

Presentation title

***ISHRAQ Program:
A Successful Experience with
Out-of-School Girls in Egypt***

Nihal Elwan, MSc
Research Coordinator
Poverty, Gender and Youth
Program

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**Focusing on Adolescent Rural
Girls in Egypt**
Providing Safe Spaces to Learn, Play and
Grow



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Global Context

- Globalization and Technology mean demand for skilled people.
- Growing Awareness of Gender-Based Poverty.
- Commitment to the Millennium Development Goals.
 - Universal primary education
 - Gender equality and empowerment of women
 - Improving maternal health
- Nevertheless, insufficient attention paid to disadvantaged adolescents.



Egyptian Context

- National Investments for child Education and Health.
- Cohort of Adolescents is the biggest in the Egypt's history.
- Rural girls in Upper Egypt most disadvantaged group.
- 26% of Rural Upper Egyptian girls are not in school
- Perpetuating cycles of poverty and deprivation, isolation.



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Risks Facing Adolescent Girls in Rural Upper Egypt:

- Illiteracy and Lack of Basic Knowledge
- Early Marriage and Pregnancy
- Female Genital Cutting
- Restricted Mobility and Limited Peer Networks
- Poverty
- No voice or Representation



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The Ishraq Intervention

A partnership between a number of actors:

International NGOs

- Save the Children
- CEDPA
- Caritas
- Population Council

Government Agencies

- Ministry of Youth
- Ministry of Education
- National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

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ISHRAQ (Enlightenment)

**Addressing the Roots of Intergenerational Poverty,
High Fertility and Poor Health by Focusing on
Adolescent Girls**



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Objectives of Ishraq: (Launched in 2001)

- Create **Safe Public Spaces** for girls
- Increase girls' mobility, skills, knowledge, and sense of agency
- Mainstream girls back into formal schooling
- Advocate for **positive community norms** concerning girls
- Encourage policy and institutional structures that support girls

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Primary Target Group

Out-of-school Girls

Aged 13-15

- 84% never-attended school
- 97% perform some work
- 53% are already circumcised (95%+ anticipated)
- 52% had no information on menstruation prior to menarche
- 56% could name their district

Source: Ishraq Baseline Survey



Selected Villages Profile

- Six villages in Minya Governorate
- Poorest regions in Upper Egypt
- Few resources dedicated to the youth
- At least one space to house program
- Villages differ religiously
Ethnically, geographically



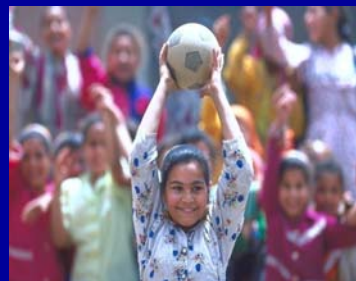
Structure of the Intervention

- Program lasts for 30 months
- Two classes per Village
- Four classes per week, each for 3 hours.
- Classes held in Youth Centers
- Specific hours during the day are dedicated to young women



Components:

- **Literacy (Learn to be Free, Caritas)**
Girls pass an exam to go back to school.
- **Life-Skills (New Horizons, CEDPA)**
 - Basic Life Skills
 - Reproductive Health.
- **Sports and Recreation (Population Council)**
Breaking local taboos, develop healthy attitudes/values



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Ishraq Promoters: A Cadre of Mentors

- Local young women (18-28)
- Level of Education
- Keen to work with girls and community

Role:

- Recruit girls
- Deliver Classes
- Advocate on girls' behalf
- Conduct home visits



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Secondary Target Groups: Gate Keepers

PARENTS

- Seminars/Home Visits
- Monthly meetings

BOYS

- New Visions Program

COMMUNITY LEADERS

- Capacity-Building
- Village Committees



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Challenges and Lessons Learned:

Challenges	Lessons Learned
Giving girls access to Youth Centers	Collaborate to Grant Girls Specific Hours
Dropout Rates increase with Seasonality	Flexible Class Hours
Resistance to Sensitive Topics (RH) and Sports	Community Must be Engaged
Resistance to 'Outsider' Interventions	Work with Local Implementers

Evidence-Based Impact Assessment

- Baseline (2001): 574 girls (418 treatment; 156 control)
- End-line (2004): 588 girls (454 treatment; 134 control)
- Attitudinal survey of girls in at Baseline and End-line
- Parental survey in end-line.
- Focus group discussions with parents, brothers, and promoters
- In-depth case studies with girls

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Impact on Education

- 92% of those who sat for the literacy exam passed
- Over half achieved an "Excellent" score
- 66% (re-)entered the formal education system (Compared to a national average of 6% who pass the exam)
- 22 graduates are currently in technical secondary education



- Educational aspirations increased dramatically:

"For the first time in my life I learned that girls have equal rights to education as boys. In the past my understanding was that girls did not need to be educated because they were going to marry."

--Wafaa, Ishraq Participant

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Impact on Health

- Ishraq Participants are over 3 times as likely to have visited a health facility
- Only 8% of Ishraq participants believe FGM is necessary compared to 68% of non-participants
- Change of attitudes towards early marriage:

"I learned that I am too young to marry, and I know now that I have the right to say 'NO'"

--Reem, Ishraq Participant



Impact on Well-Being:

- Ishraq Participants (90%) feel sports made them:
 - Stronger
 - Healthier
 - Higher self-esteem
 - Improved self-confidence

"The way I speak has improved, Sports make me feel more confident"

--participant



- Almost half of Ishraq graduates still play sports on a weekly basis



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Following Steps : Scaling-Up a Successful Pilot

➤ Horizontal Scaleup:
More Villages in Minya and Assiut

➤ Vertical Scaleup:
Transfer of Ownership to NCY

➤ Tracking of graduates:
–As Promoters
–Ishraq Graduate Fund

➤ Lobby for girl rights with
MOE and Ministry of Interior



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THANK YOU



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