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Policy papers on
Strengthening Civil Society Organizations for Enhancing Educational Services

Supporting Participation and Accountability for Communities' Education (SPACE)
Policy Dialogue for Enhancing Educational Services Project

Policy Papers on
Strengthening Civil Society Organizations for Enhancing Educational Services

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About Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Egypt

Inspired by its general aims to promote democracy and social justice, to support economic and social development, as well as to advocate for human rights and gender equality, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) started working in Egypt in 1976. For more than 40 years, the office operates in cooperation with local partners within the framework of several agreements with the Egyptian government. This first was endorsed by Presidential Decree 139/1976 and by the Egyptian parliament. The agreement was renewed in 1988, endorsed by Presidential Decree 244/1989 and approved by the Egyptian parliament.

In March 2017, a new Additional Protocol was signed in Berlin by both; the Egyptian and the German governments, amending the Cultural Agreement of 1959. This protocol was ratified by the Egyptian parliament in July 2017 and entered effect in November by Presidential Decree 267/2017.

While the legal framework of FES' engagement in Egypt has changed, its commitment to assist the Egyptian people during the ongoing transition process remains the same. The Egyptian uprising of 2011 was driven by demands for profound social and political change. Responding to these aspirations still is and will be the main challenge for stakeholders and the whole of Egyptian society during the coming years. Through a brought range of mutually agreed upon projects, FES is contributing to meet this challenge.

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

Education has long been a top priority and concern for many Egyptians as well as for the Egyptian state. Education reform has also been long debated in Egypt. In mid-2018, the Ministry of Education announced a comprehensive reform of the Egyptian education system, which should be implemented in a phased manner. The announcement raised many questions and stirred up debates among citizens on the feasibility of such reforms.

In 2014, CARE International, in collaboration with 23 Egyptian civil society associations and co-financed by the European Union and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, began to implement a project to support local communities to participate in defining, implementing and monitoring education services and strategies. The project's chosen approach was building the capacity of the concerned entities that are entrusted with that responsibility. This is to address two of the most chronic problems affecting the life of Egyptians, which are the lack of accountability of public services towards its users, and lack of participation by communities in addressing their problems.

The project has thus targeted schools' boards of trustees (BoTs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in four Egyptian governorates, namely Giza, Fayoum, Beni-Suef and Minya. The project included a series of capacity building programs for members of both entities to enable them to perform their roles more effectively. Additionally, the project organized a series of dialogue forums and seminars and implemented a set of community accountability tools to involve community members and target entities in discussing the educational problems they face at the level of their communities, and seek to solve them.

These activities have highlighted a range of issues and problems related to the educational process, which must be taken into account in reforming the educational system. This publication presents seven issues that have been addressed more deeply, and were formulated as policy papers. The eight papers cover the following topics: How can policies promote a positive built environment in schools?; The problem of poor literacy among school students; Promoting tolerance and inclusion through education policies; Towards better gender data for enhancing gender equity in education; the lack of reading and writing skills between students, the social stigma associated with vocational education and training, The importance of physical education for students; The importance of activating Student unions in schools; And the role of civil society organizations in the development of the education system.

As part of our endeavor to support the quality of education and contribute to the development of the educational process, and with the participation of concerned stakeholders, the policy papers were developed to take a closer look at these issues. The papers also seek to provide a set of recommendations and solutions that should benefit decision-makers and relevant stakeholders.

1 Towards Better Gender Data for Enhancing Gender Equity in Education

Diana Magdy

Introduction:

Enhancing the quality of education is parallel and equal in importance to increasing access to primary education. This paper looks at the quality of education from gender perspective believing that such inclusion should be at the heart of the policy process. I argue, in this paper, that the main challenge in achieving gender equity in education is beyond equal access to basic education by females and males. Based on the statistics and MDGs in relation to equal access to education, Egypt is on the right. However, this approach proves to present limited interpretation of gender inequality. As a result, this paper proposes the need for better gender data and the integration of gender analysis to identify and increase the visibility of other existing gender disparity within the educational process. In addition, the paper problematizes the deployment of gender perspective in collected and analyzed data that merely use it as representative of social variable. Hence, the paper introduces elaborate definitions of gender responsive data and the importance of this well elaborated data to develop effective interventions.

International Conventions, Local Legislative and Constitutional Context in Egypt:

Egypt took various steps towards Gender Equity and Gender Justice through creating an enabling environment. This enabling environment can be seen through the ratification of international conventions, the development of national strategies, policies, laws and establishing governmental entities responsive to gender equity and gender mainstreaming.

In 1981, Egypt ratified The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is the most distinguish international treaty that attests fundamental principles and rights in relation to women's rights. Egypt maintained reservation to article 2 (domestic policies and legislation, article 16 (the equality of men and women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations), as well as article 29 (non-compliance by paragraph 1 of that article concerning the submission to an arbitral body of any dispute which may arise between States concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention) (OHCHR, n.d.).

The ratified convention by Egypt dedicates a detailed article to ensure women's right and access to education. The article addresses the need to increase female students' enrollment rates and decrease dropout rates in all forms of education and across all educational stages. It tackles the quality of education

by requiring special attention to developing curricula that subvert gender stereotypes as well as promoting safe workspaces and conditions.[1]

The Egyptian Constitution that took effect in 2014 aimed to guarantee basic rights for all individuals in the society as well as citizens. Moreover, it aimed to ensuring that no policies, procedures and processes discriminate against gender, age, religion, disabilities, geographical location and race. In 2011, women rights' activists and advocates as well as feminist groups and institutions efforts started in advocating and lobbying for a gendered constitution (Kamal, 2015). These efforts were commemorated by the new adopted constitution, which was able to guarantee gender equality through number of articles.[2]

On the other hand, the constitution committed as well to right to education. I review two important articles concerning the focus of this policy paper. The First one is Article 19[3] that asserts the right to free and compulsory education for all citizens until secondary school. The article tackles as well the quality of

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[1] Article 10 of CEDAW states Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

(g) The same Opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

[2] Article 53 of the constitution clearly states: "All citizens are equal before the law, possess equal rights and public duties, and may not be discriminated against on the basis of religion, belief, sex, origin, race, color, language, disability, social class, political or geographical affiliation, or any other reason. Discrimination and incitement to hate are crimes punishable by law. The state shall take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination, and the law shall regulate the establishment of an independent commission for this purpose."

Article 11 of the 2014 constitution also lays out much of the legislation specific to Egyptian women's rights:

"The State shall ensure the achievement of equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. The State shall take the necessary measures to ensure the appropriate representation of women in the House of Representatives, as specified by Law. The State shall also guarantee women's right of holding public and senior management offices in the State and their appointment in judicial bodies and authorities without discrimination. The State shall protect women against all forms of violence and ensure enabling women to strike a balance between family duties and work requirements. The State shall provide care to and protection of motherhood and childhood, female heads of families, and elderly and neediest women."

education with reference to scientific thinking and education. Moreover, most importantly, it allocated a minimum budget of 4% of the GDP for education. For the fiscal year 2018-2019, the government's new budget is expected to allocate EGP 115 billion to education. Unfortunately, "the EGP 115 billion figure only represents 2.4 percent—much lower than the 4 percent constitutional requirement" (Johnson, 2018, para.7). As a result, over the years, achieving this percentage proved to be a great challenge.

In 2000, The United Nations declared its commitment for a better future by necessitating eight key global development goals to promote equity and welfare. Egypt has endorsed, as many countries have, the Millennium Declaration to achieve basic development among all countries. Through public policies, strategies and national projects formulated and implemented by the State, Egypt demonstrated its commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The eight goals are general and broad; hence, 17 targets were listed under them to act as a guide for what should be reached by 2015. Education was the subject of two of the development goals in the MGDs. According to UNDP final report assessment, Egypt was able to achieve only six targets and failed to realize the other 11 targets (p.6).

Among the targets Egypt was able to achieve successfully was the first target listed under Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women. The main objective the target aimed to achieve is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

Throughout the recent years, Egypt's efforts are noted in increasing the enrolment ratio of girls to boys "at the national level in 2013/2014 to about 102.3% and 107.4% in the primary and secondary stages, respectively, versus a rate of 79.7% and 73.6% in 1990, respectively" (p.20). Though Egypt achieved this target, it is strongly advised to continue maintaining this target. Policies should endorse this target as in the larger picture on the status of education in Egypt, the State was not able to realize the target of 100% enrolment rate in primary education for females and males. The results of Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education reflected challenges to achieve the goal. As a matter of fact, UNDP final report showed that "After reaching about 95.4% in 2010/2011, reflecting the possibility of achieving the MDG in this regard by Egypt by 2015, the net enrolment rate in primary education started to decline following that year, dropping by about 4.8 percent compared to 2010/2011, reaching 90.6% in 2013/2014" (p.17). Therefore, as a conclusion, policy makers'

agenda should not drop policy recommendation towards accomplishing universal primary education.

Problem Statement:

The main problem discussed in the paper is how to move beyond equal access to education among females and males to ensure better quality of education that is gender sensitive. The analysis of the problem demonstrates that the lack of gender analysis and gender responsive quantitative and well qualitative data contributes to the overlook of gender disparity in the society. Furthermore, it suggests that in order to address gender inequalities in education policies should incorporate gender analysis at the starting point of policies formulation, decision making, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation.

Gender and Education in Theory:

The term gender is often reduced to a term that denotes social category and as a differentiation among sexes, males and females, which represents a gap and challenge in itself. To begin a conversation on gender and education as well as how to incorporate it within the institution of education, the term gender needs to be defined. Providing a definition of gender assist in comprehending why there is a need for better gender data in the process of enhancing the quality of education for girls. Nevertheless, this does not undermine the importance of listing gender as a variable. Utilizing gender as variable for social category is important to determine outcomes that is representative to social conditions and the challenges faced for accessing resources and services between women and men.

The renowned feminist historian and academic Joan Scott presented a foundational definition to understand gender stating that, "gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power" (Scott, 1992, p.1067). In light of this definition, gender is a process where relationships of power at play within social activities, practices and structure. Scott adds that adding gender as category of analysis allows comprehending how "these relationships are constructed as they are, how they work, or how they change" (p.1057). Hence, gender is a social construct produced and reproduced through relationships of power within social structures and institutional processes.

This moves the conversation on how to look critically at state institutions in an attempt to make them gender responsive. The Feminist sociologist Joan Acker (1992) presents the term "gendered institutions" in her article From Sex Roles to Gendered Institutions. According to her, this term means, "gender is present in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in
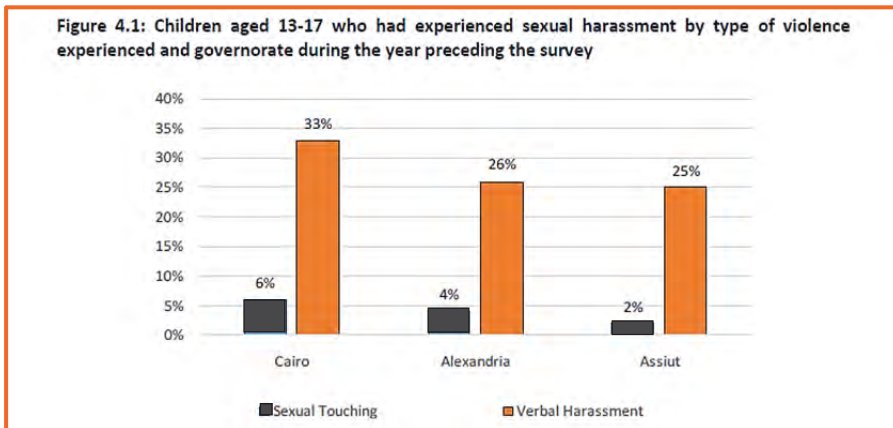
the various sectors of social life …[and]… institutional structures … are institutions historically developed by men, currently dominated by men, and symbolically interpreted from the standpoint of men in leading positions, both in the present and historically" (p.567). In other words, if gender analysis is absent from the start in these processes, then gender tensions are not grasped and relationships of inequalities are not addressed. Moreover, it highlights how state institutions fail to engage on the issue of gender-relations in its local politics and practices.

In this part of defining the problem, I attempt to read the aforementioned problems of understanding the definition of gender and the process of institutionalizing it. In Elaine Unterhalter and Amy North's (2011) article, they investigate the difficulties and challenges pertaining to expand policy discourses on gender equality and education. The authors provide an important critique that this policy paper builds its argument based on it. The critique tackles the limited perspective in addressing gender within education politics and practices through a very narrow target, which is increasing enrollment rates. According to them, "working to increase girls' enrollment has been seen as the only way in which a government, multilateral organization, or nongovernmental organization (NGO) might engage with gender and education issues" (p.2), which are driven by global development targets. These global development targets fail to "understand the complexity and nuance of local spaces in order to realize forms of gender equality" (p.4). As a result, quantitative data reflects a limited view on change in relation to gender and education though it focuses on statistics that trace enrollment rates to reflect gender parity. Hence, integrating better qualitative data and studies that are gender-based can explain other inequalities in the process of education that girls and women are subject and vulnerable to within the society such as gender-based violence, safe environment, gender stereotypes in curriculum, training teachers

Why Better Gender Data Matters?

Promoting better gender data such as gender analysis and gender-disaggregated data assists in revealing the overlooked gender inequalities in the whole process of education. For instant, inequalities in relation to gender-based violence highly contribute to the quality of education. In Egypt, sexual harassment is a widespread phenomenon and children, mostly girls, experience sexual violence that affect them physically and physiologically. In 2015, UNICEF published a report on Sexual Violence Against Children confirming such experience and "qualitative research also confirmed that girls are affected more often by sexual harassment than boys and that they are often blamed for 'inviting and deserving' harassment" (p.29). Figure 4.1 (UNICEF, 2015) below

provides an example of how to compare ratio of sexual violence between different governorates, yet it does not explain the possible reasons behind it.

Figure 4.1: Children aged 13-17 who had experienced sexual harassment by type of violence experienced and governorate during the year preceding the survey

The sexual violence does not only affect children in schools, but it affects female teachers as well. According to Nazra for Feminist Studies (2016), number of sexual violations and cases have been reported where female teachers faced sexual assaults whether in the workplace, schools, or when on duty. For instant, "in May 2015, students in Talaat Harb School in Omraniyya attempted to rape a female teacher who would not allow them to cheat during an exam" (para. 6). The report highlighted how female teachers are subject to sexual violence within unsafe environment as there is no policies for sexual violence within workspaces and female teachers are not supported with safe accommodation for the night shift, where other rape and sexual assaults cases were reported for female teachers on duty mainly during transport. These issues obstruct women and girls' experiences in the field of education leading to further inequalities that can only be grasped through qualitative gender-based analysis.

