

UN Women Egypt's Country Portfolio (2023-2027)

Overview

In support of the Arab Republic of [Egypt's Vision 2030](#) and the [National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women \(NSEEW\)](#), the work of the UN Women Egypt Country Office (ECO) is grounded in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).

Under the Egypt/UN Cooperation Framework, UN Women implements its triple mandate of supporting normative standard-setting to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, implementing national and grassroots programmes grounded in international norms and best practices in partnership with national stakeholders, and strengthening UN system coordination.

Over two decades of work in country has resulted in UN Women ECO has consolidated its expertise, partnerships and investments around two signature portfolios: **women's economic empowerment** and **eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, including harmful practices**.

UN Women's strategies include: supporting regional and global normative fora and the related commitments; drawing from global standards and practices; contributing to evidenced-based, nationally-led legislative reform and knowledge; supporting all women's access to skills, services, and networks; supporting platforms and partnerships for women's enhanced voice and leadership, including young women, rural women and women living with disabilities; developing nationally specific innovative financing mechanisms and tools, including gender-responsive budgeting; and advancing nationally and community-owned change in the attitudes and behaviours which may limit the advancement of women and girls, with the close engagement of men and boys as champions.

Programmes

Women's Economic Empowerment

Repurposed to mitigate the impact of recent years' global economic challenges, UN Women's economic empowerment portfolio targets enhancing public and private sector policies in support of young women and returning women's access to, retention of, and promotion to leadership positions in safe, accessible and decent workplaces.

UN Women's work supports the development of women-owned business and entrepreneurs while adopting climate-smart approaches; strengthening the digital financial inclusion of rural women and women at risk of poverty; fuelling evidence-based advocacy for investing in paid and unpaid care work and services; and piloting innovative gender-lens investing and financing approaches within the public and private sector.

Work under this portfolio is implemented in partnership with the National Council for Women (NCW), the Ministry of Manpower, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of International Cooperation, the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Development Agency (MSMEDA), the Central Bank of Egypt, the Financial Regulatory Authority, the Egyptian Stock Exchange, governorates, private sector and civil society.

Expanding financial inclusion

In support of the presidential initiative Haya Karima/Decent Life and the National Family Development Programme, working in Assiut, Beni Suef, Sohag, Alexandria, Menoufia, Kafr El Sheikh, Ismailia, Al Wadi Al Gedid (New Valley), Gharbia and Minya, UN Women is a key partner under the Central Bank of Egypt's and the NCW's National Financial Inclusion Programme: Digital Village Savings and Loans Associations (Ta7wisha)".



Supported by the European Union and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, UN Women's work aims to support **160,000** rural women and women living at risk of poverty to:



- Strengthen formally registered and digitized savings groups, establishing individual and group bank accounts.
- Increase access to Meeza national e-payment cards, improving women's integration into profitable value chains and markets.
- Boost women's business and leadership skills as well as digital and financial literacy.

Supporting women entrepreneurs

UN Women Egypt provides extensive support to women entrepreneurs. Support to women entrepreneurs is done in partnership with the NCW, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, MSMEDA, local government authorities, private sector, and civil society.

The UN Women/UNIDO joint programme, "Rabeha", aims to enhance the capacity of women-led businesses to grow, attract and retain workers; strengthen the performance of women-led productive clusters; and increase women entrepreneurs' access to tailored financial and non-financial services.

Throughout the work, emphasis is given to ensuring that climate-smart and environmentally sustainable approaches are adopted by women-led businesses.



Through the support of Global Affairs Canada, the programme targets the Governorates of Alexandria, Beheira, Beni Suef, Cairo, Fayoum, Giza and Minya.

Building on the increasing demand mobilized under Rabeha, UN Women and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) KOICA have recently launched a project supporting young women and returning women in greater Cairo, Beni Seuf and Alexandria to invest in women-owned start-ups and businesses in the areas of:

- Legal registration
- Leadership
- Access to markets
- Marketing & business development
- Financial management
- Teamwork skills



At the village level, in support of Haya Karima and the National Family Development Programme, UN Women partners with [Procter & Gamble \(P&G\)](#) in creating a pool of women-owned businesses and entrepreneurs integrated into the supply and distribution channels of P&G and other companies.

Women are trained on:

- Sales techniques
- Business development
- Marketing
- Financial management & soft skills

As a result



More than 300 women villagers in Beni Suef and Minya carry out market development activities.

Reaching Over 700,000 potential buyers.

In 341 villages saw an increase in income ranging from 30–50%.

15 women-owned and led retail companies established.

Watch the ["Not Only a Mom"](#) documentary to learn more.

Promoting women's productive employment and leadership in decent work

Working nationally and locally in Alexandria, Beheira, Beni Suef, Cairo, Fayoum, Giza and Minya, UN Women's interventions target public and private sector policies to advance women's employment in decent work, for including women with disabilities, as well as their retention and leadership, and systematically increasing women's competitiveness in the job market.

UN Women targets women's employment in non-traditional sectors, including sectors impacted by adaptation and mitigation measures such as STEM, food, water and renewable energy.

