

7,000 LE: cost of Euro trip ticket
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LEAD fears demonstrate our need for a USAID lifeline

Despite a free education, mixed feelings about U.S.

By Sarah Mikhail

Although Leadership for Education and Development Program students at The American University in Cairo said they are grateful for the education provided by the United States Agency for International Development, many dislike the United States' strong support for Israel.

According to USAID's website, Israel and Egypt, the two major recipients of USAID, received a total of \$192 million from it for the period of 2004-2006. Israel received \$120 million and Egypt \$72 million in support of their economic and military activities.

Noha El Gebaly, a LEAD 3 Construction junior student, remembers the day she got accepted as a LEAD student. "When I succeeded I was very happy!" she says excitedly. "This opportunity has been a push for me and currently I am applying for a semester abroad at the University of Massachusetts."

But she disliked benefiting from a program that also was helping Israel.

"We are twisted by the arm," she said. "I fear that someday USAID might become a burden instead of an opportunity in the event that America threatens Egypt to comply with certain political policies," she said.

As an Arab student torn between getting a quality university education and concern about the political turmoil in Gaza, El Gebaly said one had to be objective when judging USAID's support for Israel.

"I believe USAID has good intentions when it supports Israel's economy, on the other hand, there should be a limit to such support such that it doesn't extend to allowing its independence," she said.

A LEAD 4 student, Ibrahim Bedros, also felt a conflict between accepting USAID money and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"I believe USAID's funding is a mutually beneficial matter. Students, such as myself, can apply for the

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By Ingy Hassieb and Sarah Mikhail

The United States will make \$8 million available for student scholarships in Muslim-majority countries, where students attend American educational institutions, such as The American University in Cairo.

But the university doesn't know how much of that it will get, because of ongoing negotiations between the United States Agency for International Development and the Egyptian government.

"What we do to be able to engage in programming and activities in Egypt is receive permission from the Egyptian government," said Elizabeth Warfield, director of Human Resources and Health of the USAID office in Cairo.

"We're still awaiting approval for 2009 activities so it's a little hard to talk about what we may or may not [do]. Agreements are not finalized with the government."

Meanwhile, Egypt saw its U.S. aid package cut by \$200 million last month, and given stipulations that it use \$10 million for student scholarships.

Despite this, there is doubt about where the next group of LEAD students will be recruited from, and some students have worried the funding would disappear, as Egypt's Ministry of Education has added a sixth year of primary level education.

The move by Egypt means that a year of students will be missed, said Sohair Saad, Director of the LEAD program, which is solely funded by USAID.

"The implication of the new Egyptian system of education is that there will be no recruitment during the academic year of 2010 as there will be no graduates," Saad said.

But Nancy Ahson, leader of the team for higher education at USAID Cairo, believes there may be room for compromise after all.

According to Ahson, the main criteria for student selection are a demonstrated ability for leadership and interest in community service.

"We fund a program description and its goal is to reach a particular group. If there are changes to be made because of the exam not happening, I guess we would be discussing how does it or doesn't it change



In the middle of Bartlett Plaza is a plaque commemorating USAID's contributions to the new campus. In the middle of Bartlett Plaza is a plaque commemorating USAID's contributions to the new campus. In the middle of Bartlett Plaza is a plaque commemorating USAID's contributions to the new campus.

how important U.S. funding to the university still is, despite recent tuition rises, fundraising and increased enrollment.

For instance, though its is a private institution, the university was able to secure over \$100 million in U.S. taxpayer money for the construction of its new campus in Kattameya.

According to the university, AUC first received funding from USAID in 1959 which enabled equipping the Science Building in the old campus, the purchase of Greek campus, and construction of the library. The dormitories in Zamalek were also funded by grants in 1991 and a campus-wide fiber optic network was set up in 1993.

Additionally, the U.S congress passed legislation in 1985 that established a trust fund at the U.S

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False news story shows how vulnerable AUC's image can be

Despite being here 90 years, the university is still the target of wild rumors among Egyptians

By Rasha Refaat

The American University in Cairo was at the center of unsubstantiated rumors last week, after the independent Egyptian-language newspaper *Al-Masry Al-Youm* reported the university was passing along "confidential information" to the Pentagon.

The article stated that AUC won a 3.4 million L.E contract to act as an espionage group. AUC flatly denied such accusation.

Since 2006, the university has had a contract with the U.S Naval Medical Research Unit in Egypt (NAMRU-3) to recruit and provide scientific staff in support of infectious disease research through the region, specifically relating to Avian Flu, according to a statement by AUC.

In addition, AUC stated its relationship with NAMRU is all about keeping with the university's long-standing commitment to teaching, research and service to Egypt.

Moataz Al Hady, a reporter for *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and a student at AUC, explained that after the newspaper received a story from ethnic newswire service 'American Arabic' which tackles news about Arabs in the United States, it decided to run the story.

Yet he questioned the ethics behind this decision.

"I believe that who wrote the story was not being objective since AUC's side was not put into consideration," Hady said. "The basic rules of reporting that they teach us here in the newspaper were definitely not applied in this case."

But the newspaper said it stood by its story. Mohamed Sameer, managing editor of the newspaper, said "NAMRU and the Pentagon are the same thing, we did not get our reporting wrong. We have a statement from the White House."

According to Ethar El-Katatney, an alumna and a writer for *Egypt Today*, when she first read the news in *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, it was obvious to her that it was an assumption since there was no comment by AUC.

"I was really shocked," Katatney said. "The article's aim was to damage AUC's reputation. It was more of an editorial than hard-news."

"Although the number was accurate, the statement was slanderous," said Yasir Khan, assistant professor of journalism in the Adham Centre. "AUC did get the money but the use was different."

"The article was unfair since nobody called AUC for a comment, which is what a real journalist does," added Khan.

According to Khan, less inquisitive readers tend to



"The American University in Cairo Signed a Contract with the Pentagon to Provide Confidential Information about Egypt," it reads.

believe what is written in newspapers. They never ask, he said, "Why shouldn't it be true?"

According to a statement by the Student Union misinformation published in the media with no concrete evidence affects the AUC's student body. It damages the reputation of AUC's community, either on or off campus.

The SU stated that it is essential that the news media recognize that students at AUC as an integral part of the university and, as a result, any accusations or charges against AUC, are also charges against the AUC community.

Other professional journalists working in Egypt

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