Qualitative analysis provides an in-depth reading to quantitative and statistical data. The statistics on dropout rates reflect only progress towards ending gender disparity. However, looking quantitatively at the reasons behind the dropout offers better understanding to the challenges faced. For instant, the reasons for dropout can differ according to urban rural category with intersection to issues of race. Dropout rates due to sexual violence might be higher in urban more than rural, while girls in rural areas might drop schools due to early marriage or child labor reasons than in urban. Hence, the gender analysis provide data that reflects the specificity different geographical areas and their

socioeconomic context. Figure 4.9 (UNICEF, 2015) demonstrates quantitatively the variety of spaces women and girls face sexual harassment.

What is Gender Analysis?

I reiterate the point that was made at the beginning that gender-based analysis should be a mandatory component in any policy design as fundamental starting phase. This to ensure that the different phases of designing, implementing and monitoring of activities are attentive to capture quality of the targeted audience experience, changed attitudes as well as community opinions and feelings.

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)[3] presents an informative toolkit on gender analysis that is recommended in this study. It includes a definition and a framework of what gender analysis entails. They define it as "the starting point for gender mainstreaming. Before cooperation processes begin, any decisions are made and plans are outlined, the gender equality situation in a given context must be analyzed and expected results identified.

Figure 4.9: Places where forms of sexual harassment took place, according to parents (by governorate)
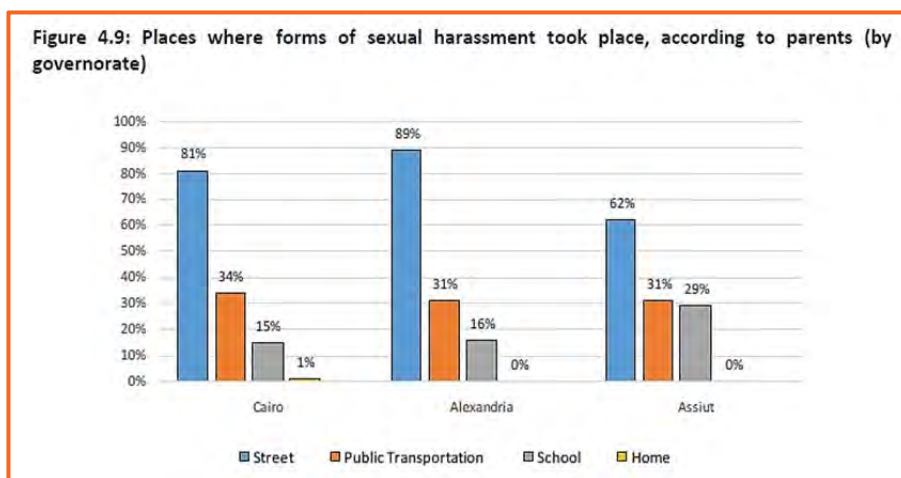
1) **Norms for gender.** A gender analysis includes information on women, men, girls and boys in terms of their division of labor, roles and responsibilities, access to, and control over, resources, and their relative condition and position in society. It also involves looking at other norms for how gender may be expressed, including norms relating to sexuality and identity.

[3] Recommended toolkit by SIDA for this study: Gender Equality in the Education Sector – Focusing on issues of quality of education and Completion. Retrieved from:
https://www.sida.se/contentassets/8603ffb013ff4fb7a662c3f4f5d0cc5b/tool_gender_equality_education_sector_june-2017_c1.pdf

2) Other social variables. A gender analysis should include social variables such as ethnicity, culture, age and social class. It may also include sexual orientation.

3) Quantitative and qualitative data. A gender analysis should include both quantitative (statistics) and qualitative data (analytical and relative).

4) Vulnerability and empowerment. A gender analysis highlights specific vulnerabilities of women and men, girls and boys. It always has an empowerment perspective, highlighting the agency and potential for change in each group.

5) Scope and methods vary. The scope of a gender analysis can vary and be done in different ways depending on the context" (Sida, p.1,2015).

Moving towards Gender Equality requires reducing gender gaps between women and men, while also looking at the inequalities produced by gendered power relations without excluding the other sex. Data collection is a key element to enable the process of recognizing the problem and pinpointing gaps. Gender based analysis is crucial to understand local context in relation to gender issue. As a result, gender-based analysis becomes a process that cross-cuts with many aspects of policy formulation such as the planning, designing, analyzing, collecting data and policy recommendation.

Gender disaggregated data:

This method looks at data beyond statistics based on sex as a social category variable, so it is different than sex dis-aggregated data. In other words, it presents a qualitative interpretation for the quantified data in order to expand the problem beyond the existing statistics that do not engage with the relationships of power. It aims to explain the relationships of power based on gender in accessing resources and services in order to understand the discrepancies and discriminatory acts.

Gender Indicators:

Gender Analysis is an essential step for more efficient gender indicators. Indicators are significant tool and guideline in order to reach to better policy interventions. Gender analysis supports the process of the identification of issues of gender inequalities for the generation of information to develop effective indicators to measure change. On the other hand, well-informed gender indicators and their integration in policies "can be used for holding institutions accountable for their commitments on gender equality. Gender indicators and relevant data can make visible the gaps between the commitments many governments and other institutions have made at all levels

institutions accountable for their commitments on gender equality. Gender indicators and relevant data can make visible the gaps between the commitments many governments and other institutions have made at all levels – for example by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – and their actual implementation and impact. They can be used to hold policy-makers accountable for their actions, or lack of action." (Demetriades, 2007, p.2).

Existing Experience in Egypt:

In March 2018, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) launched its report on the status of gender mainstreaming in selected projects in Egypt. Education was among the areas that were investigated in the report to assess the level of gender responsiveness of the implemented projects. Egypt Japan Education Partnership (EJEP) aimed to improve the quality of education through four projects where only one project integrated gender perspective in the planning and implementation. The project is Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST). A main critique presented is the limited approach to gender in deployed in these projects as the use of gender disaggregated data with focus on statistics only. The data collection in the pre-primary, primary, preparatory, secondary and the technical education projects demonstrated complete lack of gender analysis and absence of qualitative data as "the baseline survey, although the gender disaggregated data on the number of pupils/students and teachers was collected, no other indicators and information were examined from the gender perspective." (JICA, 2018, p.50).

Generally, this partnership presents a useful framework for the incorporation of gender perspective in any project with respect to four aspects:

(1) Collecting and analyzing relevant data and information to identify gender needs in the planning stage:
The first aspect accentuated in the process of gender mainstreaming is the gender analysis. In order to devise solution and take proper gender actions, gender analysis based on both well collected qualitative and quantitative data for gender issues is indispensable.

(2) Integration of gender devices in project activities:
According to the report, gender devices refers to the engagement and participation of gender experts, concerned local NGOs and appropriate agencies with knowledge and adequate understanding of local context and the addressed problem. This is highly important in order to be sensitive to local

communities' issues and identify a way to address them through proper tools, activities as well as ensuring the participation of local communities.

(3)   Taking a cross-sectoral approach for boosting women's empowerment:

Another aspect brought to attention and highlights the complexity of gender integration in the education process is the cross-sectoral approach. The report states that the "integration of gender as a topic in extracurricular activities of basic education for fostering a sense of humanity as a basis for combating violence and harassment against women and making the scope of a technical education project more gender-friendly according to the labor market's needs for female and male students" (p.59). The stakeholder analysis presented in this policy paper proposes sectors, which their work intersects and supplement the educational process.

(4)   Setting gender-sensitive indicators and constant monitoring:

The final aspect of the framework tackles the importance of setting measurable gender indicators, while maintain regular monitoring system to evaluate the effectiveness of these indicators.

Country Experience:

In this part, I review other countries experiences to achieve gender equality in education.

The Indonesian Experience:

I find the Indonesian approach as an inspiring approach towards ending gender disparity in the educational system. In 2013, Ministry of National Development Planning in Indonesia published a study to review the country progress towards gender mainstreaming in education. Interestingly, the study stresses that the key challenge is ensuring gender equality beyond access to education. The study finds that, "Increasing parity in enrolment is only the first step in achieving gender equality in education and may only treat the symptoms, not the root causes, of inequality. Focusing on access as the primary issue for all girls and boys can undervalue the importance of quality and relevance." (p.47). In fact, the study that explain that gender mainstreaming is a process more than mere developed intervention. In 2005, Gender Working Groups is established by the provincial education agency. It aimed to disseminate gender equality in formal and non-formal education and proved to be effective in developing gender sensitive projects in schools. As a result, a holistic approach took place to ensure making schools gender responsive through number of pilot projects.

I enlist here number of policy recommendations mentioned in the study to achieve gender equality, which suits the local context of Egypt:

(1) A gender equality in education strategy and action plan to be developed by MoEC and MoRA (with input from each DG) to enable MoEC and MoRA to:

> Formulate gender responsive budgets (GRB) and gender budget statements (GBS)

> Assist individual DGs within Ministries to develop and align their own specific action plans and budgets to meet strategic gender equality objectives

> Enable local governments to develop and align their own gender responsive budgets and plans to meet national strategic gender equality objectives

> Ensure that strategic plans relate not only to equality of access, but also to equality in the learning process, achievement and outcomes, including the recommendations below

(2) Ensure any future plans for review of the curricula to raise standards contain no gender bias or gender stereotyping. New textbooks should be screened before publication to ensure that textbooks are free of gender bias and gender stereotyping. Textbook authors need to be certified as trained gender-responsive curriculum writers who use pictures and illustrations that do not reinforce gender stereotyping.

(3) Institute a comprehensive pre-service teacher training program that integrates gender equality in all universities and teacher and education personnel training institutions and aims to gradually improve lecturer, school supervisor and student teacher skills in line with the requirements of an improved gender responsive approach to school-based management, curriculum development and teaching and learning processes using modern teaching methods.

(4) Encourage local governments to explore innovative partnerships with schools and NGOs and train school supervisors and principals to develop strategies to reduce: a) anti-social behavior (including raising awareness of impacts of bullying and sexual harassment) in close collaboration with the National Commission for Child Protection; and b)

promote gender awareness and comprehensive reproductive health socialization in secondary schools in close collaboration with Ministry of Health.

(5) Equality of External Results: review labor market policies and practices, particularly staff development processes and strategies, with regard to salaries, status, benefits, promotion and retirement age from a gender perspective.

Stakeholder Analysis:

Identifying the different actors and stakeholders is an essential step in any process of change. The mapping of stakeholders provides clear vision on who should be involved in the process from designing to implementing; who has the power/influence and interest to affect change.

> **Ministry of Education** is the major key stakeholder with high influence and interest in this process of affecting change by incorporating gender analysis in the educational process. The ministry should have the political will as it is primary accountable actor for improving the quality of education and ending inequalities within the educational politics and practices.

> **Ministry of Finance:** according to the analysis is a key stakeholder in this process. They are responsible for the allocation of budget to The Ministry of Education. This proves to be a challenging stakeholder as they have high influence/power with very low interest in assigning more finances to the ministry of Education in favor of gender mainstreaming strategies. In fact, this paper recommends MoE to continuing requiring the MoF to commit to the 4% budget of GDP as listed by the constitution.

> **Civil Society:** National NGOs with focus on women's rights and feminist organizations play significant role in providing expertise for linking women's rights approach and agenda to the educational processes such as planning, designing, policy formulation. Moreover, those actors are needed in the implementation of the activities, raising awareness campaigns and advocacy among local communities. They have high interest for setting a feminist agenda, while gaining weight for cooperating with the government on strategic and executive level. International NGOs are important actors to MoE to foster international dialogue that stresses the priority to place gender analysis within the

education system in order to mobilize resources such as knowledge, human capital and finances.

> **National Council for Women i**s a national machinery for gender mainstreaming in Egypt. In May 2016, NCW has launched National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women (NSVAW), which make NCW of high interest in expanding and implementing this strategy to encompass schools and conquer the educational field. Hence, possible partnership and collaboration between MoE and National Council for Women can emerge. For instant, promoting for safe schools via policies where anti-harassment units are established in every school. The responsibilities of the unit are to develop sexual harassment policies inside the school, to handle sexual harassment reports, raising awareness on gender-based violence, combating victim blaming and social acceptance culture among pupils both females and males as well as teachers.

> **The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)** is considered a secondary stakeholder. It can support the Ministry of Education through policies addressing the rights of child, combating and raising awareness on early marriage as well as child labor through the implementation of programs and activities.

> **Private sector** is a secondary stakeholder in this process. Through social responsibility approach, private sector can support girls' access to technological and technical education, offering fellowships and study grants, supporting gender equality in sports and sponsoring young girls' athletes in different forms of sports.

> **Media** is a secondary stakeholder and should be deployed for the communication of messages that subvert gender stereotypes in education.

Policy Recommendation:

Based on the problem analysis and the review of country experiences the following recommendations are presented:

1. Establish a Gender Research Unit in Ministry of Education focused on the production of gender data and incorporation of gender analysis in the educational process

a) The group members should have expertise in gender and women's studies, sociology, anthropology, political science, public policy and legal studies. It is important to have this diverse expertise and not leave out any expertise to ensure the quality of the developed projects.

b) The Gender Research Unit should identify the needed projects and activities to be implemented in order to ensure the integration of gender perspective among the different aspects of the educational process. For instant, reviewing curricula from gender perspective, capacity building in gender for curricula developers and teachers.

c) Create a specialized team for the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative that is gender responsive beyond equal access

d) Conducting an expanded survey to allocate number of girls' schools in relation to geographical regions. Complement this study conducting survey of the number of dropouts among female students in relation to geographical areas. This to understand reasons behind dropouts through quantitative and qualitative gender responsive data to identify required measures and interventions if more girls' schools are needed and where.

e) Building partnership with research center such as The Social Research Center at AUC, Cynthia Nelson Institute for Gender and Women's Studies, Sociology and Anthropology Department at AUC in order to develop surveys, questionnaires, baseline, and other tools to collect gender sensitive data in Arabic.

f) Responsible of the monitoring & evaluation of the activities, and to issue study reports with lesson learnt and best practices in respect to the local context for the incorporation of gender analysis, indicators and devices.

