



## SUCCESS STORY

### Sharqia neighborhood celebrates its success



ACED Program

*"The Neighborhood Development Activity is a pioneer program conducted for the first time in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone with the goals of increasing citizens' participation in decision making, and developing local residents' skills and abilities to benefit from the increasing opportunities in the ASEZ." Dr. Bashir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner for ASEZA.*

*"At first I was skeptical that the NET would succeed, but now the entire neighborhood and I are happy about the results of this project and we are looking forward to continuing the process of improving our neighborhood," said a Sharqia resident and parent of a school student.*

August 26, 2008 will be a memorable day for Sharqia neighborhood residents. On that day, the community celebrated two events: the successful completion of a neighborhood project to upgrade their "Safe Street Access for Students to Public Schools" and a Traffic Safety Awareness Day.

USAID's Aqaba Community & Economic Development (ACED) Program works with the Local Community Development Directorate of the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) to support the Neighborhood Development Activity (NDA) using a participatory methodology to encourage neighborhood members to mobilize their human, financial and other resources and address their most pressing needs. One of the first steps taken was to discuss the neighborhood primary concerns and establish a Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET) composed of active residents to represent the neighborhood.

The NET members hold regular weekly meetings facilitated by the NDA partners in order to analyze the situation and needs of the neighborhood, identify potential projects, and follow-up through project implementation. After conducting a survey, the residents decided that the "Safe Street Access" is what they need most.

The NET worked with ASEZA engineers to design the project, follow-up with contactors, and complete the street crossing project. The NET also mobilized community resources, including printed materials, donations of project materials, equipment donations from ASEZA, and labor from neighborhood residents and restaurant employees.

This experience of Sharqia neighborhood demonstrates what can be accomplished when members of a community work together. With this first project completed, the neighborhood has gained more than just a safe street crossing and a Traffic Safety Awareness Day, but has experienced first-hand the organization and community mobilization skills necessary to overcome future local challenges.