

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



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Agenda item 6(b)

UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

Recommendation by the Executive Director

Interregional project

Assistance to Al-Azhar University, Egypt International Islamic Centre for Population Studies and Research at Al-Azhar University (INT/72/P57)

Estimated total UNFPA contribution:	\$301 900
Estimated equivalent value of the Government's contribution:	\$360 000 (over 5 years)
Duration:	Two and one-half years
Estimated starting date:	January 1975
Executing Agency:	UNDP
Government co-operating agency:	Al-Azhar University

I. Background

1. Al-Azhar University, in Cairo, founded in 1972, is regarded as the foremost seat of Islamic learning. It is both secular and theological and in 1973 had a student body of 38,000 of which approximately 17 per cent were students of countries other than Egypt.

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2. In 1972, Al-Azhar University requested UNFPA technical and financial support for the establishment of an International Islamic Centre for Population Studies and Research. In the same year, UNFPA fielded a three-man feasibility mission which visited several Moslem countries and also consulted agencies within and without the United Nations system on the proposal. The mission concluded that such a Centre would meet the needs as expressed by Moslem countries, and satisfied itself that Al-Azhar University was the most suitable location. The mission also prepared a draft project request for UNFPA support in the amount of \$1,308,500 over five years, with a counterpart contribution from the Government of Egypt of approximately \$1,500,000 over the same period. Since the work plan submitted in the draft request did not contain all the necessary data, the Government of Egypt and UNFPA agreed to appoint a consultant to revise the request; the revised version was received in October 1974. Because of the international composition of the student body, the request is treated as an interregional project. Besides the contributions of the Government of Egypt, the Department of Human Reproduction of Al-Azhar University has received in 1974 \$230,000 from the Government of Saudi Arabia; \$120,000 from the Government of Kuwait; \$40,000 from the Government of Abu Dhabi; \$145,000 from the National Institute of Public Health, USA; \$25,000 from the Ford Foundation and \$18,000 from the World Health Organization regular programme.

II. The project

3. The objectives of the Centre are: to promote research in different disciplines directed to the study of the relationship between population facts, social and economic goals and Islamic principles; to focus classroom interest on population and development issues as they arise in the context of the subjects taught at all faculties of the University; to present, through scientific and population publications issued in different languages, ideas on social and institutional change which are consistent with Islamic moral principles and which may serve the material needs of the Islamic community; to bring together in seminars and conferences persons who may contribute to the educational objectives of the project; to give to students a first-hand knowledge of social stresses and their causes through a programme of field service; to increase research and teaching capabilities related to the purpose of the project through opportunities for advanced training; to provide consultative assistance to institutions in Moslem countries when so requested; and to provide fellowships for study at Al-Azhar University.

III. Financial data

4. The revised request called for UNFPA support of \$890,000 over five years. After a reappraisal, the UNFPA recommendation is for an estimated contribution of \$301,900 over the initial two and one-half year period from January 1975 to June 1977.

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5. Besides periodic reviews of the project activities, UNFPA will conduct a thorough evaluation in May/June 1977 on which further assistance to the Centre will be based.

6. The UNFPA contribution will be utilized to provide the services of an international project adviser, short-term consultants to the work programme of the Centre, consultants on Islamic research, administrative support and participation of members of various faculties of the University in teaching and curricula development programmes. UNFPA will provide training abroad and at Al-Azhar University for the student body, some equipment including journals, books and other library materials, as well as printing and translation of publications issued by the Centre.

7. The breakdown of the UNFPA contribution for the duration of the project is tentatively set as follows:

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>Total</u>
Expert: Project adviser	42 000	42 000	21 000	105 000
Local costs - field programmes and faculty members participation	24 000	24 000	12 000	60 000
Subcontracts to Moslem institutions for research and studies	10 000	10 000	-	20 000
Training	20 000	28 400	-	48 400
Equipment - Expendable	5 000	5 000	3 000	13 000
- Non-expendable	8 000	-	-	8 000
Miscellaneous including printing and publication	19 000	19 000	9 500	47 500
Total	128 000	128 400	45 500	301 900

8. The Government contribution will cover support for personnel, a building to house the Centre, full-time administrative and clerical staff, equipment and other facilities available at the University, plus operating costs of the Centre.

IV. Recommendation

9. The Executive Director of UNFPA recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Approve the project in the amount of \$301,900 for two and one-half years; and

(b) Authorize the Executive Director to make appropriate arrangements with the Al-Azhar University.
