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Abstract

In Egypt, before 1952, education, especially higher education, was the province of a privileged few. After the 1952 Revolution, in pursuit of social justice and economic development, Egypt's leaders eliminated fees, instituted a universal admission examination, promised government employment to all graduates of higher education, and expanded the number of places. Officials expected these policies to increase inclusiveness as enrollments grew. We examine the period from 1988 through 2005, when egalitarian policies remained in place, and during which enrollments continued to expand rapidly. Despite this growth, we find that inclusiveness did not change for males and, at best, modestly improved for females. Young adults from the wealthiest families maintained a substantial advantage in the likelihood of enrolling in higher education. At the same time, females, and notably females from poor families, came to make up a larger share of the higher education community.

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