2. Develop a national strategy and an action plan for gender equality in education. The strategy to be established by MoE in collaboration with key stakeholders

a) Identify all potential key stakeholders and provide stakeholders analysis by assessing influence, interest and power

b) Involve all stakeholders in the process from an early stage: during the planning phase, allow each stakeholder group to set its own baseline, indicators and targets

c) Promote for safe workspaces and conditions of work for women through policies, strategies and laws that equality in job opportunities, salaries, benefits and so forth from a gender perspective

d) Establish anti-harassment unit in every school to develop internal policies for sexual harassment, raise awareness on the different forms

of gender-based violence to end social acceptance and victim blaming culture, promote gender awareness and comprehensive reproductive health

3. Promote gender budgeting policies through sector wide approach by the government to place gender mainstreaming and production of better gender data as a pressing need for accomplishing gender parity

   a) Formulate gender responsive budgets and gender budget statements

4. Launch media campaign that demonstrates the results of increasing enrolment and decrease of dropout rates among girls. Feature examples of young female students from different contexts overcoming challenges of dropout and reintegration in the educational system. The aim of campaign to convey inspiring and encouraging messages among less empowered female students. In addition, to increase the visibility of the success of excreted efforts towards this target.

5. Maintain the commitment of equal access by increasing enrollment rate among vulnerable and disadvantaged subjects and decrease dropout rates of girls

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2

Promoting Tolerance and Inclusion through Education Policies

Hatem Zayed

Introduction:

A quality learning environment is one of the main tenets in the definition of quality education proposed by UNICEF.[1] This policy paper is concerned with an integral condition within one of the sub-categories of a quality learning environment as defined by UNICEF. Creating an inclusive environment within a school is an important precondition for achieving a positive psychosocial environment for students. Inclusion, for UNICEF, is to end policies or practices that are discriminatory or "hinder the advancement of quality education for all children", including children of different ethnicity, nationality, sex, etc.[2] However, the difficulty of such an objective is that while many countries may have progressive policies, there is an evident gap between policies and practices in schools.[3] Another challenge is the understanding of inclusion, whether in practice or in actual research, tends to be limited to access to education. In this policy paper, I argue that access, alone, is not an adequate indicator for inclusive policies as students may have access to education but have dissimilar experiences in school or in opportunities beyond school.

Egypt successfully achieved equal access to education, nearly universally, for girls and boys. However, beyond the numbers, the definition of equity contains elements that are far more complex. In my review of existing policies/ strategies aimed at attaining equity in education in Egypt, I will investigate whether their objectives reflect this complexity. For the purpose of maintaining a focused scope for the policy brief, when referring to inclusive educational policies, I will not explore needed policy/practice reforms to create an inclusive environment for students with disabilities.[4] Rather, in this paper, I will focus on gender, nationality, and race.

In this paper, I will first provide some background on the status of educational inclusion in Egypt. Second, I will review an existing policy/practice that the Egyptian Ministry of Education adopt, and pinpoint its merits as well as its limitations. Third, I will present an international case study to compare with the efforts of the Egyptian MoE. Finally, I will conclude the policy paper with a few recommendations for both policies and practices that can contribute to an inclusive learning environment in Egyptian schools. I give particular focus to the Equal Opportunities Unit (EOU), as it provides the Ministry of Education an excellent opportunity to promote tolerance in schools. The EOU currently

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[1] "Defining Quality in Education." Right to Education Initiative, http://www.right-to-education.org/resource/defining-quality-education
[2] Ibid.
[3] Mitchell, *Special Education Policies and Practices in the Pacific Rim Region.*
[4] Several excellent studies have been published in the last few years on inclusive policies for children with disabilities. Please refer to Handicap International's 2016 report, "Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Education in Public Schools," and Ashley Parnell's "Building Implementation Capacity for Inclusive Education in Egypt"

misses this opportunity with a vague and limited mandate and lacks an implementation mechanism for what could have otherwise been an excellent policy.

Education and Inclusion

Data on equity in education in Egypt is typically available in relation to gender parity. Figures 1 through 4 below, extracted from World Bank Development Indicators, demonstrate significant progress over the past 20 years in regard to access to education. All indicators point to a decrease in the gender gap to the extent that girls have even more access to education than boys when considering primary enrollment. Moreover, the gender gap is decreasing even when considering opportunities in the work force, or percentage of girls out of school – areas where girls were previously at a clear disadvantage. Unfortunately, similar data is not available to demonstrate other types of parity – between students of diverse religions, ethnicities, or nationalities.

Figure 1

Primary School Enrollment by Gender

% enrolled from total population in school age

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2016
Male	94.58	94.17	94.61	95.73	96.79	97.83	99.45	102	103.6	105.7	105.1	101	103.7	103	101.3	103.6
Female	87.32	87.68	88.99	90.79	92.66	94.68	94.21	96.91	99.27	102.2	102	96.48	102.3	102.1	101	103.7

Figure 2

Gender Parity in Enrollment

	1999	2000	2001	2003	2004	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2016
Secondary	0.92	0.93	0.94	0.94	0.95	0.99	0.97	0.99	0.98	0.98	0.99	0.98
Primary	0.92	0.93	0.94	0.96	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.95	0.99	0.99	1.00	1.00

Figure 3

Children out of School by Gender

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2012	2014	2016
Male	13.55	11.74	10.64	9.55	7.98	6.25	3.34	3.66	1.87
Female	18.74	16.28	14.42	12.57	10.58	7.87	2.91	2.87	0.82

Figure 4

Share of youth not in education, employment or training

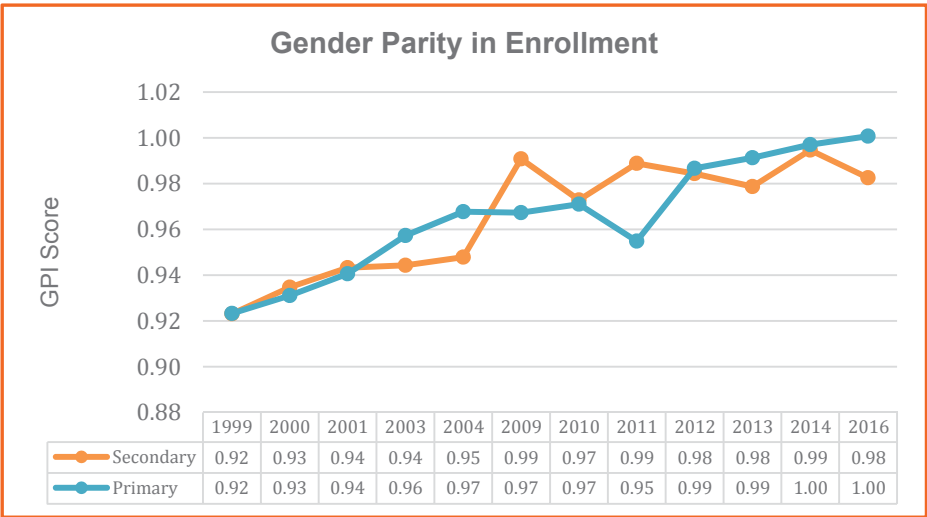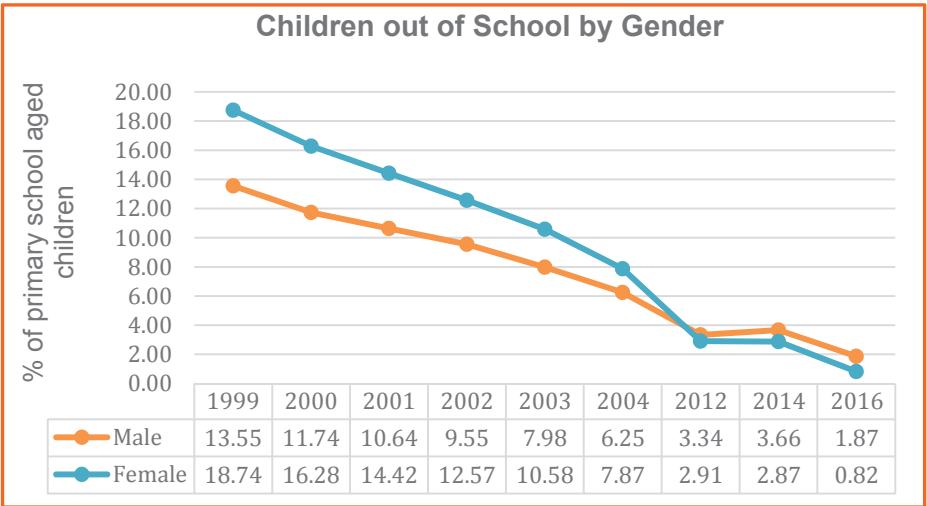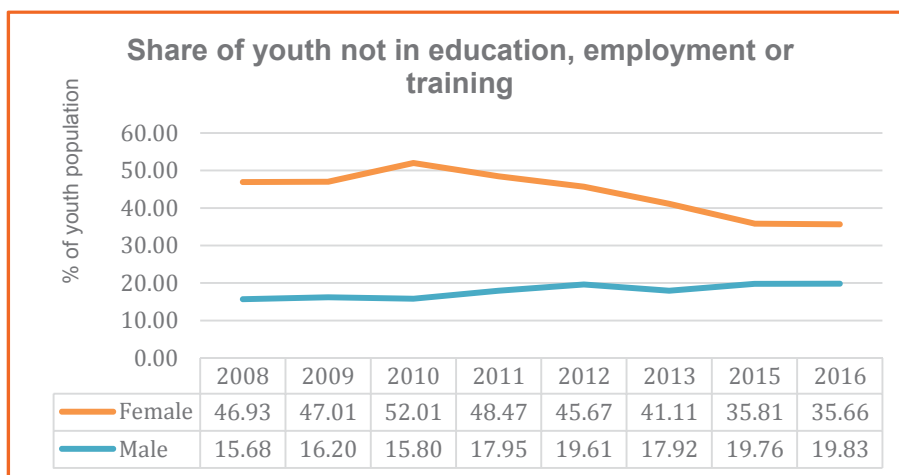|	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2015	2016
Female	46.93	47.01	52.01	48.47	45.67	41.11	35.81	35.66
Male	15.68	16.20	15.80	17.95	19.61	17.92	19.76	19.83

To reiterate a point earlier made, relying on access alone to reflect on parity is incomplete. While girls now have equitable access to educational opportunities, there remains to be other sources of inequality. Understandably, it becomes more difficult to measure inequality in education beyond access. This policy paper focuses on inclusion, and not equity, which entails an elimination of all types of social exclusion that are consequences of attitudes towards diversity.[5] To assess the inclusion of all social groups, one must look at language used by teachers, or in curricula, that may perpetuate disadvantages between social groups, the level of focus and attention given to each social group, the access to different types of activities within school, and exposure to violence or discomfort, as well as other potential indicators. While, admittedly, such standards are harder to measure, some recent studies reflect that not all students share similar experiences in school – for better or worse. For instance, in a recent UNICEF study, girls in Assiut reported that their male schoolmates harassed them and that they would feel safer in an all-girl school.[6] In the same study, more boys reported to be victim of teacher violence in schools than girls. Upon further investigation, teachers confirmed that they in fact impose harsher punishment on boys. This reflects that gender influences experiences of students in schools – whether as a result of treatment from other students or from teachers.

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[5] Ainscow, "Developing Inclusive Education Systems".

[6] UNICEF, "Violence against Children in Egypt".

Similar discrepancy can be observed when investigating the experiences of students with other nationalities. In a recent baseline study conducted by CARE Egypt for a project that aims to increase access to education for Syrian refugees in Egypt, it was revealed that Syrian boys and girls – when compared to Egyptians – were more vulnerable in school. They were less likely to use sanitation facilities in school (due to their poor conditions), less satisfied with learning facilities, less satisfied with psychosocial services in school, had a lower sense of social cohesion within the school, and less likely to participate in social activities or sports.[7] Such discrepancies, in the experiences between one group of students and another, must be reduced to create an inclusive environment – and thus reach true equity.

Not only do schools have the responsibility to ensure an inclusive environment for students, but they should also tackle harmful attitudes and practices that may perpetuate inequality in society beyond the school. For instance, many studies have demonstrated the association between positive attitudes towards gender equality and education[8] – confirming that education can be a powerful tool to battle discrimination more broadly. In the following section, I will discuss an effort by the Egyptian Ministry of Education, through a unit called the Equal Opportunities Unit, to promote tolerance and inclusion in schools, among educational employees, and in society more broadly. I will argue that while this unit had great potential to fulfill this role, its mandate was too under ambitious and did not develop proper implementation mechanisms for it to play an effective role.

The Equal Opportunities Unit

On the 12th of September 2012, the Ministry of Education issues a decree for the establishment of the Equal Opportunities Unit (EOU). In this decree, it listed the following roles for the unit:

1. Spread the culture of citizenship and human rights, particularly the right to equality and equal opportunity, through educational curricula and practical learning materials in cooperation with the relevant administrations
2. Map, review, and propose solutions for employee concerns and cases of discrimination or unequal treatment based on sex, race, origin, religion, faith, social status, political opinions, cultural opinions, age, health status or any other reason

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7 CARE Egypt, "ACCESS Baseline Final Report – Improving Syrian and Egyptian Children's Access to Formal and Informal Education."
8 Fan and Marini, "Influences on Gender-Role Attitudes during the Transition to Adulthood"; Brewster and Padavic, "Change in Gender-Ideology, 1977-1996"; Tallichet and Willits, "Gender-Role Attitude Change of Young Women"; Al-Kohlani, Improving Educational Gender Equality in Religious Societies.

3. Work towards women's access to their rights in promotion, and equal participation in social, cultural, tertiary, and entertainment programs and opportunities
4. Document data, information, and research studies that reflect the reality of the working woman in the Ministry and assess their needs
5. Hold conferences, sessions, and roundtable discussions on issues that concern the unit
6. Promote and strengthen the role of women in school board of trustees and educational administrations and districts
7. Cooperate with the National Council for Women's 'complaint committee' concerned with the working woman
8. Create an online website for the Equal Opportunities Unit

While the second objective reflects a commitment to end discrimination of all kinds (race, health, sex, social status, etc.), only women are explicitly referenced as a group to be promoted for equal opportunities in any of the other objectives. There is no mention of ethnicity or race, religion, or health status despite Egypt's heterogeneous demographic make-up. Additionally, a greater number of roles are concerned with equal opportunities in the education sector workforce than with welfare of students. While it is promising that the commitment to justice in the workforce is so pronounced, the EOU missed an opportunity of creating objectives that promote a more inclusive environment in the school environment for students as well. The first objective, which commits to a review of educational curricula and learning materials, is an excellent step towards the realization of that goal. However, the vague language used – a "culture of citizenship and human rights, particularly the right to equality and equal opportunities" – provides little or no guidance for reviewing the curricula and learning material. In case curricula is reviewed with this objective in mind, material on human rights and citizenship can be added without thoroughly reviewing the curricula for biases and triggers that may perpetuate a lack of tolerance among children towards individuals of different ethnicities, nationalities, religions, genders, and persons with disabilities.

