



## **MMS Bulletin #99**

*Community Action for Health: Gemeinsam für Gesundheit*

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### **Terre des hommes Foundation - Egypt**

## **Community based health project Assiut**

In a recent survey by UNICEF in Egypt adolescents expressed that TV is prime source of entertainment for them (75%) followed by meeting friends (more for boys than girls), reading books (25%) and listening to the radio (8% to 10%). Gender and age have a role in defining the percent who participate in the decision making process with more bias to boys and older adolescents. Adolescents' general knowledge about Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) is rather limited. Although as high as 95% reported having heard about HIV/AIDS, their level of knowledge about modes of transmission is not as high and rather weak. Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting (FGM/C) is another critical protection issue that endangers the physical and psychological and mental health of Egyptian girls.

The overall goal of Tdh community based health project is to improve health outcomes through empowering communities to adopt healthier living practices. Specifically the project contributes to increased demand of maternal health services, improved adolescents participation and knowledge of reproductive health and the abandonment of FGM/C.

The project targets children between the ages of 0 to 5 years and also women of reproductive age, adolescents from 15 to 24 and men. The Secondary target groups include community leaders (teachers, agriculture guides, and religious leaders) local policy makers and media professionals. Results show that less than 20% of the interviewed women would like to participate in any community awareness activities/meetings related to issues of their health and/or the well being of their children. Accordingly, the demand creation for the health services or introducing change of any given situation has to come from within the community. Therefore, the approach is led by the concept of community empowerment which should be more successful as a strategic approach to development.

A communication strategy building synergy among the components by raising public awareness about health is used. Several community entry points are used including the water and sanitation program, community schools, upgrade of primary health care units, and / or the FGM/C project activities of the protection program (other Tdh led program). The protection program works on the other hand, in almost the same communities utilizing the CEDPA model of positive deviance. It is a model that is built on the idea of identifying community advocates

who opposes the FGM/C practice and become supporters of abandonment efforts within their communities. The adolescent program is also working in the same areas through the youth centers and NGOs to provide life skills and reproductive health information to targeted adolescents in these areas.

**Country/region:** Egypt, Assiut

**Duration:** 2004-2006 (Integrated in a 5 year project in Assiut)

**Swiss Organisation:** Fondation Terre des hommes

**Website Organisation:** [www.tdh.ch](http://www.tdh.ch)

**Contact:** Ignacio Packer, [ipa@tdh.ch](mailto:ipa@tdh.ch)

**Partners:** Ministry of education, Ministry of health

## ***Kontakt***

### **Deutschschweiz**

Medicus Mundi Schweiz  
Murbacherstrasse 34  
CH-4056 Basel  
Tel. +41 61 383 18 10  
[info@medicusmundi.ch](mailto:info@medicusmundi.ch)

### **Suisse romande**

Route de Ferney 150  
CP 2100  
CH-1211 Genève 2  
Tél. +41 22 920 08 08  
[contact@medicusmundi.ch](mailto:contact@medicusmundi.ch)