This work is supported by KOICA, a regional joint programme with the ILO supported by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), and the "Rabeha" Joint Programme with UNIDO supported by Global Affairs Canada (GAC). Investments are being made in building employability skills including internships and job placements among women – particularly young women and women returning to the workforce – and raising awareness in the workplace on the negative impact of gender stereotypes.



The work is carried out in partnership with the NCW, Ministry of International Cooperation, Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Education and Technical Education, local authorities, the private sector and civil society.

Under the UN Women Egypt/UNIDO joint programme, "Rabeha":

6,300+ women are being supported to access employment and/or self-employment opportunities throughout Egypt in growth-oriented sectors.

Additionally, the ability of women-led productive clusters to employ more women is being strengthened.



Through the support of Sida and KOICA, UN Women works with regulators, civil society and the private sector on increasing women's representation on corporate boards, [supporting data collection](#), boosting their professional development, availing internships for 450 women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), technological and vocational education (TVET), and creative industries and encouraging women to enter non-traditional occupations, provided such jobs are decent.



Moreover, under all of its Women's Economic Empowerment programmes, UN Women Egypt engages at community, government and corporate levels to promote the importance of women's work and the collective sharing of unpaid care and household work.

Watch the ["Because I am a Man"](#) campaign to learn more.

The private sector and the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

To promote gender equality in private companies, UN Women and the UN Global Compact established the [WEPs](#).

Since 2010 7,267 companies have signed on worldwide (as of December 2022).

70 of these are in Egypt, with the numbers expanding weekly.

Through the WEPs, UN Women Egypt is:



Advancing a gender-responsive private sector that attracts, retains and promotes women employees by improving workplace policies and environments, including equal pay for work of equal value.



Implementing skills development and leadership programmes for women and promoting more women on company boards and in senior leadership positions.



Supporting companies to tackle sexual harassment.



Promoting gender-responsive procurement and the integration of women-owned businesses within corporate supply chains.



Advancing family-friendly work policies.

UN Women's work on the WEPs will contribute to Egypt's commitments under the World Economic Forum (WEF)'s [Closing the Gender Gap Accelerator](#), a national public-private collaboration under the leadership of the Ministry of International Cooperation in partnership with the NCW. UN Women's work on the WEPs is made possible through the GAC-supported UN Women/UNIDO "Rabeha" Joint Programme, Sida-supported UN Women/ILO Joint Programme and KOICA.

Women and the care economy

Through joint work with ILO, and the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Sida, UN Women promotes evidenced-based policies and services to mobilize the care economy sector in support of women's work inside and outside the home. Through [research](#), UN Women seeks to increase policymakers' awareness of the potential impact of investments in the care economy in advancing women's livelihoods.



In support of the National Family Development Programme, UN Women works with the Government of Egypt, including the Ministry of Social Solidarity, to enhance families' access to support for unpaid care work in the home, including through the Working Women's Service Centres and Social Clubs throughout Egypt.

Innovative financing and gender-responsive budgeting

To ensure that a post-COVID recovery is both sustainable and inclusive, UN Women is leveraging its triple mandate of normative support, programme implementation and coordination by working with the Government of Egypt and regulatory bodies to explore innovative gender financing instruments in the public and private sectors. For example, UN Women and UNDP are partnering with the Government in support of Egypt's first SDG Bonds Framework.

Drawing from global best practices, UN Women is working with the public and private sector to promote the implementation of gender-lens investing principles and guidelines.



This work is supported by Global Affairs Canada and the Global UN Joint SDG Fund, in partnership with international development actors and communities of practice.

Contributing to Egypt's Integrated National Financing Framework, the UN Joint Programme "Egypt SDGs Financing Strategy" (implemented by the ILO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women) aims to produce nationally-owned tools and relevant governmental capacities to estimate the cost of achieving the SDGs in Egypt. The Joint Programme is supported by the global UN Joint SDG Fund.

The programme assesses and maps current financial flows towards the SDGs. The programme also supports identifying opportunities to increase and more effectively allocate SDG financing.



Within this programme, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and the National Council for Women, UN Women is supporting selected ministries to advance gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) through technical guidance, a gender review of budget templates for their alignment with national budget circulars, as well as capacity-building on GRB.

Ending violence against women and girls

In support of Egypt's international and national commitments, UN Women Egypt partners with national stakeholders in:

- Strengthening policy and regulatory frameworks to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG);
- Generating research, evidence and analyses of trends on women's rights in the context of family and personal status legislation;
- Creating safe spaces for women and girls;
- Providing essential services for women who have experienced gender-based violence.
- Supporting national and community-led behaviour change initiatives in support of women's empowerment including ending all forms of violence against women and girls.

Carried out in partnership with the National Council for Women, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, private sector and civil society, UN Women's work in this area has been made possible through the support of the European Union, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Government of Spain and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Prevention and access to essential services and safe spaces

Through the Safe City and Safe Public Spaces programme, UN Women and national stakeholders provide assistance to underprivileged settlements by: engaging community members including, men, boys, women and girls to champion to EVAWG; establishing volunteering units in local NGOs to address and respond to violence against women and girls; supporting the development of anti-harassment units within public universities; upgrading a safe, inclusive and economically viable public spaces; and providing technical support to the formulation of policies to end all types of VAWG in public spaces, including the workplace.



