



# REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INNOVATION EXCHANGE

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## Ma'ana Fe Al-Dawar: Community Plays for Family Planning Conversations




Innovation presented by: John Snow Inc., USAID, Egypt Ministry of Health and Population

### Problem statement

Discussing certain topics in Egypt with youth is taboo. We used art to build youth's knowledge around traditionally hushed subjects of family planning (FP) and reproductive health aiming to help address rapid population growth in Egypt.

### Circle of Care stage

#### Before:

-  Generates Demand
-  Creates Enabling Environment
-  Sets Supportive Norms

### Audience(s)

Direct audiences are youth between 17 and 24 years old in the community. Indirect audiences are communities at large.

### Country of implementation or design

Egypt

### Outcome(s) of interest

- Help communities adopt favorable opinions and behaviors on FP to slow Egypt's population growth
- Empower and motivate both government and youth to take the lead in solving social problems in a sustainable manner

### The innovation

The *Ma'ana Fe Al-Dawar* initiative was created by trained media officers from the Ministry of Health and Population who were trained on social and behavior change communication approaches, with support from Strengthening Egypt's Family Planning Program (SEFPP), funded by the United States Agency for International Development. The initiative was designed to target population segments with FP and reproductive health messages to increase demand for and use of FP methods. In Aswan governorate, the media officers piloted the initiative through a series of short plays that featured youth from the community to prioritize FP messages for youth and the community at large.



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### Why you should consider adapting and scaling this innovation

For the first time, one of the media officers worked with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and SEFPP, and they chose to prioritize youth, the largest segment of the Egyptian population, to start off the initiative through a series of short plays that would feature youth from the community. The youth started to refine key messages for the plays and to develop the storylines. Diverse youth participation was essential to ensuring the messages would resonate across a spectrum of audiences. Based on the success of the plays, a community theater group will continue to work with the media officers to regularly conduct plays in Aswan governorate, encouraging further interaction among participants and community members.

### Resources needed to adapt or scale this innovation

The Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) and SEFPP conducted a five-day training for the media officers in Aswan. Immediately after the training, the media officers collaborated with local youth groups to launch Ma'ana Fe Al-Dawar (Al-Dawar). The training can be conducted by any organization upon approval from the MOHP. The ideal timeline from the training to the implementation of the innovation is a one-year period. Afterwards, the initiative will continue but the size of the events depends on resources.

Resources required are minimal since the MOHP has trained their media officers on a regular basis. Concerning putting in place the innovation, one of the topics of the media officer training is on mobilizing various societal sectors to reach more people and increase their awareness of population issues, family planning, and sexual and reproductive health.

### Implementation recommendations

The most important recommendation is to make such efforts government-owned from the beginning. In our case, SEFPP's contribution is technical support with minimal financial support for training and initial events of Ma'ana Fe Al-Dawar (Al-Dawar).

In addition, the government media officers need training on how to engage private sector entities, NGOs, youth to address the population growth, sexual and reproductive health, and other social challenges. This creates independence from the beginning; therefore, government (media officers) are more likely to sustain this innovation on its own after the project.

Building youth capacity as a leader and champion in FP and reproductive health issues has a long-term impact. By including the youth in the solution of serious societal problems, this innovation fosters civic involvement and social responsibility. A group of young future leaders will be formed to advocate for sustainable population growth, sexual and reproductive health, and rights in addition to gender equality.

Challenges found were around community's acceptance of youth to address serious social issues. To overcome this, a joint effort between the media officers and the youth groups in this innovation has made the community realize the importance of the work of youth and their invaluable insight into how to deliver key messages.

### Have more questions? Contact the following people

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### Relevant links

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6bFaio-PX8&amp;t=75s>