While I could not find an official news source reporting on the specific objectives of the EOU, a post on the EOU's Facebook page on December 7th, 2014 laid out the below objectives. These objectives came in an effort to create more tangible action points for the unit as a step to fulfill the mandate referred to above.

1. Commit to ensuring equal opportunities among employees in the educational work force
2. Ensure justice in the treatment of and the division of tasks between males and females

3. Spread concepts pertaining to gender among employees
4. Encourage administrations and districts to include gender issues and gender concepts in educational practices and strategies
5. Coordinate with the administrations and districts to provide gender disaggregated information and data on employees
6. Conduct scientific and practical research studies on gender and development and education
7. Raise the awareness of both men and women on their roles and responsibilities through sustainable professional development
8. Map gaps and assess needs of both men and women and work towards achieving them
9. Create mechanisms for liaising with employees in the education sector (press releases, emails, meetings)
10. Pinpoint problems or challenges in the work place and liaise with relevant parties to take needed steps towards achieving a positive environment

As can be observed from these 10 objectives, the language used is relatively less vague than the original roles and responsibilities included in the Ministerial Decree. The focus on teacher training and interest in research reflected in these objectives is a very positive step and is likely to indirectly improve the environment for students in school. However, similar to the roles and responsibilities mentioned in the decree, there is little or no mention of any source of diversity other than gender. Moreover, the inclusion of objectives that work towards improved welfare for students, such as the revision of curricula and learning materials, have been completely removed – which further limits the role of the unit to achieving equality in the work force only. While this is an equally important objective, it omits an objective that is central to the original decree.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there is no mention, in either the specific objectives or the mandate released in the decree, of implementation mechanisms for the unit. The EOU, despite the abovementioned concerns, reflects a very progressive policy and potentially good intentions by the Ministry. However, with no mention of an implementation mechanism, this unit can easily play only superficial roles in the ministry with no real power.

International Case: The South African Gender Equality Task Team (GETT)

In this section, I will review South Africa's experience with the establishment of a similar committee to the EOU. I intentionally select a case study with partial success – demonstrating both successes and failures. The failures presented in

the South African case can also allow room for generating lessons learned. Results from an evaluation to these gender inclusion policies in Education in South Africa will be reviewed in this section. Success was seen in reforming curricula and educational material and in the implementation of post-graduate training programs for teachers on gender issues. However, gender biases continued to prevail in classrooms and sexual violence was not adequately combatted.

The post-Apartheid government in South Africa has committed to end discrimination – demonstrated in section 9 of the South African Constitution, which outlaws all forms of discrimination on the basis of age, gender, race, cultural origin, etc.[9] This commitment extended to educational institutions in the country. In 1996, the National Department of Education established the Gender Equality Task Team (GETT). This task team was given the role of reporting on enrolment imbalances as well as career paths and performances, identify means of correcting imbalances, propose guidelines to address sexism in curricula, propose strategies to improve representation in employment, and propose a strategy to counter sexual harassment and violence in schools.[10] The Department of Education responded positively to the establishment of this task team and accordingly made some welcomed reforms.[11] Most notable of these reforms include a formulation of curricula, as well as learning support materials and textbooks, that are gender sensitive. Additionally, teachers were trained on gender awareness and incorporating gender issues in teaching methods. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, gender-based harassment and violence was outlawed in schools through creating a reporting system and introducing a school-based module on managing sexual harassment and violence for both teachers and students.

A research study released in 2011 performed an evaluation to these policies.[12] This study revealed that the curricula and learning materials are in fact gender-sensitive and that access to education was equitable. Life orientation lessons were included in curricula which taught life skills and discussed issues of power and power relations regarding gender. However, girls remained to be disadvantaged, as they were most affected by sexual violence in schools and were treated by their teachers differently than boys. For instance, regarding tasks assignments, girls were assigned duties of cleaning while boys were asked to move desks around to enable girls to clean or to do other "physically challenging tasks" like cleaning the board and gardening. Girls were also

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[9] Chisholm and September (eds, *Gender Equity in South African Education, 1994-2004.*
[10] Ibid.
[11] Wadesango, Rembe, and Chabaya, "An Assessment of the Implementation of Gender Equity Policies in Schools in South Africa."
[12] Ibid.

discouraged from participating in sports that were traditionally associated with boys, such as rugby, soccer, etc. As for teacher training, teachers reported that they attended trainings on gender during their honors program after they graduated from teacher service programs, but that there were no gender trainings during the pre-service programs. Moreover, no trainings were incorporated during the actual service years of teachers.[13]

This case highlights that partial, and not full success, is likely and even expected. Creating an inclusive environment in schools requires strong policy making, and more importantly, strict policy implementation. The success of the South African case, however, was that the Department of Education adopted the suggestions of the Gender Equality Task Team. Curricula and learning materials were reviewed to become more gender-sensitive. Additionally, gender trainings were incorporated in the honors programs for teachers. Yet, as the above evaluation reflected, gender biases remained in the classroom and sexual violence was not adequately deterred. This highlights the importance of creating a strong monitoring mechanism that can be coupled with progressive reforms. While a reporting mechanism was in place in South African schools for cases of violence, there may not have been adequate follow-up and linkages with relevant bodies that can broaden the options given to schools to respond to such cases. Additionally, while training programs were created for teachers, no guidance was available in classrooms to give feedback on gender-harmful behavior. The case also reflects that behavior and cultural beliefs are hard to change and likely take time. However, what is praise-worthy is that the proper first steps were taken by the South African department of Education regarding the revision of curricula and the professional training programs for teachers.

Policy Recommendations

With both the successes and failures of the South African case in mind, and considering the potential of the Egyptian Ministry of Education Equal Opportunity Unit, the below recommendations are made to promote tolerance of diversity in educational institutions in Egypt to achieve an inclusive educational environment that goes beyond equity in access to educational opportunities.

1. Revise the mandate of the Equal Opportunities Unit and use less vague language on how to review current educational curricula and learning materials. Particular focus should be given to removing biases that perpetuate harmful norms and traditions that can act as hindrances to promoting tolerance and diversity between students in school.

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[13] Ibid.

2. Incorporate equity and diversity trainings/learning material in both professional development programs for teachers as well as undergraduate teaching programs in local universities. The development of this material can be done in cooperation with expert organizations and research institutions in the field. These training programs should not just focus on behavior and norm change of teachers, but also aim to equip them with the needed skills and resources to relay tolerant behavior to students.

3. Increase emphasis on promoting tolerance of all sources of diversity, not just gender, including socioeconomic class, nationality, language, and ethnicity

4. Link the Equal Opportunities Unit (EOU) with the Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in schools to support in cases where the cause of violence is intolerance or discrimination. Social workers in schools can be trained on identifying such cases and accordingly report to the EOU. Possible intervention options for the EOU may include seminars or awareness sessions that aim to promote tolerance of diversity in school.

5. Improve monitoring systems in schools to ensure the application of the EOU objectives. MoE supervisors can support in reporting on the progress of teachers regarding their usage of teaching methods and language that promotes tolerance in the classroom. Similarly, social work supervisors can also support social workers in providing needed guidance to students who are both victim to and perpetrators of discrimination and intolerance.

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3 Role of CSOs in Improving the Egyptian Education System

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Introduction:

At the 6th Youth Conference, held in July 2018 in Sharm al-Sheikh, the Egyptian President announced the year 2019 to be the Year of Education (Masrawy, 2018). This came amid a major education reform project adopted by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and funded by many international donors, led by the World Bank (Afifiy, 2018). The project extends to early childhood education as well as secondary education. It involves reforming the curriculum, the examination process, teacher trainings and introduction of new technologies to the education process (World Bank, n.d.).

One of the main criticisms of the new reform project is concerned with the extent stakeholders are involved in the formulation and decision making, including teachers, parents, students, and NGOs working on education (Afifiy, 2018).

This research aims to understand the ways in which civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the education sector can become more effective for the overall education reform process.

This research is divided into two papers: the first discusses the role of CSOs in improving the quality of education, especially their role in teacher training. The second addresses their role in making education more available and accessible, especially for disadvantaged children.

The research concludes with a number of recommendations for both the Ministry of Education and CSOs in the education sector. The main recommendation stresses that strengthening the cooperation between the MoE and CSOs in the current Egyptian context can accelerate the benefits of the desired education reform project planned by the MoE.

I.   Mapping Education CSOs in Egypt

Since the late 18th century, education, in developed and developing countries, has become the mandate of the State or, more precisely, the government. This is one of the results of the long historical process of emergence of nation-states. This does not deny that non-governmental social actors were always involved in a way or another in providing educational service and/or participating in education policy weather for-profit or non-profit.

Education CSOs in Egypt are mostly NGOs, but they also "include unions of teachers and students, movements created by parents, researchers and individuals" (Abdelrahman, 2017). This research focuses on the role of NGOs in education. NGOs working in education existed in Egypt since the 1940s,

especially with religious charitable mandates, such as the Association of Upper Egypt.

NGOs' role changed over the years from a restricted and limited role during Nasser's era to working in a relatively open space receiving international funds and working in specific areas related to education, reaching their peak of activity during the last twenty years of Mubarak's presidency.

The Mubarak regime's policy towards NGOs can be located in a "grey zone". More NGOs were created and worked on a range of sectors, compensating the shortages of the government's performance in certain areas. At the same time, they were always under the control of the authorities, either through the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) or through security apparatuses. Advocacy NGOs especially had and still have confrontational relations with the authorities. This relationship was regulated by a restricted law of association, which has been getting only more and more restricting since then (Mamdouh, 2018).

There are different ways to classify NGOs in general in Egypt. The most common one classifies by types of activities. Some NGOs offer services to disadvantaged communities in rural and urban areas, and are classified as Service NGOs. Others advocate for a cause or a right, and classified as Advocacy NGOs. Traditionally, the majority of Egyptian NGOs belonged to the first category. However, in late 1980s, the first advocacy NGOs started to appear. These NGOs aim at defending causes that are qualified as "political", such as human rights, women's rights, transparency and the environment (Camau, 2002).

To map education CSOs, we choose to combine two classifications. The first one is based on their activities in relation to the formal education system. Under this classification, three types of education CSOs emerge: complementary, advocacy and parallel NGOs. The first type are mostly service NGOs and it represents the first wave of education NGOs in Egypt. The two other types, advocacy NGOs, parallel NGOs, belong to the second wave of education CSOs: they appeared in the 2000s, along with independent teacher and student unions and online social movements (Abdelrahman, 2017).

The second classification is based on the change CSOs aim to make in the education system based on the theory of transformation: (Spirit In Action, 2010) reform, resist, re-create and re-imagine (Makar, 2014).

Combining these two classifications, we can divide the education civil society in Egypt into three main categories: (Abdelrahman, 2017)
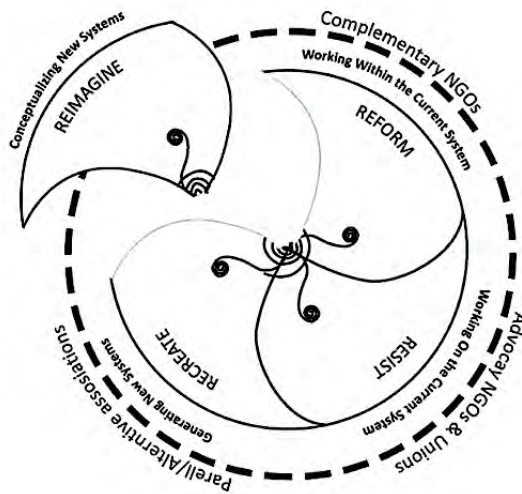
1. Reform – Complementary NGOs: these NGOs operate within the rules of system; they reform form inside. In other words, they mainly fill the gaps of the formal education system. For instance, they contribute to ameliorating the infrastructure of schools, building schools and classrooms, creating alphabetization programs, etc. They vary in size and sphere of influence: they can be international NGOs or local national ones.

2. Resist – Advocacy NGOs and Unions: they aim at changing the system rather than working within its rules. They are only a few in Egypt in the domain of education, and include advocacy NGOs, independent teacher and student unions and more recently non-institutionalized actors such as the Facebook page of ChaoMing and parents' Facebook groups.

3. Re-create – Parallel or alternative associations and initiatives: their aim is neither to reform nor change the rules of the existing system, but to offer better education. They adopt child-centred pedagogies, grouped on what is called "alternative education" methods (Abdelrahman, 2014). They are the most difficult to identify and categorize because they

operate as NGOs, enterprises, initiatives and online/offline social groups. Most of those identified as part of this category are in Cairo.

This research will focus on the complementary NGOs, not just because they are the majority but also because they are in direct contact with the MoE. The projects of these associations aim at solving the shortcomings of the formal education system, especially those affecting the children of poor families.

We can classify the latter shortcomings in three main categories. The first is the inaccessibility of education to children. The second concerns the quality of the educational process and its failure to offer the capabilities and the skills needed for children. This leads to the third shortcoming affecting education in Egypt, which is the high illiteracy rate, not just for adults but also for children.

Reflecting on the Role of NGOs in Education

The involvement of NGOs and civil society in education was encouraged by international organizations and was clearly framed at the Jomtien Conference on Education for All (EFA) in 1990. Funds were allocated and civil society actors were encouraged to create activities supporting the education system, and the MoE was in turn encouraged to accept these initiatives.

However, the political situation in Egypt was and continues to be limiting the activation and participation of many CSOs. The laws regulating the work of NGOs in Egypt is becoming more and more restricting, especially in regard to receiving funds. (Mamdouh, 2018)

Moreover, the processes to get approval from the MoE, before intervening in schools and in the formal education system, is complicated, lengthy and demanding, especially if it is related to the quality of education, such as trainings for teachers or students (Abdelrahman, 2013).

The second dilemma is that CSOs cannot reform the education system structurally. They have neither the capacity nor the authority. They can either fill the gaps left fulfilled by the MoE or perform activities in parallel. The current international system is organized in a way that position governments as the actors most capable, in terms of resources and authority, of transforming the education system. However, even if a concrete education reform project is adopted by the government, it is still imperative to include CSOs in the process of designing and executing the reform project, for it to be more responsive to the needs of local communities and inclusive of the important experience of workers in these organizations.

