

REPORT ON PHILIPPINE DELEGATION'S VISIT TO EGYPT
Zynia L. Rionda, Health Consultant to USAID/Egypt¹
June 20, 2000

I. Executive Summary

A Philippine Delegation composed of Friendlycare Foundation, Inc. (FCFI) officials and Philippine program managers visited Egypt's Family Planning and Reproductive Health (FP/RH) Program on May 13-20, 2000. FriendlyCare, an innovative health concept in the Philippines to promote greater participation of the private sector in family planning and reproductive health, was uniquely created and organized with the encouragement and support of the Philippine public sector. Initial funding for FCFI is provided by USAID/Philippines. In cooperation with USAID/Egypt and Johns Hopkins University, the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) hosted the visit, the highlights of which included the observation of the "Gold Star" Quality Assurance Program, FP/RH activities of the Clinical Services Improvement (CSI) NGO, and the Private Sector Program (PSP). The delegation held substantive discussions with government and private sector managers. FCFI staff made an effective presentation of its program to bring affordable and client-based services to Filipino families. Egyptian officials and program managers learned about FCFI's ground-breaking strategy to create a "franchised" model of family planning and basic reproductive health clinics on a fee-for-service basis. Two primary results of the visit were: (a) the Philippine delegation observed how Mission-funded activities in the public, commercial and NGO sectors are producing remarkable increases in utilization of FP/RH services; and (b) Egyptian health officials and program staff were made aware of FCFI's program plans and its innovative concept of public empowerment of private sector service delivery.

This report complements USAID/Egypt's reporting cable on the visit sent earlier to USAID/Philippines and USAID/Washington.

II. Philippine Delegation Members

The delegation was composed of influential Filipinos who are leading figures in business, health, and academe, and who are the driving force behind FCFI, as follows:

Ms. Maria Isabel Ongpin, FCFI Trustee; Chair of the Board of Ongpin Foundation, philanthropist, and a leading women's rights activist

Mr. Andrew Gotianum, FCFI Trustee; Vice-Chairman of PhilInvest, Inc.

Dr. Alex Herrin, FCFI Trustee, Health Economist and University of the Philippines Professor

Mr. Edmundo Bacay, Director of Finance and Administration, FCFI

Dr. Maria Rebecca Cuezon, Chief Operating Officer, FCFI

Dr. Restituto Recto, Area Service Center Director for Metro Manila, FCFI

¹ As one of her tasks as USAID/Egypt consultant, Ms. Rionda assisted the Mission in facilitating and documenting the visit of the Philippine delegation.

Mr. Benjamin de Leon, Board Chairman, Philippines NGO Council on Population and Development

Ms. Diane Mendoza, Media Advisor to the Commission on Population

Ms. Nilda Perez, Senior Program Specialist, USAID/Philippines Office of Population, Health and Nutrition

Mr. Jose Ibarra Angeles, Senior Program Officer, Johns Hopkins University/ Population Communication Services (JHU/PCS), and FCFI Consultant.

Mr. Gary Saffitt, Deputy Director for ANE/ENI of JHU/PCS, Baltimore, also helped escort and facilitate the visit..

III. Highlights of Visit:

A. Briefing at Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), May 14

First Undersecretary Dr. El-Noataz Reizah and his staff briefed the Philippine group on Egypt's population and health program: its organizational structure, network of static and mobile clinics, MIS system, and its achievements in providing family planning services. Dr. Reizah emphasized the strong collaboration with the mass media as an important factor in Egypt's increased acceptance and use of family planning. The briefing on the success of the "Gold Star" program elicited comments from the delegation regarding evaluation and maintenance of the 101 quality indicators, pricing and affordability of services and the family planning method mix. The delegation also showed interest on the relationship and differences among the public, NGO and commercial sectors' family planning initiatives, and on the MOHP's programs dealing with adolescents. The MOHP also shared their recent advancement in moving towards contraceptive security by funding Norplant procurement with Ministry funds and initiating the training of physician providers.

