key FDIC examination training course to the local context.

International Executive Service Corps

Egypt Forward. USTDA, in coordination with the U.S.-Egypt Business Council and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Egyptian Embassy and the U.S. Departments of State and Commerce, will be hosting a two-day forum on June 27-28, 2011 to encourage enhanced trade and sustainable economic development in Egypt.

Institute for International Education

Fulbright Scholar Program. More than 150 U.S. scholars have received Fulbright grants for Egypt since 1980 - approximately 40 percent for lecturing, 40 percent for research, and the remaining 20 percent for a combination of lecturing and research. There has been enormous variety in these Fulbright Scholars' fields of specialization, ranging - literally - from agriculture to zoology.

Winrock International

Agricultural Exports and Rural Incomes. As a partner in the Agricultural Exports and Rural Incomes (AERI) project, Winrock worked to raise income levels and employment in upper Egypt. AERI focused on small producers in sectors with potential for income and employment growth, including horticulture and livestock, with the aim of making farmers more competitive in local and regional markets.

Egyptian Environmental Policy Program. As a sub-contractor to IRG, Winrock provided core management and analytical support as well as resource management and conservation of Red Sea coral reefs, islands, and ecosystems. Additional activities included work with the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency to further government adoption and implementation of policy measures and operational support for the Red Sea Rangers.