In Egypt, complementary NGOs have a long experience in dealing with many local communities on many levels of education. However this experience was never taken into consideration, as happened for instance, in the last attempt at education reform. Moreover, we cannot separate between the political regime and the will to improve the education system. The more the political regimes is democratic and permitting of participation, the more the different actors of civil society are included in the process of planning and executing the reform projects, and the more the reform project is able to engage with the real problems and offer concrete solutions.

In the current political situation, NGOs are consumed in investing money, time and effort to create education initiatives in many local disadvantaged areas, but these efforts and experiences are not taken into consideration in any of the reform projects announced and adopted by the MoE. Thus, the activities might have a positive effect on smaller scales, which is not to be underestimated, but unfortunately, they do not echo in the larger and structural scales.

The main recommendation of these two papers are:

> Benefiting from the expertise of Egyptian NGOs in improving education, and not only those operating in Cairo but most importantly those in disadvantaged areas

> Integrating representatives of NGOs from different parts of the country on higher levels of policy and decision making

> Delegating some of the implementation of the reform to NGOs, relying on their expertise. This should happen after agreement on protocols satisfying both the MoE and the NGOs

Furthermore, the Egyptian education system needs a holistic reform approach (Abdelrahman, 2017), that incorporates all of the following:

> A clear political will to improve the education system

> A democratic participatory planning process

> Researches on the needs and resources

> A reconceptualization of the whole system in order to fulfill the needs of the population

> Openness to change from all the stakeholders

> And most importantly, increasing of the budget to fund all the above

Thus, the main focus of these two papers is to reflect on how the role of CSOs especially complementary NGOs could be more effective and influential in (1) improving the quality of education, and (2) in making education more accessible for disadvantaged communities taking into consideration the current political situation and the reform projects announced by the MoE.

Methodology and Research Phases

To produce these two papers, including the concrete recommendations, this research follows a qualitative participatory research methodology. It aims at giving the space to the workers at the education NGOs in two governorates to express in their own words the real challenges they are facing, and how they propose to overcome them in matters of policies and resources.

The research adopts a purposive sampling strategy, which ensures the representation of different sizes in terms of the number of workers and scope of activities, but also the types of activities even if they are all complementary NGOs.

Fieldwork was done in Cairo, Giza and Minya in February 2019. It included semi-structured interviews with one NGO in Giza and three in Minya. There was an attempt to reach another NGO in Cairo but access was denied. The research also relies on two informal discussions with workers in an international organization in Cairo and an academic expert on education in Egypt residing in Berlin.

These papers are also based on fieldwork previously done by the researchers for other papers, including in 2013 and 2016 with members of NGOs working in Cairo, Giza and Minya.

II. Role of CSOs in Improving the Quality of Education

The deterioration of the quality of Egyptian education system is a well-known fact. It is discussed by officials before parents, students and teachers. In 2017, Egypt was ranked 130 out of 137 countries in terms of the quality of the education system, according to the Global Competitiveness Index (World Economic Forum, 2017-2018). Since 2017, the Minister of Education, Tarek Shawky, is taking many decisions in the context of a complete education reform plan. The plan was announced in his statements for the press and on social media. On the website of the Ministry of Education, the link for the strategic plan 2014-2030 is broken.

Mada Masr studied the Minister's statements and what we know of the education reform plan. According to its research, the plan focuses on improving the quality of education offered especially for early childhood education and primary education. It further proposes to change the system of examination for the secondary level (Afifiy, 2018). Part of the plan is to reform the curriculum, a process that involved international organizations and consultancy companies, according to the minister. This plan is funded also by many international organization, including the World Bank.

Moreover, on the MoE website, there is a link for the Teachers First initiative, which is supposedly is an initiative taken by MoE and supported by two international consultancy companies, and aims to train the teachers to create an adequate learning experience.

The efficiency of these reform plans is not the topic of this research. But there are many questions to be asked, as indicated in Mada Masr's article. The most important question for the purposes of this paper is: where is the role of civil society organizations, which have been working in education for decades, in this plan? In the interviews, CSOs informed us that they heard about these reform plans the same way the general public did. The founder of one of the NGOs we interviewed was however part of the consultant's team of the Minister, but as an individual, not representing the NGO. It is also important to mention that this person is from Cairo. Thus there was no representation for the other governorates.

After discussing the different variables of the quality of education, this paper will try to give an overview of the activities of Egyptian NGOs working to improve the quality of education, especially those working on training teachers.

Framework for Improving the Quality of Education

It is not easy to measure the quality of an education system. Not only because it depends on the socio-economic context of the country in question but also because it involves variables on many levels, starting from curriculum design, school management, teachers to student performance and parents' engagement.

Thus, in the Egyptian case, it is not only about improving the curriculum, but also about teachers' training, school management, the role of MoE, and the involvement of parents in the learning process.

In 2013, the Education Unit of the World Bank published a report titled "Framework for the Reform of Education Systems and Planning for Quality" where the authors offered a framework comprising six elements important for improving the quality of education in a given context. The authors devised this inclusive framework after studying theories, findings about quality of education, as well as the experiences of different countries during the last two decades (Patrinos, Anthony, Velez, & Wang, 2013).

So, this framework consists of six elements:

1. Assessment: it is important that there are indicators and benchmarks that provide information on students' learning for main stakeholders: teachers, administrators, policy makers, students and families. The report also highlights that in the high-quality education systems like Finland there is a shift from assessment of individual students to an assessment of the whole education system.

2. Autonomy: based on literature and countries' experiences, the more the local authorities and schools have autonomy in decision-making, the better the students perform. "In the autonomy-based structure, the central administration retains responsibility for budgeting and funding, setting policy, and evaluations, decision-making in relation to management and operation of the schools are decentralized to local authority and schools" (Patrinos, Anthony, Velez, & Wang, 2013).

3. Accountability: An autonomy driven reform cannot work without a clear system of accountability. The report stresses that "effective school performance should be based on a well-established accountability structure that clearly defines the roles of institutions, agencies, and individuals exercising control over the resources and activities of schools" (Patrinos, Anthony, Velez, & Wang, 2013).

4. Attention to teachers: the quality of teachers is a pre-requisite for the quality of students and the whole education system. This quality is attributed to three factors: (1) the selection process of teachers, (2) the system of salary and compensation, and (3) the ongoing capacity building and training of teachers to be effective instructors (Patrinos, Anthony, Velez, & Wang, 2013).

5. Attention to early childhood development: the report highlights that early childhood development (ECD) is the first cornerstone for improving any

education system. The early years of childhood represent the best time to develop language abilities ad cognitive functions. It is the foundation affecting the behavior and learning of the child (Patrinos, Anthony, Velez, & Wang, 2013).

6. Attention to culture: an education reform plan cannot be copied from a context to another context, or it will fail. Any education reform plan should take into consideration the different socio-economic and cultural dimensions of the given society. Changing an education system is not just about changing the curriculum; it implies changes in values and morals in many institutions and also for the population. Here, it is important to mention that education is not separate from politics. Thus, from one side, without a deeply-rooted institutions, an education reform plan will not be successful. On another side, it engenders uncertainties which elevates the anxiety of people because education touches almost all the population. So, the reformer planners have to be as clear and transparent as possible to build up conviction and trust with the population so that they accept and cooperate, for the reform plans to succeed. This needs a whole political context where democracy and participation are enabled.

The three authors stress that improving one or three of these elements will not help in improving the quality of education but they have all to work together in relation to each other. The relationship between the elements is not additive but iterative and interactive (Patrinos, Anthony, Velez, & Wang, 2013).

Reflections on the Quality of the Egyptian Education System

Based on this framework, we offer the following reflections on the Egyptian education system and the recent reform plan proposed by the Minister.

First, one the main measures of the plan is to do away with all the examinations for the primary levels, as well as changing the examination system of the secondary level to limit it to one year. So, the plan follows the logic of decreasing the assessment of individual students. However, it is not clear if there is any measures for the assessment of the general education system. Furthermore, it is not clear how the teachers will be trained for this new system.

Second, the Egyptian education is highly centralized. Most of the decisions are taken by the MoE and are not delegated even to its departments in the different governorates. Thus, a deeper structural and institutional reform is needed in

order to make local authorities and schools more autonomous, and able to develop a clear and transparent system of accountability.

Here, we move to the third point, which is related to the political context that does not encourage participation. The reform plans are top-down and do not engage the different stakeholders and do not deal with the different socio-economic and cultural factors. Part of the reform plan is to start using electronics tablets for the first secondary exams and to avoid cheating, which require a lot of funds and logistics. At the same time, many of the Egyptian students at this level of education might have reading and writing difficulties.

The last reflection is related to the centrality of teachers' training to the reform of the education system in Egypt. There are around one million teachers in Egypt in 2017 (Ministry of Education, 2018). The reform plan should not only include an effective training that allow them to deal with the students in an interactive and open learning environment; it should most importantly change the process of selection. The change of the process of selection should be concerned with education in the faculties of education and pedagogy. This represents a whole set of procedures that go beyond the mandate of the MoE, for it is included other institutions. Adding to this, the salaries of teachers in Egypt are very low. Thus, it discourages teaching. therefore, changing the curriculum and offering training to teachers will not lead to a real and concrete reform in the Egyptian education system. This is why the initiative of the MoE, Teachers First, is problematic although it is good intentioned. It is problematic because it relies on an online training system which is not accessible for teachers in different places in Egypt. It is also problematic because it is not supported by adjustment of the salary and selection systems.

The MoE contracted with an international consultancy company called Imagining Education, whose affiliation and base are not known. This is problematic because there are NGOs and international organizations in almost all governorates that have long experience in training teachers in Egypt.

CSOs Expertise in Teacher Training

One of the main activities of many NGOs working in education in Egypt is to offer training for teachers and students on specific topics. This could be directly related to conditions of funding they are receiving, but could also be part of the vision the NGO is developing; and could further be a mix of the two factors. The training varies from one day training to a long term one, from working on one specific topic to working with the whole learning environment and methodology.

To map the expertise of CSOs, especially NGOs, in teacher training in Egypt, a dedicated research with more resources and time is needed. In this paper, we will only showcase, based on the interviews, two models of conducting teacher training by NGOs.

The first is an NGO founded since 1980s and working in one of the Upper Egypt governorates. It has a long history of providing educational services to the community of this governorate, in both its urban and rural parts. One of their recent projects was concerned with a holistic transformation of schools they are working at not only in their governorate but in three other governorates. They work on renovating the infrastructure but most importantly they aim at improving the quality of education, and for this they offer teacher training. In this project, they worked in these schools for two years. They offered training that covered three different levels: Personal: which tackles the psychological personal stress the teachers face in their career.

1. Behavioral: which deals with the relationship between the teachers and the students, and with the behavioral challenges of students.
2. Professional: which is about the development of teaching skills to become student-centered, and focuses on how to plan for the classes and to deal with the different performance levels of students.

Our interlocutor emphasized the importance of following-up with the teachers directly. She criticizes the fact that the training offered by the MoE is done through video-conference or online. Thus, there is no space for interacting and following-up with teachers for evaluating the concrete impact of trainings on their performance in classes.

The second NGO is founded almost ten years ago by young Cairenes who are ex-employees of corporate companies or international organizations. Its vision and projects offer parallel extra-curriculum activities to children in the disadvantaged area they are based in. They create a community school and offer trainings for teachers in public and private schools. For the founders themselves, the process was a learning journey.

They had two main projects. The first one is similar to the one offered by the first featured NGO, a school transformation project. It consists of a series of interventions in a number of schools in four governorates where they not only offer teacher training but also work with students, infrastructure and administration. The second offer specific trainings on specific topics. This one is challenging because the school or teachers have to ask for these trainings. This

NGO managed to develop modules of trainings and to accredit them from international academic institutions. Our interlocutor mentioned that once a department of the MoE asked them for these modules and that they were also asked to train trainers to offer these trainings. However, this was done once and was not institutionalized, and they were not approached when the plan for training teachers were launched by the MoE. One of their founders is part of the group of consultants for the minister but she is there in his personal capacity.

These two NGOs are just examples of the long experience of NGOs and other CSOs in offering training for teachers.

The main recommendation is that the MoE should benefit from this developed and experiences training modules, trainers experienced in working in different local communities, and from organizations that have built trust with local communities over years.

Challenges to CSOs' Intervention in Training Teachers

Based on interviews done for this research, and on fieldwork done by the main researcher since 2013 on the role of NGOs in education, NGOs in general are facing many challenges. However those working in education, especially in projects that require access to public schools, have a set of special challenges:

> The first and most important challenge is acquiring permissions to access schools. It is a double process of permissions, one for funding and one for accessing schools. Receiving funding is becoming more and more difficult especially with the latest amendments to the law of association, which forces the NGO to deal with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA). It is a long process of applying, waiting and being checked by security. To get access to schools, on the other hand, the NGO has to present the project to the MoE, and not only the local department but to the central MoE, and then go through a process of application, waiting and approval from security and the Department of Social Participation. The first NGO featured here had a long history of cooperation with the MoE, so most of the times, it gets the permission. However, our interlocutor also complains of the complicatedness of the process. The second NGO does not have this kind of relationship with the MoE, so it works with other big organizations that have protocols of cooperation with the MoE to be able to access public schools.

Thus, the permission is easier when the NGO has a protocol of cooperation with the MoE. Most organizations that have such protocols

are big organizations, in terms of scale but also in term of the funding they are offering to the MoE.

In India, there is an interesting example of cooperation between government and NGOs that aims at improving the overall quality of education. The state-governments of India could not meet the different goals of education. Thus, CSOs were invited to be more involved and complement the role of the government by signing memorandums-of-understanding (MoUs) (Syal, 2011). These MoUs give the NGOs the space to intervene in their communities on many levels for a long term, not just doing trainings for teachers but also following up with administration of schools and parent-teacher associations. The results of the research done in one of the states of India show that this cooperation improved the rates of attendance.

Egypt is a more centralized state and smaller than India in terms of population size. It will be useful if there is more MoUs with a number of local and national NGOs working in different parts of the country. especially in training teachers. These MoUs can include a detailed evaluation of the activities of NGOs and the accountability system.

> The second challenge is that education authorities in Egypt starting from the MoE to teachers expect from NGOs that they are going to offer material support: maintenance of infrastructure, facilities or even increase of salaries for the teachers. This is due to many factors: the bad conditions of many schools and the very low salaries of teachers. Thus, it is important to work on increasing the rewards of teachers and to work on the maintenance of schools as well as the training of teachers. Improving the quality of education could not happen while working on one factor.