This work includes partnering with UN-Habitat, authorities and private sector in advancing women's safety within public spaces including transportation.



In strengthening essential services, UN Women Egypt works closely with the NCW and its Women Complaints Office (WCO), to strengthen the legal, psychosocial and mental health services available to women and to support referral mechanisms among service-providers. The WCO provides legal assistance to almost 2,000 women every month through a network of volunteer lawyers.



Working closely with the Ministry of Social Solidarity, UN Women and partners seek to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry's women's shelters and increase the quality of their multiple services for women and their children, including income-generation support.

UN Women redesigned and renovated four of the shelters, following a survivor-centered approach to ensure privacy and confidentiality, and supported the endorsement of inclusive new shelter bylaws at the beginning of 2020. Since 2017, over 1,500 women and children have been hosted at the eight MoSS shelters, with demand increasing steadily. More than 10,000 women have also benefited from an array of services ranging from psychosocial and family counselling to medical, legal and economic empowerment.



In partnership with the NCW and other national and international partners, UN Women works on expanding the evidence base on VAWG. Recent research includes the [first national study](#) on Violence against Women with Disabilities, Women's Experiences of Public Transport in Greater Cairo and a series of studies on the impact of COVID-19 on Egyptian women.

Our support to women experiencing violence has continued during the COVID-19 pandemic, in response to the emerging needs. UN Women ECO has supported national research to understand the impact the pandemic has had on women in the home, as well as efforts to ensure the continued provision of essential services to women who experience violence during the pandemic, including dedicated quarantine rooms and operating procedures for shelters to protect women survivors and front-line responders.




Broader areas of work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment

UN Women Egypt implements programmes which seek to tackle the overarching bottlenecks to women's empowerment and gender equality.

Normative support on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment



For over three decades, grounded in the CEDAW, the SDGs, UNFCCC, UN CSW Agreed Conclusions and the BpFA, UN Women has worked closely with the Government and civil society in supporting Egypt's role in global and regional intergovernmental dialogues shaping gender equality norms and standards, and in applying these norms within the Egyptian context. Through support to national analyses and data, to local- and national-level advocacy campaigns and broader behavioural change initiatives, to enhanced nationally owned monitoring and reporting on global commitments, UN Women seeks to strengthen understanding of the gains and the opportunities for women's empowerment in Egypt.

A national action plan for women, peace and security



In May 2019, the Government of Egypt announced its intent to develop the country's first National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. In partnership with UN Women, the NAP has been developed through a tripartite partnership between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the NCW and the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA). Phase I of this work was supported by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

National citizenship initiative



For eight years, UN Women has supported the Government's NCW-led National Citizenship Initiative, whereby marginalized women gain access to national identification cards that enable them to open a bank account, participate in elections and access vital governmental services. The work has been made possible through the support of the European Union and the United Kingdom

Supporting women refugees in Egypt



Under a regional programme supported by the Government of Japan, UN Women works with the NCW, UNHCR and civil society to address the economic and humanitarian needs of women refugees and Egyptian women living in the host communities.

Work includes enhancing women's access to livelihood opportunities including job creation and access to financial services for those developing their own businesses; building competitive skills for decent and demand-based employment; supporting women's access to essential services; raising awareness of rights, gender-based violence and psychosocial support services; and providing COVID-19 cash relief. The programme also promotes social cohesion in host communities.

Men and women for gender equality



Since 2015, and under a Sida-supported regional programme, in partnership with the NCW, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, and national and local civil society partners, UN Women has supported systemic behavioural change around the root causes that limit women and girls' empowerment.

Work supports evidence-based advocacy and campaigns against negative masculinities, while strengthening civil society and engaging communities to develop innovative solutions and best practices. Strong focus has also been on increasing understanding of the impact unpaid care work in the home has on women's engagement in public life.



Work has focused on broader community outreach and initiatives such as parenting workshops and using sports, culture and art as conduits to address social norms and to instil gender-equitable perceptions and behaviours.

Communications and advocacy

Within all programmes, UN Women has partnered with the Government of Egypt, private sector and civil society in supporting national and local awareness-raising on the possible negative impacts of social norms on women and men.



Of note has been the film "[Between Two Seas](#)", an award-winning film developed with the NCW on the impact of violence on women and their families, which as of 2022 has received 22 awards from international and regional film festivals and now streams on Netflix. The film is used throughout Egypt to stimulate village, town and community-level discussions on the impact violence against women and girls has on families.



UN Women Egypt has also extensively supported the NCW's national campaigns "[Ta'a Marbouta](#)" and "[Because I'm a Man](#)" and other advocacy initiatives such as the "Nour" song – which surpassed 1 million views within an hour of its release – to challenge gender stereotypes in the public and private spheres.

This work has been made possible with the generous support of the Government of Japan, Sida and USAID.