B. Site Visit of "Gold Star" Clinics, May 14 and 17: On May 14, at the Al-Khalifa Hospital "Gold Star" clinic, the delegation observed clinic activities and discussed with the medical staff the strategy and service delivery aspects of their integrated maternal and child health/family planning program. On May 17, delegation members were honored guests of Governor Seif El Din Galal of the Suez Governorate at the formal ceremonies to award a "Gold Star" to the El-Takamoly FP/MCH Clinic. Christopher McDermott, USAID/Egypt Population and Health Office Director, introduced the delegation to the audience in his welcome remarks and explained the U.S. Government's contribution to the "Gold Star" program. On behalf of FCFI, Mrs. Ongpin accepted a "Gold Star" commemorative plaque.

C. Briefing on USAID Private Sector Project (PSP), Pathfinder International institutional contract, May 14: The delegation was briefed by the PSP Project Director and his staff on the project's strategic approaches and its commercial sales, marketing, research, and advocacy-building activities. A slide presentation was shown on the PSP's marketing networks, branding strategies, promotional campaigns and contraceptive products to increase consumer demand and

the private sector's share of the family planning market. PSP's "Ask-Consult" campaign to promote Progestin-only pills among breastfeeding women generated discussion on strategies, issues, pricing and current demand relating to hormonal methods. FCFI officers were also interested in PSP's experience in working with the pharmaceutical sector for lessons learned that can be applied in their own work.

D. Meeting with Managers of the Clinical Services Improvement (CSI) NGO, May 15:

CSI is a highly successful organization supported by USAID; it is affiliated with the Egyptian Family Planning Association as an NGO. CSI is currently financing 60% of its operational costs from client revenues, with the 40% balance supported by USAID. CSI Executive Director Dr. Mohamed Edrees and Assistant Executive Director Dr. Sanaa Helmy shared with the group CSI's strategies in increasing revenues from client payments. Clinic location (even if costly) was cited as the key factor for marketability of services. Also discussed were the added value of receiving complementary technical assistance from USAID-funded cooperating agency projects (Pathfinder in case of CSI and JHU/PCS in case of FCFI).

E. Visit to CSI Agouza Clinic, May 15. At this clinic, USAID/Egypt arranged for the Philippine group to be interviewed by Egyptian news reporters. FCFI staff described the purpose of their visit and FCFI's mission and complementary service philosophy vis-a-vis the Philippine public sector. CFO Ed Bacay shared FCFI's vision on sustainability and the concept of their ten-year business plan. The group later observed the clinic's operations and discussed strategies, service delivery and financial sustainability issues with the medical staff.

F. Meeting with USAID/Egypt Mission, May 17: The Mission presented the strategy and priorities of its redirected health and population program under its new Strategic Objective of "Healthier, Planned Families." The Mission also discussed the key results expected from the S.O. that will help Egypt to graduate from USAID support by 2009. The Mission highlighted its activities for growing the NGO and commercial sectors' share in reproductive health, maternal and child health, and family planning services. Common program concerns were discussed, such as: involving men; offering family-oriented, one-stop primary health care; sub-contracting with local government units; a health insurance basic benefit package that includes family planning; and contraceptive security.

G. Visit with International Islamic Center, Al-Azhar University, May 18: The Center has been instrumental in conducting research, hosting expert group meetings and disseminating information to Islamic leaders in Egypt and other Muslim countries on the ethical aspects of population, reproductive health and family planning. It has had a long history (the Center was established in 1974) in dispelling misconceptions on family planning and has trained religious leaders, educators, health workers and various workforce cadres. The Center has also addressed sensitive issues such as female circumcision, assisted reproduction and women's rights. The Center's mission and work are supported by the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, one of Egypt's key Muslim spiritual leaders. Some FCFI representatives showed great interest in studying further the center's experience as it may have relevance to the Philippine context with regard to the Catholic Church's role.

H. Visit to Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS)

May 19: CEOSS is 50-year old organization involved in community development, with funding and other support from diverse sources. CEOSS also self-finances some of its income-generating business ventures. Since 1974, the organization has worked in family planning using community resources and volunteers; in doing so it has established good working relationships with MOHP and NGOs. Although it targets mostly poor rural and urban communities, CEOSS services are not provided free. The organization described its leadership and management styles as “flexible”, and thus is “able to respond to change”, including any defunding by donors. CEOSS’s philosophy and experience strongly resonated with some delegates, especially its perspectives on sustainability and donor support.

