



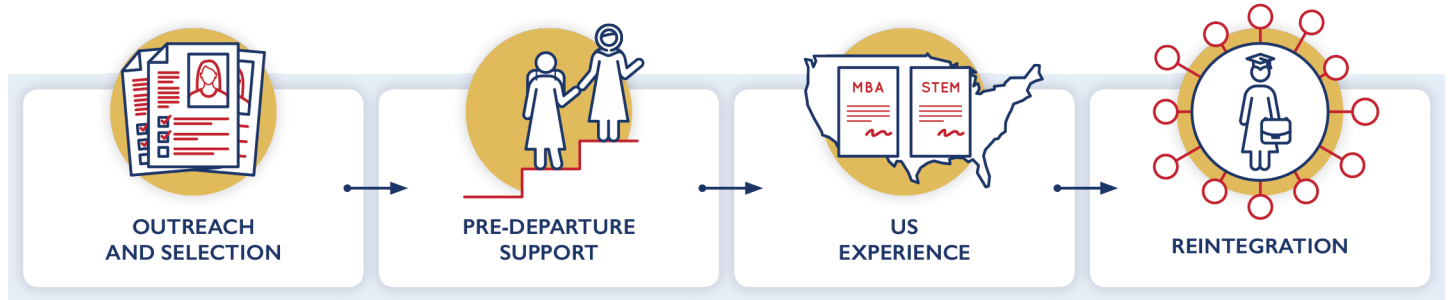
**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

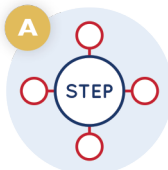
# Scholarships and Training for Egyptian Professionals (STEP) Activity Performance Evaluation

USAID's STEP Activity provided scholarships to women from disadvantaged communities to study at United States universities and graduate with two-year Master's of Business Administration (MBA) or four-year Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) degrees. With enhanced knowledge, strengthened leadership skills, and increased cultural awareness, participants would return to Egypt to gain employment and positively contribute to their country's social and economic development. STEP also provided scholarships, training, study tours and technical assistance (TA) to improve the capacity of key government, academic and private sector organizations.



## ACTIVITY EVALUATION

**WHAT DID WE EVALUATE?**



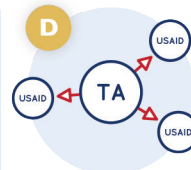
**A.** STEP's contribution to USAID strategic needs and priority needs of the Egyptian Government, academic and private sector



**B.** Selection of beneficiaries



**C.** Return on Investment



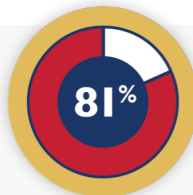
**D.** How TA supplemented other USAID activities



**E.** Whether graduates are productively employed and in leadership positions

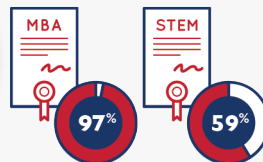
## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evidence was triangulated from quantitative and qualitative data gathered from key stakeholder groups and document review.



**81% of scholars targeted**

responded to face-to-face, telephone and online surveys. Response rates were 97% and 59% for MBA scholars and STEM scholars, respectively.



**18 interviews**

conducted via face-to-face and telephone interviews with ministries, employers, non-returnees, local partners and USAID/Egypt.



**146 documents**

reviewed, including 110 activity documents and 36 secondary documents.

## ACTIVITY BACKGROUND



**USAID CONTRIBUTION**  
\$43,912,257



**IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD**  
January 2014 through December 2018



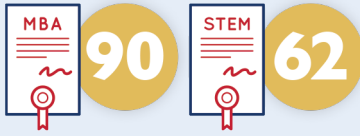
### PARTICIPANTS

MBA scholar candidates, STEM scholar candidates and government, academic and private sector organizations.

## KEY GOALS AND RESULTS

### GOAL

Develop a cadre of skilled professional women to apply and transfer new knowledge and skills for inclusive economic development in Egypt.

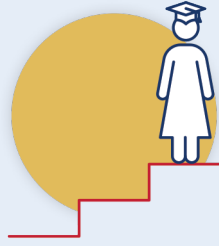


### RESULT

**90** of 96 MBA graduates back in Egypt with strengthened knowledge and skills; and **62** women pursuing STEM degrees (32 Engineering, 23 Science, 7 Technology) to graduate within one year.

### GOAL

Increase women's leadership and professional advancement; strengthen technical, managerial, and leadership capabilities in targeted public and private institutions and organizations; and increase goodwill and cultural understanding.



### RESULT

Premature to gauge leadership positions or advancement but MBAs with strengthened leadership skills, improved technical abilities and greatly enhanced cultural awareness are applying their knowledge and skills – mainly in the private sector.

### GOAL

Build capacity in government policymakers and tertiary institutions for improved education and health.

### RESULT

Extensive support to Ministry of Education with 271 regional supervisors trained and more than 72,000 teacher's guides prepared; also, capacity built and knowledge strengthened in 161 Ministry of Health staff.



**271**  
REGIONAL  
SUPERVISORS  
TRAINED

**161**  
MINISTRY OF  
HEALTH STAFF  
TRAINED



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



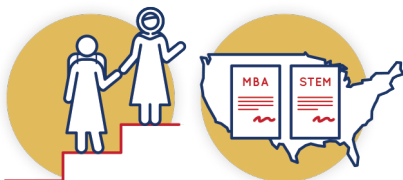
### OUTREACH AND SELECTION

**Explicit criteria to select candidate scholars for participation existed but were not always verifiable or consistently applied.**

- The selection criteria and process - relied upon clear rubrics and cut-off scores but not consistently followed.
- *Disadvantaged* - not clearly defined or applied to ensure the most qualified applicants were selected; however, selected scholars did achieve strong academic results.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use financial status for screening after evaluating leadership skills, not as an eligibility pass/fail criterion, to avoid eliminating potential leaders.
- More clearly define what criteria must be met to designate an applicant as *disadvantaged*.
- Conduct a longitudinal study of scholars to gauge their impact as leaders in Egypt's development.



### PRE-DEPARTURE SUPPORT, US EXPERIENCE

**Increased employment support is needed early on in the process.**

- Career counseling rated low to moderate by scholars.
- Being out of job market 2½ years and lack of relevant job experience are related challenges.
- Internships not always in the field of study exacerbate lack of job experience.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider a sustainable and holistic approach for program design that includes:

- A pre-departure review of labor market assessments to zero in on labor demand as it relates to fields of study.
- More scholar career counseling time to select field of study and university, factoring in work experience, interests, internship availability, and labor market.



### REINTEGRATION

**Private sector companies had limited awareness of returning STEP alumni.**

- No attempts made to systematically inform and educate private sector firms about the select group of STEP women for employment.
- The exerted efforts were not enough to establish a sustainable scholar network beyond conducting events or publishing a webpage.
- Positively, over 50% of returned MBAs are employed after an average six month search (75% of them in their field of study).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Design future scholarship programs to promote the employment potential of scholars by systematically engaging with private sector firms from day one. Support should continue for a minimum of six months after their return.

## SUMMARY

Aspects of the STEP activity design and its implementation would certainly have benefitted from different approaches. Nonetheless, the scholarship component offered Egyptian women – who would otherwise not have sufficient resources – a significant opportunity to strengthen soft skills, earn a degree from a respected U.S. university, develop self-confidence, and engage in a truly life-changing experience.

For the complete evaluation report, <https://tinyurl.com/yyzvbgpv>.

## CONTACT



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