
Advocacy case studies

HEALTH CARE ACCESS FOR REFUGEES IN EGYPT

COUNTRY:	Egypt
THEMES:	Health; HIV; human rights; migration and refugees
ADVOCACY APPROACHES:	Government officials: lobbying; using human rights

Tearfund partner Refugee Egypt (RE) supports refugees in Egyptian cities such as Cairo and Alexandria, working closely with UNHCR. Many members of staff are themselves refugees and the team have received an award for their work in this area.

Life is far from simple for refugees, even when they get to Egypt. Those whom RE supports come from across the wider region: South Sudan, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and Syria. The refugees do not share a common language and many of them live in their own groups. The general public often resent them, and they struggle to obtain the necessary licences to be allowed to work, as well as many other difficult issues.

RE decided to address the problem of access to health care for refugees by lobbying the Ministry for Health on the issue. They asked that refugees be given the right to be tested for HIV, offering its premises to host the clinics. The lobbying was successful, and the government made available funds to set up the clinics and provide doctors with the necessary training. RE subsidised the clinics, but ultimately, they want to see the government make this and other health care services for refugees available through public hospitals, so the provision is both sustainable and accessible. Yet, state funding for such services is limited even for ordinary Egyptians, let alone refugees.

RE is now advocating for the Ministry for Education to give refugees access to education. They are also continuing their lobbying at the Ministry for Health, focusing now on provision of health insurance and medicines for refugees.