



## SUCCESS STORY

# Outreach Work Empowers and Educates Young Women

**Home visits by community development workers help to empower women and change attitudes towards the role of women in family and society**



***“I realized that women don’t have to marry so young. I won’t allow my child to get married at an early age.”***

***- A female student attests to the positive impact of health messages she was exposed to while attending literacy classes.***

Community development workers in Egypt can find themselves caught between the desire of young women for wider opportunities and choices and traditional attitudes regarding the role of women in society. The USAID-funded Integrated Reproductive Health Services Project (Takamol) provides support to community workers as they raise awareness and act as forces for change in the communities where they work.

Since 2006, Community Development Association outreach workers have conducted home visits to introduce health information and services to 1,153,985 women. During home visits outreach workers meet with all members of the household to discuss priority issues and problems, as well as possible solutions to them. USAID’s Takamol project provides training and support to the Associations and their outreach workers to help them bring about positive behavior changes throughout their communities.

Successful home visits often empower women and help to change deeply embedded traditional perceptions of women’s rights and their roles in the family and community. In Qorna District in Luxor Governorate, for example, one outreach worker was able to convince a family that their 12-year old daughter should attend school and marry at a later age. The girl’s mother was also encouraged to attend literacy classes which included discussions on the health risks of early marriage. After participating in these sessions, the mother canceled her daughter’s engagement to a 27-year old man and now wants her daughter to attend school.

In Bayadeya village, another outreach worker was able to help an 18-year old daughter convince her father to allow her to obtain a birth certificate. Though initially resistant to these messages, the father eventually recognized his daughter’s right to have an identity and agreed to get her a birth certificate. The outreach worker’s multiple meetings with the father resulted in the young woman attending a school with other young women who had not received any kind of formal education, and also enabled her to participate in the Takamol project’s Egyptian Women Speak Out program. As a result of this cooperation between her Community Development Association and her family, the young woman has been empowered to strive for a better future.