> The third challenge is related to the second. It is about the level of engagement of teachers. Our interlocutors classified teachers into three categories. The first one is those who are enthusiastic and apply what they learn in classes even in absence of any direct or material reward. The second group includes those who do not perform but with effective evaluation and monitoring they should perform. The third category is those who are not interested at all. If the training given by the NGOs is supported by the MoE and linked to a system of rewards, more teachers will be enthusiastic about applying what they learn in the classes they teach.

> The last challenge is the fact that NGOs and other CSOs were absent from the discussions around the reform plan initiated by the minister, especially those not in Cairo. Taking into consideration the long history and expertise of CSOs, especially NGOs, in education in Egypt, this might represent a shortage for the policies employed by the MoE. These entities have concrete experiences in working in education and in communities which the decision makers in Cairo will not be able to understand as deeply, certainly not using reports and numbers given to them by the different departments.

Recommendations

Given the challenges mentioned and the current political and economic context in Egypt, the main recommendation to the MoE is to include CSOs, especially NGOs, in higher levels of decision making, and most importantly to delegate to them some tasks such as training teachers. This could save money given to international consultancy companies, which could rather be allocate to increase the salaries of teachers. Moreover, these trainings should not be done through video conference, so that they become more effective for the teachers.

> Incorporating civil society organizations in the higher levels of decision-making, especially those in areas that need them the most, and those with experience in civil educational work, in order to benefit from their field experience.
>> Inviting representatives from civil society organizations, working in the areas most in need, to meetings at the level of districts, but also at the central Ministerial level, to discuss new policies for the enhancement of quality education.
>> The integration of one or two civil society organizations, working in the areas most in need, within the Minister's advisory board, so that they are represented at the central level in the Ministry. This will allow the Ministry to benefit from their more concrete experience which will help it develop more relevant policies.
> Utilizing the experience of civil society institutions in the training of teachers, and delegating the bulk of this training to the associations located throughout the country, while simplifying this process.

> The Ministry, through the Department of Community Participation, should study civil society organizations that have experience in teacher training. It should learn from their training curricula and their methods. The ministry should identify the physical and human capabilities that the organizations allocate for the training activity.

> Selecting a number of institutions which can be representative of the Egyptian society, and delegating to these institutions the task of training teachers, and training trainers in smaller institutes across the country, especially in remote and marginalized areas.

> Inviting these institutions to a conference to present their different approaches and reach agreement on a number of programs that they use or want to use in teacher training. This conference will offer the institutions the opportunity to exchange their expertise in this field.

> Signing cooperation protocols with these institutions to carry out this task within a specified period of time, including a period of follow-up and ensuring that the training is integrated into the educational process.

> Facilitating civil society institutions' access to schools throughout the country, in coordination with the regional directorates at the Ministry.

> Facilitating the process of obtaining funding, and encouraging international institutions and donor institutions that have protocols of cooperation with the Ministry to finance these local institutions to empower them to efficiently and successfully perform their tasks.

> Monitoring and evaluating the whole process by the Ministry and representatives of civil society.

III. CSOs Role in Making Education More Accessible

According to Comment 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the right to education has four pillars: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. The first pillar of the right to education is the availability of schools and educational institutions. However, availability is not enough on its own; accessibility is also necessary. "Educational institutions and programs have to be accessible to everyone, without discrimination, within the jurisdiction of the State party" (Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1999).

Accessibility has three overlapping dimensions: non-discrimination, physical accessibility and economic accessibility.

1. The non-discrimination dimension means that education has to be accessible to all without any discrimination based on race, class, gender, ethnicity or any other ground. The comment prioritizes "the most vulnerable groups, in law and fact" (Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1999).

2. Physical accessibility stresses that education must be reachable in terms of safety and geographic location or even through modern technology.

3. Finally, education has to be affordable to all, especially primary education, which has to be compulsory and free for all. The article states that governments have to work on making secondary and higher education free (Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1999).

Therefore, to make education more available and accessible, schools have to be sufficient in terms of numbers but most importantly reachable and accessible.

This research stresses the role of CSOs in making education more accessible in Egypt, and it recommends different measures to support the cooperation between CSOs and the MoE in this domain.

Reflecting on Availability and Accessibility of Education in Egypt

The primary education enrollment rate reached 92% for boys and 96% for girls in 2018 (Ministry of Education, 2018). Preparatory education enrollment rate reached 86% in 2018 (Ministry of Education, 2018). On the one hand, these high figures of enrollment show that the big majority of girls and boys have access to education at least for the primary and preparatory levels. On the other hand, these figures do not reflect many challenges.

The first is the high density in the classes that lead to bad quality of education. According to the MoE statistical book of 2018, the average class density is 44 students per class in the primary levels and over 40 for preparatory levels. "More than 75% of Egyptian students are in classrooms that have over 40 students. Especially in the critical primary stage, such high classroom densities have a very negative impact on learning. In addition, most classrooms are not designed to house more than 40 students, which leads to additional problems of

overcrowding, unhealthy classroom environments, absenteeism and unmanageable classrooms" (Sobhy, 2019).

The second is the problem of out-of-school children, which is not just about who were not enrolled. This is mainly about those who are enrolled but still cannot read or write till the preparatory and sometimes the secondary levels. The third challenge is the safety of schools and the sufficiency of its equipment. According to the "availability" criteria of the right to education, these schools must be safe and equipped to accommodate the students. The high enrollment rates do not reflect the status of many Egyptian schools. But there are press reports, and observations by researcher and interlocutors showcasing how schools are neglected and not sufficiently equipped.

The fourth challenge is related to accessibility. A recently published policy paper about school construction in Egypt argues that there are many schools in unpopulated areas and not enough schools in dense areas (Sobhy, 2019). Therefore, some classrooms are overcrowded which does not guarantee a high-quality learning environment and at the same time some children can have a hard time trying to reach their schools because they are far away.

According to the constitution and laws, education is free until graduation from secondary school, but this contradicts the fact that Egyptian families spend around 15 billion Egyptian pounds, mostly on private tutoring (Al Araby Al Gedid, 2018). Thus, a fifth challenge is related to inaccessibility of education due to economic conditions, especially in a country where around 27% are below the poverty line (World Bank, 2018).

Therefore, there is a need for more safe, accessible and equipped schools. The president stated in November 2018 that there is a need to build around 250,000 classes, with a budget of around 130 billion Egyptian pounds (Reuters, 2018). This leads to the fifth challenge: the high cost of school construction and the complicated regulations of the General Authority for Educational Buildings (GAEB). Sobhy (2019) showed in her policy paper how the procedures and conditions of GAEB are making school construction highly expensive in comparison to African and Latin American averages. She also recommends a set of measures that could help in reducing the costs of construction especially in making the regulations less complicated and more flexible.

In the next section, this research paper will discuss the efforts of Egyptian and International NGOs in making education more available and accessible. It will then build on Sobhy's recommendations for making school construction a simpler process and propose a set of recommendations to make education in Egypt more and more accessible.

NGO Expertise in Making Education More Accessible for Disadvantaged Children

One of the main historical activities of national and international NGOs in Egypt is building public and private schools. Based on fieldwork since 2013, building schools and/or maintaining their infrastructure ranks as the number one amongst the activities that the MoE advises NGos to undertake. The second project in which NGOs are highly involved in is creating community schools. Finally, NGOs are also involved in offering education for disabled children especially in disadvantaged areas.

Construction and Renovation of Schools

One of the oldest NGOs in Egypt, the Association of Upper Egypt, was established by Jesuites in the 1940s and taught the poor next to churches or inside homes in the governorates of Upper Egypt. When Nasser came to power and nationalized the education, thirty-five schools of the association were transformed into primary schools to follow the education program of the MoE. This association continued to found more schools. They are considered as private schools with affordable fees, following the same curriculum as well as extra-curriculum activities: art activities, foreign language course, hygiene awareness and civic education programs. They are open to both Muslim and Christian students. It is one of the strategies of the association to open up to the local community and avoid confessional tensions.

Thus, national and local NGOs especially those with religious backgrounds were involved in founding private schools in different parts of the country. Starting from late 1970s, some NGOs with Islamist background also founded private schools where pupils have extra-curriculum activities oriented more to religious activities, such as reciting the Quran.

In the year 2000, a department was established within the MoE, whose main objective was to facilitate the intervention of NGOs and organizations in public schools. That was an official recognition of the role of NGOs in education. This decision came also as part of the neo-liberalization policy pursued by the Mubarak regime and the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Plans (Abdelrahman, 2013). Since then, international organizations were involved in the construction of public schools in partnership with the MoE. For example, between 2000 and 2008, Care International and USAID partnered with the MoE to build 98 schools in three governorates in Upper Egypt (Abdelrahman, 2013).

Furthermore, big-scale national NGOs got involved in constructing public schools. After the revolution of 2011, Misr Al-Kheir, an Egyptian institute founded in 2007, launched, in cooperation with the MoE, a project to build 100

public primary and preparatory schools. The project targeted governorates with a large deficit in the number of schools, which are mainly in Upper Egyp. Like all other Misr Al-Kheir projects in the field of education, this one followed a protocol established directly with the MoE.

In an interview in 2013 with the head of Department of Associations at the MoE, she insisted that the construction of new schools and the renovation of existing schools are the priority, especially as "the ministry cannot satisfy all needs using its budget" (Abdelrahman, 2013). Our interlocutors in 2019 also stressed the fact that the ministry officials, school administrators and teachers always ask about the material benefits, such as maintenance of infrastructure, and that they prioritize them more than doing trainings or activities for teachers and students.

These construction projects mobilize significant financial resources and aim to reach a large number of disadvantaged people. They require big associations with a stable protocol with the MoE, which is difficult for many NGOs in Egypt especially with the limitations on receiving funds. It is easier for international NGOs, big national NGOs, and associations attached to companies such as the Vodafone association. Delegating the mandate of constructing schools to NGOs can be one strategy that decreases the spending of the MoE on this item. The saved funds can then be redirected to improving the quality of education. However, the construction regulations should be reviewed to reduce the costs, so that more schools can be built with the same budget proposed by the NGOs.

Community Schools

In the 1990s, the problem of out-of-school children was one of the major education problems, especially for girls. Here, community schools (one-classroom schools and other types) helped in controlling the problem. Community schools were proposed by UNICEF to the Egyptian government in 1992. However, based on interviews with workers in NGOs in Upper Egypt before 1992, NGOs were already working on projects with similar ideas (Abdelrahman, 2013). This brings us to the same problem that there is no communication between grassroots NGOs working for years with local communities to improve the conditions of education system and the central administration of the MoE in Cairo.

The first community schools were created in Assiut in 1992, numbering 201 schools in 1999-2000 and now around 5000 schools in most of the governorates (Ministry of Education, 2018).

The project of the community schools was considered as a prototype for partnership between the MoE and non-governmental actors: each actor has a complementary role to the others. There is no competition between them, rather

coordination and cooperation. In the early stages of the implementation of the project, UNICEF developed the school model by providing training to teachers, offering the necessary tools for the students as well as furnishing of schools. The MoE, on the other hand, participated with UNICEF in the administration and the remuneration of teachers (Zaalouk, 2014). A department for community schools was created in the MoE to monitor this project, which was mainly based on the contribution of local associations: they provide the premises and participate in the management of the school. According to Poisson, (Poisson, 1999) this project has mobilized the local communities in three ways. The first is the mobilization of community resources, for example, finding a space for the school. In some cases, it is the leaders of the community (such as the village mayor) who agree to allocate a room for the school in a mosque, a community center, or a house, or even in some cases offer a land to build the school on. The second way is the participation of local community members in the management of some of these schools through local associations. In addition, in many cases it is the community members who are responsible for teacher training.

According to one of our interlocutors, his NGO spent more than one year until they received the authorization to open a community school in a disadvantaged neighborhood in Giza. The format of the community school is a flexible one that gives space for teachers and children to experience active and collaborative learning methods in low density classes. Thus, the MoE should encourage the construction of these schools in more disadvantaged areas, so primary education is more accessible for more children, especially the poor and the girls.

Education for Children with Disabilities

Many NGOs working in education offer inclusive learning spaces for children with disabilities. Egyptian public schools are not equipped to offer education for these children, not only for lack of material requirement, but also because of the high density of classes and the lack of training for teachers. One of our interlocutors stated that his NGO offers medical assistance to disabled children, but also special education, such as writing, reading skills and vocational training. He told us how some of the students now have their own business in one of the villages of Minya.

This expertise of NGOs in disabled children education has to be considered. Through cooperation from the MoE, some of the best practices could be replicated in more governorates so that education become more accessible for children with physical and mental challenges. By the end of 1990s, a network of NGOs working in education was founded in Egypt to promote education for all.

These NGOs advocated many causes, one of which was to establish a department for associations, which happened in 2000. Thus, it is important that education NGOs get together in conferences and meetings and communicate their activities to officials, but also advocate for certain causes.

Recommendations

> Civil society organizations should activate the various networks or associations established in the past years, such as the Education for All Coalition or the Development and Learning Association. These network and associations have experiences in the communities they work for, and can help the Ministry in determining the priorities and challenges of access to education.
  > Reaching out to smaller associations and invite them to participate, by some associations with large human and material resources
  > Offering funding to facilitate general meetings at least twice a year, and to integrate institutions operating in areas most in need
  > Simplify the process of obtaining funding for these meetings, by the ministry, because it will help it draw policies closer to reality and avoid going through the same challenges the institutions already faced in their field work
  > Held meetings twice a year and discuss the priorities and challenges of access to and drop-out of education. They should present the results to the public in the presence of representatives from the Ministry. Public discussions will strengthen the independence of the associations

> The tasks of building and maintaining schools should be fully delegated to the civil society institutions that are able to undertake it. This will reduce their cost in the coming budgets, and the money saved can then support the quality of education in terms of teacher training and salary increase.
  > Announcing the number of schools to be built and their places. Civil society organizations should be encouraged to propose to participate in the process, especially the institutions of companies, so that it is part of their social responsibility
  > Facilitating the process building of schools by civil society institutions through protocols with the Ministry
  > Starting an open debate about the conditions of the educational buildings. The costs of these buildings should be reduced while taking into account the health and environmental standards and providing a safe and attractive environment for learners. There

should be a space for including local communities in the decision-making process

> The ministry should encourage civil society institutions to establish community schools in remote and marginalized communities
  > Facilitating the process of establishing these schools
  > Publishing the research and lessons learned from this experience online and making it available to a larger number of institutions so that they can benefit from previous experiences
  > Encourage the establishment of middle schools for graduates of community schools

> The Ministry should benefit from the expertise of civil society organizations in providing education to those with special abilities, in terms of both programs and methods
  > Monitoring the institutions working in this field, and discussing with them the lessons learned and the most important challenges
  > Facilitating the procedures for the provision of education for people with special needs in remote and marginalized areas
  > Encouraging leading institutions in this field to transfer their expertise to other associations in remote and marginalized areas

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4

Activating and Upgrading Ministerial Resolution No. 62 of 2013 Regulating Student Associations within Schools and Educational Departments and at the Level of the Republic

Submitted by
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Introduction

The Student Union is an elected mechanism within all schools in all stages of pre-university education. It is approved and regulated by resolution No. 62 of 2013 issued by the Ministry of Education.[1] There are allocations in the school budget and at the level of education directorates in the governorate for it, and both technical and financial support by the Ministry of Education to enable key partners to assess the benefits of student associations. There is, however, a lack of specific guidance on how to implement the decision. Therefore, student unions in most public schools in the Arab Republic of Egypt do not function well as an available means for students to organize their interests and voices.

