

Growing Hope in Egypt – *find out more*

Egypt fact file:

- 100 million people live in Egypt – compared to 66 million in the UK.
- Almost all of them live on just a small fraction of the country's land, close to the River Nile.
- 19 million live in Cairo. Cairo is a megacity and according to some stats is the 15th largest city in the world.
- Egypt is officially a middle-income country but around one in three people live in poverty.
- For any who are particularly vulnerable, perhaps because a key breadwinner is ill, injured or lost, things can quickly become desperate. There is little access to government help.
- Recent water shortages and political upheaval have added to the difficulties faced by many Egyptians.
- Malnutrition, especially in under-5s in Egypt, is a huge problem. Around 25% of under-5s experience malnutrition and 25% of adult women are anaemic. Anaemic women are more likely to give birth to children with a low birth weight and developmental delays, perpetuating the cycle of malnutrition.

Embrace's partners in Egypt

- Embrace has 12 Christian partners working with all faiths and none in Egypt to serve those in need.
- They serve faithfully to help lift people out of poverty, welcome and support refugees, provide essential healthcare services, empower and train women and integrate people living with disabilities into mainstream society.
- Embrace has partnered with The Salaam Centre for over 20 years. The centre works to improve the quality of life for the Zabaleen community who live in the Ezbet el Nakhl slum area of Cairo, characterised by great poverty resulting in poor health.

Christians in Egypt

- Around 10 million Christians live in Egypt – representing 80% of Christians in the Middle East.
- By far the largest denomination here is the Coptic Orthodox Church. The Church has its own Pope (currently Tawadros II) and traces its roots right back to the apostle Mark. The Zabaleen community across Cairo are 80 per cent Coptic Christians.
- The Bible was translated into the Coptic language as early as the second century.

- Although Christians do face pressure and tension in some areas of Egypt today, they also remain active and influential members of society. Many make an extraordinary difference to those facing poverty and injustice in their nation.

From **Wikipedia**: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zabbaleen>

The **Zabbaleen** is a word which literally means "garbage people" in Egyptian Arabic. The contemporary use of the word in Egyptian Arabic is to mean "garbage collectors".

Spread out among seven different settlements scattered in the Greater Cairo Urban Region, the Zabbaleen population is between 50,000 and 70,000. The largest settlement is Mokattam village, nicknamed "Garbage City," located at the foot of the Mokattam Mountains, next to Manshiyat Naser. The Zabbaleen community in Mokattam Village has a population of around 20,000 to 30,000, over 90 percent of which are Coptic Christians.

For several generations, the Zabbaleen supported themselves by collecting trash door-to-door from the residents of Cairo for nearly no charge. Notably, the Zabbaleen recycle up to 80 percent of the waste that they collect, whereas most Western garbage collecting companies can only recycle 20 to 25 percent of the waste that they collect.

The Zabbaleen use donkey-pulled carts and pick-up trucks to transport the garbage that they collect from the residents of Cairo, transport the garbage to their homes in Mokattam Village, sort the garbage there, and then sell the sorted garbage to middlemen or create new materials from their recycled garbage. The living situation for the Zabbaleen is poor, especially since they live amongst the trash that they sort in their village and with the pigs to which they feed their organic waste.

Nevertheless, the Zabbaleen have formed a strong and tight-knit community. However, their existence and way of life has come under threat after the Cairo municipal authorities' decision in 2003 to award annual contracts of \$50 million to three multinational garbage disposal companies.

The government authorities do not compensate the Zabbaleen for these changes, and as a result, the takeover of waste collection threatens the socio-economic sustainability of the Zabbaleen community. More recently, the Zabbaleen have faced another challenge when the Egyptian Agricultural Ministry ordered the culling of all pigs in April 2009, in response to national fears over the possible spread of H1N1 influenza. This governmental decision was a major setback to the Zabbaleen because pigs are an essential component to their recycling and sorting system, in which the pigs eat all of the organic waste.

There are also worries that the Egyptian government is seeking to remove the Mokattam village entirely and relocate the Zabbaleen further outside of Cairo by a further 25 km, to a 50-feddan plot (1 feddan = 0.420 hectares or 1.038 acres) in Cairo's eastern desert settlement of Katameya.