I. FriendlyCare Presentation at Marriott Hotel, May 18: An audience composed of USAID, MOHP, CSI and other Egyptian organizations attended FCFI’s presentation of its program plans and activities. The audience was visibly impressed with FCFI’s concept of affordable quality care and its entrepreneurial but compassionate approach to comprehensive health services. Ed Bacay described FCFI’s business plan -- its financial projections and the assumptions used for achieving sustainability. FCFI impressed the audience with the early success of its test clinic venture in Antipolo, and the various affordable health care promotional packages developed so far.

IV. Delegation’s Informal Impressions from the Visit – what they will bring back to the Philippines

Overall, the group felt that their visit was beneficial and that their exposure to the Egyptian program’s emphases on service quality improvement and program sustainability has widened their perspective and offered some programmatic lessons learned. The delegates expressed appreciation for the substantive program agenda and arrangements made for their visit, which included full security detail and escort by a senior-level MOHP official. Additionally, there were individual comments forwarded, as follows:

- The FCFI delegates noted that the Egyptian program’s emphases on service quality improvement through various measures and coordinated mass media support, seemed very effective.
- A Trustee informally remarked that the Egyptian family planning program is comparatively “more advanced” than that of the Philippines, and that continuing dialogue with Egyptian leaders and program managers would be useful. The Egyptian program has also provided good training to online health providers.

- Another Trustee commented that it would be useful to dialogue with Egyptian NGOs like CSI (as well as with USAID/Egypt) on FCFI's concept of "corporateness" and in using business plans in planning for financial sustainability.
- FCFI is presently working on how to effectively involve the Philippine pharmaceutical and drug retail companies. Some of Egypt's (and perhaps other countries') experience on working with this sector could be further studied.
- There is interest in learning more about Egypt's social health insurance experience and its plans to include commercial as well as NGO health providers.
- The Family Doctor Clinic model also elicited interest. This model, developed under the Health Sector Reform activity, provides a basic package of integrated primary health care including family planning. The model is currently being pilot-tested in Alexandria.

V. USAID/Egypt Comments on the Visit

The USAID Population/Health team was impressed with the scope and appeal of FCFI's business plans and initial success in health care delivery. The Mission is committed to supporting continuing dialogue between FCFI and Egyptian institutions on mutual program concerns and on sharing of program models and lessons learned. The Mission anticipates a future reciprocal visit to the Philippines by Egyptian leaders and program managers, when it is programatically convenient and appropriate.

Attachment: Schedule for Visit

**ATTACHMENT: Schedule for Visit of Philippine Delegation to Egypt
May 13-20, 2000**

Saturday, May 13: Delegates arrive at Cairo Airport (MOHP facilitators:
Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim and Mr. Aly Eid)

Sunday, May 14:

10:00-11:30 Ministry of Health and Population: Dr. El Noataz Reizah,
First Undersecretary; Dr. Yehia El Hadidi, Executive Director,
Systems Development Project.

11:30-12:30 Visit two Gold Star clinics (El Khalifa Hospital and Misr El
Kadima MCH Clinic)

14:00-15:00 Lunch

15:15-17:30 Briefing at Pathfinder on Egypt FP Program and Private
Sector Program

Monday, May 15

10:00-12:00 Dr. Maher Mahran, Secretary General, National Pop. Council

12:15-14:00 Aziza Hussein, Chairman, National Committee for Population
and Development

14:30-15:30 Mr. Ahmed Abdel Salam Zaki, Chairman, Credit Guarantee Corp.

15:30-17:00 Lunch

Tuesday, May 16

09:15-11:30 Mr. Salah El Toukhy, Director, IEC, State Information Service
and SIS/IEC Staff

12: 00- 14:00 Dr. Mohammed Edress, Director, Clinical Service Improvement
and Staff (Lunch at CSI)

14:30-16:00 CSI Agouza Clinic

Wednesday, May 17

Whole Day “Gold Star” Award Ceremony, Suez Governorate

Thursday, May 18

- 10:00-11:30 Meeting at USAID with Christopher McDermott
and USAID Population/Health Team
- 12:00-13:30 Dr. Gamal Aboul Serour, International Islamic Center, Al-Azhar
University, and IIC Staff
- 14:00-15:00 Lunch
- 18:00-21:00 FCFI Presentation and Reception, Marriott Hotel

Friday, May 19

- 13:30-16:30 Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Service (CEOSS)

Saturday, May 20 Delegation Departs