Most of them are inefficient and get only few resources from the school. In addition, their participation is very limited, which greatly affects the student's future and the making of a generation that lacks the spirit of participation and does not have the ability to participate effectively in the other stages of education, and on their participation in student associations in university. This is the effect at the level of students, while at the school level, it lacks the participation of students and their role in linking the school with the local community.

Hence, there is a need to revitalize these inert unions by guiding partners to the larger objectives of schools, then building the capacity of students and school personnel, especially social workers, school teachers and extracurricular teachers. This process should also include relevant Ministry of Education units responsible for giving training, standards in schools, technical support and quality assurance.

The Egyptian State affirms its full commitment towards enabling students to obtain their rights and complete their responsibilities as citizens. This vision represents a strategy for the Ministry of Education, which focuses on strengthening the role of student associations in developing their schools and communities from a human rights perspective. This perspective confirms that students have a great role in their own development, and the development of their schools and communities, through the foundations of effective future participation and involvement in society.

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[1] Ministerial Resolution No. 62 of 2013 stipulates that the objectives and objectives of student unions in matters such as democracy / student participation, human rights, the responsibility of the student to participate in the administration of the school, etc., and gives specific structures (leadership roles, subcommittees) Students at the school, administration, directorate and national levels (Ministry)

Activating and Developing Ministerial Decree on Student's Union   Magdy Aziz& Adel Badr

As well as the use of mechanisms such as student unions and school improvement plans, which are supported by the law and the national strategy for the development of education in Egypt. This helps in providing the possibility of continuity and has important impact on the national level, focusing on increasing the participation of girls in schools in the process of taking action to address issues and meeting their needs in schools and communities, as well as involving children in civil work to defend their rights.

The policy paper aims at benefiting from all interventions that have involved large number of partners in Egyptian governorates and other stakeholders, including students and representatives of the Ministry of Education. The steps included an analysis of the situation, problem, risks and partners, review previous and current contributions, realistic assessment of administrative and technical capabilities, application of creative methods and special methods to achieve effective and inclusive participation of children and finally empowering children to develop leadership skills. Students' participation aims at contributing to decision-making concerning their future in any of their related issues so that their interests can be understood and strengthened. Students will actively contribute to the planning, implementation and evaluation of all interventions.

By capacity-building we mean: the capacity of departmental staff has been built to ensure that it provides the necessary support and follow-up staff at the school level. Student-led networking and advocacy: their participation along with civil society organizations to document the realities of children in Egypt, while allowing them to participate effectively through participatory techniques and networking methods.

Information about the resolution:
Ministerial Resolution No. 62 of 27/2/2013 issued by the former Minister of Education Dr. Ibrahim Ahmed Ghoneim on the student unions and leadership is repealed to Ministerial Resolution No. 203, which was about the same issue.

Principles and objectives
Student unions are democratic educational organizations within the school that have multilevel formations that adhere to the principles of the Union and achieve its objectives.

Principles of Student Unions
1. Belief in God, His angels, His revealed books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgment, and the practical application of this through the daily

behavior of the students and the exclusion from any statement or action contrary to this principle

2.   Ensure freedom of expression for students to participate in making all decisions related to the educational process

3.   To consolidate democracy and achieve equality and social justice through various means from the 25th of January revolution

4.   Belief in national unity as an entrance to the unity of humanity and the preservation of sanctities and emphasize the spirit of belonging to the family, school and society

5.   Emphasize the values of citizenship, which promotes national belonging and the preservation of the pillars of social peace

6.   To strengthen values and instill them in the hearts of students by encouraging good example among young people and developing personal and emphasizing that each right is matched by duty

Aims of Student Unions:

1. Encourage students to excel in the academic life and strengthen the spirit of creativity and innovation
2. Commitment to the principles of the Union as a legitimate and national organization
3. Benefit from educational activities inside and outside the school
4. Contribute to the achievement of the objectives of education, most importantly:

   A- Emphasize the building of the Egyptian personality capable of facing the challenges of the future
   B-The establishment of productive society by achieving comprehensive development
   C- Preparing a generation of scientists through programs to care for the gifted and talented

5. Express students' thought, assert their rights and hold accountable those who violate principles and objectives
6. Expanding the scope of knowledge and experience by exchanging visits and emphasizing the culture of dialogue
7. Interest in the culture of self and public to coexist with the technological development in daily life

Formations
Classroom
The formation starts from the fourth-grade. All students of the class are members of the Student Union of the class, and constitute an executive office including:

> Leader of the class
> Secretary of the Union
> Assistant Secretary
> Religious and cultural rapporteur
> Social rapporteur
> Scientific rapporteur
> Sports and Scouting rapporteur
> Arts rapporteur

Membership Conditions for the Executive Office:
1. To be a citizen of the Arab Republic of Egypt with its nationality
2. Must be with a good manner and excellent to represent the activity to which it is nominated
3. Not to be weak or backward in his studies
4. No penalties have been imposed for violating school regulations
5. To be consistent with the true spirit and spirit of cooperation and be recommended by the leader of the class and two of the teachers of the class
6. Has paid the student unions fees

The applicant must submit a written request to the leader of the class, including his/her name, his/her activity, his/her potential and his/her experience, and he/she will sign the agreement to participate in all activities.

The election
The election process goes as follow: Students in a class are divided into 5 activity committees as described above. The election process is carried out by a tripartite committee of non-candidates chosen by the leader of the class, who writes on the blackboard names of the certificate to explain them and give each of them the opportunity to identify himself to his colleagues and present his electoral program.

The tripartite committee shall distribute the cards and collect them after the votes have been cast. Elections of the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary shall be held first and the five rapporteurs' elections are held in the same way.

The electoral card is canceled if:

> The voter signed in his name, and ignored typing a candidate name

> The candidate did not write any name, or writes two names in one center

The tripartite committee shall carry out the counting operations and announce the result. In the case of equality, the elections shall be re-elected only among equals. The committee shall release a copy of all the steps in the register of the student union council of the class signed by the leader of the class and keep a copy of it to the social worker until the end of the term of the council.

Council of Students' Union is formed as follows:

> The school, which consists of more than 14 classrooms, has its council of the union formed of the trustees of the class

> The school, which consists of 14 classrooms or less, has its council formed of secretaries and assistant secretaries

> The principal of the school shall be the general leader of the Union and he and the Union official shall supervise the Council

Formation of the Executive Office of the Student Union:

> General leader of the Union of students of the school

> The social worker is responsible for the union

> Secretary and Assistant Secretary

> The decision makers of the five activity committees elected at the school

Election process

Applicants applying for the executive office must apply in writing to the head of the student's union of the school, including his/her name and class, and the position wishing to run for him at least one week prior to the elections. Five activity committees shall be formed as mentioned above, each of which shall not be less than 5 members. If the activity is not available, the assistants of the classes shall be completed by the two rapporteurs. The elections shall be

conducted by a tripartite committee, in the same manner as the elections in the classroom.

Council of Students Union of Educational Administration:
It is a student union council for each stage of education (primary/ preparatory/ secondary) where:

> Management that includes more than 14 schools should include in its council the school trustees

> The administration, which includes 14 schools or less, has its board of trustees and assistant secretaries

> The director of the department shall be the general director of the secondary student union, the under-secretary of management and the director of primary services. If there is no director of services, the director of primary education shall be a general director of primary

Formation of the Executive Office of the Students' Administration Union:

> Secretary of the Union

> Assistant Secretary

> The five rapporteurs

Along with the following leaders:

> Major General

> First wave of social education management

> Union's representative

> The oldest social education teachers of the stage

Election process:
It takes place just as the school election process.

Council of Students Union of the Educational Directorate

Each Directorate of Education shall have a Council of Students Union for the preparatory stage and a council for the secondary stage, where:

> The directorate, which contains more than 14 departments, has its board of trustees from the departments only

> The directorate, which contains 14 departments and less, has its board from the trustees and assistant trustees

> The director of the directorate shall be the general director of the secondary stage and the deputy director of the preparatory stage

Formation of the Executive Office:
Formed as the management, along with the following leaders:

1. General Leader
2. General Director of Social Education Directorate
3. The official of the Union
4. Council of the General Federation of students of schools in Egypt

The Minister of Education selects a general leader of the General Union of School Students from among the current or former teaching staff with experience in dealing with the students and follows the minister directly.

The Board shall be constituted as follows:

> General leader of the Union of students of schools in Egypt

> Members of executive offices of student union councils of all educational directorates (secondary)

Executive Office of the Students Union of Egyptian Schools:

> At its first meeting, the Council shall elect an executive office from its members by a member representing each governorate, taking into consideration gender representation

> The Council shall then elect a secretary and assistant secretary who has been elected to the bureau, provided that the two sexes shall serve as secretary and assistant secretary

The Bureau shall be constituted as follows:

> General leader of the Union of School Students

> Director of the Department of Student Unions

> Consultant of social education

> Secretary and Assistant Secretary

> Elected members in accordance with the foregoing

The election

> The General Leader shall inform the members of the Council of the date and venue of the first meeting and its agenda

> Applicants wishing to apply shall submit a written application to the General Leader accompanied by the approval of the Board of Directors and approved by the Directorate of Education

> A meeting is held under the chairmanship of the Maj. Gen. or his authorized representative to hold the elections

> Each candidate is given the opportunity to introduce himself for his colleagues

> Prepare an election card with the names of all candidates

The general leader shall form a committee consisting of representatives of the administration of the student associations and three non-candidate council members of the tripartite committee.

> The voting process shall be carried out on the basis that the students shall vote for the members of the committee first and then the rest of the members and prepare a list of the winners to be signed by the committee and approved by the general leader and then announce the result

> The door shall be reopened for the election of the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary who won the Bureau

The election process shall take place in the same committee as mentioned above and the result shall be announced at the same session.

Leadership

> The school principal chooses a leader for each class, not to entrust him with more than one leadership assignment

> A share of leadership shall be allocated not exceeding the fourth quota and shall be from the original quorum of the teacher and shall not be allocated reserve shares on the same day of the lead share

School Leaders Council

In each school, a council of pioneers shall be established under the chairmanship of the general leader of the students' union (the headmaster). Its secretary shall be assigned to the social worker responsible for the activity of

the union of students of the school, in the first week of the academic year at most, and its membership goes for:

> The first social worker in the school - if any - or the oldest social workers in the school

> Specialized officials of the activities of the five committees of the student union (consultants committees) selected by the general leader of the competence and experience in the specialties of the five committees

> Chairman of the Board of Trustees and parents and teachers at the school

> Secretary of the Students Union of the school

Nine of the class leaders are selected by the general leader so that they represent all grades of the school (3 of the first grade, 3 of the second grade, 3 of the third grade. Or fourth, fifth and sixth primary if the school is a primary school) The council is for all school and elementary school leaders. It is limited to the classes formed by student associations. It is possible to enroll 3 experienced people who represent the first, second and third primary grades of the first cycle of basic education.

Meetings

> Any union council meets once a month under the chairmanship of its Secretary and the Secretary-General of the Assistant Secretary and the presence of its leader and the official of the Union, except the General Federation Council where he meets at least twice each year in the presence of the General Leader or his delegate

> Any activity committees that meet once a month under the chairmanship of its rapporteur and the presence of the official (adviser) of the concerned committee

> Any executive office meets once every two weeks or if necessary, under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the Union and the Secretary-General of the Assistant Secretary and the presence of the General Commander and the official of the Union, except for:

> The Executive Office of the Students Union of the Directorate where it meets once a month or if necessary

> The Executive Office of the Students' Union of Egyptian Schools, where it meets at least twice a year under the chairmanship of the Secretary, the Secretariat of the Assistant

> Secretary, and the presence of the General Leader of the General Federation or his delegate

> The council of school leaders meets once a month under the chairmanship of the general pilot and the secretariat of the student union

Election dates

> Elections shall be held no later than 3 weeks after the start of the academic year

> School elections shall be held no later than one month after the start of the academic year

> The administration elections shall be held no later than 6 weeks from the start of the academic year

> Elections of the Directorate shall take place no later than 7 weeks from the start of the academic year

> Elections of the General Federation of Egyptian Students shall be held two months after the beginning of the academic year

Terms of reference

Terms of reference of the student union council of a classroom

1. Introduce all aspects of the school activity and its groups so that any student can join one or more groups and propose the formation of new groups
2. The composition of the five activity committees among the students of the class
3. Examine the students' projects or proposals and refer what they see to the executive office of the class or the council of the student union
4. Coordinate between the activities accompanying the different materials and the specific activity programs of the committees
5. Reviewing the decisions issued by the Student Union Council and discussing the role of the class
6. Celebrating national events during the year
7. Helping to maintain order within the classroom
8. Participate in activities organized by the Union of students of the school or higher levels
9. Work to strengthen the relationship between students, teachers and parents by various means

Terms of reference of the Executive Office of the Student Union Council of the classroom

1. Coordinate the plans submitted by the committees of activity with the class and prepare the plan and the time schedule of each committee and submit them to the council for approval
2. Implementation of decisions and recommendations issued by the Council of the Class or higher levels
3. Representation of the separation in the higher levels of formation
4. Support the activities of the class in the Council of the Student Union of the school
5. Organizing the records showing the work of the committees and the council of students' union

Terms of reference of the student union council (school/ administration/ educational directorate)

1. Examine what is referred to him through the councils of the lower level students' union in the formation and the proposals and projects submitted by its members and make the appropriate decision and refer what he sees to the executive office or the higher formations
2. Adoption of the general plan of the Council in the light of the draft submitted by the Executive Office and what it considers to be added and approved by the General Commander
3. Approval of the draft general budget within the limits of its resources and approval of the General Commander
4. Study the decisions and recommendations issued by the senior formations and discuss its role in them
5. Organization of programs of activity and public service and community participation as one of the axes of reform with participation in programs and activities organized by the highest levels in the composition
6. Attention to programs that work to strengthen the relationship between students and teachers and parents
7. Studying the problems that may face students and schools and contribute to solving them

Terms of reference of the Executive Office of the Student Union Council (School/ Administration/ Educational Directorate)

1. Notify the executive offices at the lower level of the decisions and recommendations of the Student Union Council and the high-level formations and work to implement them
2. Prepare a general plan for the Council from the plans of activity and the central plan
3. Preparation of the draft general budget of the Student Union Council
4. Preparation of meetings and conferences held by the Council of the Union
5. Organizing the exchange of visits, publications and reports with the executive offices of the councils of the federations in different formations
6. Follow up the implementation of the programs and activities of the Union as well as the decisions and recommendations of the senior formations
7. Representation in the upper formations of student union organizations
8. Organizing records that illustrate the activity of the Council and its committees
9. Confront the emergency situations between the dates of meetings of the Student Union Council

Terms of reference of the Secretary of the Student Union Council

The Secretary and his/ her assistant shall, in each formation, cooperate with the general leader in the good conduct of the union and the achievement of its objectives. The Secretary of the Union shall assume the following functions under the supervision of the General Commander:

1. Chairing and managing meetings in a cooperative spirit and a sound democratic manner
2. Prepare the agenda for the meetings in cooperation with the Assistant Secretary and the five rapporteurs, including the suggestions and recommendations recommended to be presented at the least
3. Signing minutes of meetings, speeches and invitations of the Union
4. Representation of the formation in the bodies assigned to represent him
5. Follow the implementation of decisions and recommendations

Under the supervision of the Commander-in-Chief, the Assistant Secretary shall have the following functions:

1. Preparation of invitations to hold meetings
2. Record and sign minutes of meetings and speeches
3. Preparation of the draft budget of the Union
4. Receive proposals, projects and reports of committees
5. Follow the financial position of the Union

Financial affairs

> Each student must pay the annual subscription of the Union, which is determined by the Minister and received by the schools under receipts (123 education)

> The financial year of the student unions begins on the 1st of September of each year and ends by the end of August of the following year and the final account of the Union shall be submitted within 3 months of the end of the fiscal year

> Accept donations and donations to unqualified student unions in accordance with the ministerial decision governing the boards of trustees, parents and teachers

Distributing the revenue of student unions as follows:

> 35% for public service projects and camps and programs committees, talented and outstanding

> 30% for exchanging visits, dating and trips

> 10% for seminars, lectures, conferences and exhibitions

> 15% for publications purchase of uniforms, uniform, armor and gifts for the Union

> 5% to support the activity of the boards of classrooms, schools, departments or directorates

> 5% reserve and miscellaneous

The ratios may complement each other or report new disbursement purposes that would meet the objectives of the Union and be approved by the Council of the Union at the relevant level.

Signature of financial notes for the Student Union:
1. The union's representative
2. The general leader

Signature of financial notes for the Students' Union of Management:
1. The official of the Union
2. The first leader
3. The general leader

Signature of the financial notes for the Student Union:
1. Union official
2. General guidance
3. The general leader

Signature of financial notes for the general union of school students:
1. Director of the Department of Student Unions
2. The financial director of student unions
3. The general leader

Checks

In total, a second signature of the representative of the Ministry of Finance in the Department (Directorate - Directorate - General Union) and signature of the first director of the department (the director of the school administration and administration/ director of the Directorate)

Bills for school:

> Financial Officer of the project - School secretary - Union official - General leader

> At other levels, the financial officer replaces the school secretary

General provisions

> Students

> The Director General of the Student Union of the School: Director of the school administration

> Membership in the councils of the student associations begins from the date of election of the member and ends with the formation of similar councils in the academic year

> The member may be re-elected one of these councils once the prescribed conditions have been met

> The social worker shall not be charged with any work that hinders his work or contravenes the provisions of the ministerial decree

> Both genders shall serve as Secretary and Assistant Secretary in each of the following:
>> Joint classes
>> Joint schools

Educational departments and the general union:
1. The Tripartite Commission shall receive the following documents before the start of the election process.
2. A list of voters (members of the council present)
3. An appropriate number of election cards
4. A form for the minutes of the Committee
5. Uncover the dump sounds

The voter must put the ballot card himself in the fund prepared for this before the committee. Each level of formation shall be two reports, one half-year and the other at the end of the year, each containing a statement of activities, programs, services and proposals. Reports shall be sent to the highest levels of formation.

It is permissible to drop the membership of students in the councils of student associations in the following cases:
1. If he fails to attend two consecutive sessions or three separate meetings without an acceptable excuse
2. If he violates the provisions of this regulation or the duties assigned to him or neglects to perform them
3. If he commits an act which the council or the executive office of the addressee deems to be a serious act

The decision of the decision shall be issued by a majority of two-thirds of the members of the Council after hearing his statements as to his position. He may be satisfied with warning, warning, censure or suspension for a certain period.

> If the member's place is vacated due to death, conversion, dismissal or resignation, his replacement shall be re-elected, provided that his term of office expires on the date on which the term of office of the original member was supposed to expire

> In the case of non-availability of one of the activities in the Council may nominate those who have been completed by membership of the

committees and if he won the membership of the Office becomes a member of the Council

> All meetings may be convened by the general leader. An extraordinary meeting may be convened at the request of half the members. Members shall be informed of the agenda at least three days in advance of the meeting and shall be informed of its date and place. The meeting shall not be considered legal unless it is attended by the majority of the members and the responsible leader or his representative. Decisions shall be issued by a majority of the votes. In the case of equality, the subject becomes inadmissible and may be re-presented at a subsequent meeting.

> Unions, councils and executive offices have the right to form temporary or permanent committees. The members of these committees may be members of those committees that they believe fit other than their members and meet whenever necessary

At the formation of the union, the following schools shall be considered:

> A school that includes classes or a special non-integrated people is considered a complete unit in the composition of the school board

> A school that has more than one term of study and each period has an independent school, each with its own council

> The school, which includes sections for different educational stages and types, each of which is integrated in grades, each stage of which is considered an independent unit and constitutes an independent council

> It is possible to form a student union council and an executive office for special education schools. Special accounts shall be allocated to the student unions and the official records shall be responsible for one of the specialists in financial affairs

> Travel of the representatives of the student associations in the departments, directorates and officials accompanying them to attend the programs and meetings of the higher formations and other tasks assigned to them by a decision of the Council or the General Commander

> The general leader of the Union of Student Students (the Department of Student Unions) shall clarify and interpret the provisions of this Regulation and its implementation, and may be proposed to amend them on the recommendation of the general union council

> Obstacles resulting from the distribution of financial allocations and spending items of student unions

First: Financially

The weak financial allocations for the activities of the student unions, where the amount and capacity of 2.90 pounds of each student in the primary stage, and the amount and capacity of 3.50 pounds of each student in the preparatory stage, the amount and capacity of 4.50 pounds of each student at the stage of secondary and technical secondary education in accordance with Ministerial Resolution No. (356) 2018 concerning the determination of fees and fines and additional services and the same as the evaluation evidence obtained from students and students of schools in different stages of education.

Only 60% is allocated for the expenditure of the activities of the student unions within the schools (i.e. approximately 1.74 pounds per student in the primary stage and 2.10 pounds for each student in the preparatory stage, while in secondary education it amounts to 2.70 pounds for the fees).

Difficulties of spending through the unified account of schools and educational departments, because of the length and complexity of the disbursements and purchases and approvals for the implementation of the activity.

Second: Technically

Absence of criteria for evaluation and accountability of student associations at all levels and absence of clear and specific text for the stakeholders involved in the evaluation and accountability process.

The development of plans of action in advance by the educational departments of the subjects and activities of student unions elected schools and not listen to the views and views of the unions led to the weakness of the process of implementation and also came some of these plans are not appropriate to the nature of the local needs of some union.

The absence of an annual report to monitor the achievements made and identify the difficulties encountered - the ways to overcome these difficulties and document the experiences and success stories following the process of accumulation of experience and continuous evaluation.

Proposals and solutions
First: Financially

> Increase the financial allocations for the activities of student unions, where the allocation of 10 pounds of each student, through the amendment of the ministerial decision on the determination of fees and fines and for additional services and evaluation evidence obtained from students and students of schools in various stages of education

> Increase the proportion allocated to spend on the activities of student unions within schools for at least 80%

> Remove all difficulties of expenditure through the unified account of schools and educational departments, which causes the length and complexity of disbursements and approvals for the implementation of the activity, and develop a simplified manual for the process of disbursement and financial adjustments, with a quick date for the completion of financial audits of the protection of expenditure on activities

Second: Technically

> Setting criteria for assessing and questioning student associations, and determining the official body responsible for the follow-up process and evaluation and follow-up achievements of student unions and activate the ministerial decision No. 62 of 2013

> Presentation of the plan from the educational departments to the elected student unions through the organization of regular and permanent meetings with the commitment to make adjustments to suit the needs of each school to ensure the feasibility and take into account the possibilities available to each school

> Implementation of periodic meetings to assess the performance of student unions and to identify what has been implemented of the plan and the difficulties encountered - and ways to overcome those difficulties. Organizing visits to exchange experiences with student associations of successful experiences

> Raise awareness of the role of student associations and its importance in activating the participation of students in public life and communication with the community, and contribute to the interaction between the community and the school

> Conducting awareness meetings for students

> Use school radio and booklets, and the work of guidance panels to raise awareness of the importance and role of student associations: How to run for elections, candidacy criteria, the concept of democracy, concepts and importance of student participation

> Enabling students to practice the electoral process democratically through:
>> Conducting elections with transparent glass boxes inside the school
>> Activate the role of the school parliament and allocate budgets to implement the interventions of student associations. And activate Article No. 34 of Decree No. 63 of 2013 governing student associations
>> Organizing an annual meeting under the auspices of the President of the Republic between the Egyptian Council of Ministers and the members of the General Federation of Students at the level of the Republic "aims to activate the role of the councils of student unions and work to develop solutions to the difficulties faced by federations at all levels
>> Holding regular meetings (hearings) between the members of the House of Representatives, especially the Education Committee of the Council to hear the views of students in the issues of educational development
>> Allow all levels of student unions to establish protocols of cooperation with government agencies such as (Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Culture, etc.) in order to activate the activities of the various federations

Third: From the procedural point of view

> Amendment of Article 6 of the Ministerial Decision "The Minister of Education shall choose a General Leader of the General Federation of School Students from among the current and former education men, and shall be subordinate to the Minister, among a number of candidates".

> The amendment of the text in Article (7) paragraph (6) of the regulation, which specifies the conditions of candidacy "to be paid to the fee of the participation of student unions". To exempt all categories exempted in accordance with the Ministerial Resolution on the determination of fees and fines and for additional services and Students and students of

schools in different stages of education, we avoided the right of their right to run or to challenge their victory.

> Eliminate the ambiguity in article 9 (6) of the organization of the methods of conducting executive office elections, as well as Article 75 of Chapter Six General Provisions "The two sexes share the positions of secretary and assistant secretary in the joint classes (boys and girls), although it is a positive distinction for girls, however, in the case of girls win the two posts, the Union is contrary to the articles of the resolution.

> Amendment of Article 10 of Chapter two Student Unions "The process of holding elections and announcing the results of the end of the third week of the beginning of the academic year should not exceed" the process of conducting elections and announcing the results should not exceed the end of the fourth week of the beginning of the academic year, Of the amendment.

> Amendment of paragraph 2 of Article 12 from "Schools with 14 classrooms or less its Council of the student's union shall consist of all its classrooms' secretaries", till "schools with 5 classrooms or less its Council of the student's union shall consist of all its class' secretaries".

> Article 65 is canceled, especially for the acceptance of donations and donations to student unions in accordance with the Ministerial Decision on the Board of Trustees, Parents and Teachers. The article on voluntary contributions was canceled in Resolution 306 of 2014 concerning the Board of Trustees. Of the rules and legal frameworks governing pre-university education.

> Amendment of Article (83) of Part VI General Provisions "The meeting is not valid unless attended by the majority of the members and the principal responsible or his representative and the decisions are issued by a majority of the number of votes and when equal issue is considered unacceptable and can be re-discussed again at a meeting to". The decision shall be in the case of equality, in which the opinion of the responsible head or his representative is likely.

> Amend the text of paragraph (4) of Article (86) Organization for the formation of the Union in schools may be formed a student union and the Executive Office of the Schools of Special Education, to be committed to special education schools to form a union for each school taking into account the type of disability and provide all facilities and availability necessary to enable students to process Voting and nomination, with the provision of a representative of students with disabilities in the General Union of students of the Republic.

Expected positive results
First: Financially

> Increasing the financial allocations for the activities of the student associations leads to increasing the financial capacities of the federations, which helps to achieve all the plans and programs and the objective that the unions are trying to implement

> Increase the capacity of schools to implement plans and intervention programs to improve children's participation in decision-making within schools

> The development of a simplified manual for the process of exchange and financial settlements helps to implement student activities at all levels of student unions

Second: Technically

> Developing criteria for evaluation and accountability of student associations helps to identify the opportunities available to student unions to develop mechanisms of work within them, and also to identify the strengths and weaknesses on the one hand and ways to overcome difficulties and success stories on the other hand, which is pleased to the need to activate the participation of students commensurate with the objectives of their unions

> The participation of student associations in the discussion and amendment of the plan developed by the educational departments ensures that the participation of the real stakeholders (elected student unions) in the implementation of these plans in a manner commensurate with the needs of each student union at all levels

> Increase community awareness of the importance of the role of student associations, which helps increase the participation of local communities in supporting these associations

> Maximize the importance of decision-making on the highest levels of the importance of supporting and supporting student unions and increasing the channels of communication and listening to students, which achieves the main objective of the establishment of student unions

> Utilize the possibilities available to government agencies to enable student associations to implement the various activities of the specialized committees of the student associations

Third: the procedural level

> Electing the general leader of the General Federation of School Students by the system of election among a number of candidates to ensure the completion of all elections democratically to the levels of management of student unions

> Ensure the participation of all students in the process of nomination and win, especially the categories exempted in accordance with the ministerial decision on the determination of fees and fines and for additional services

> Increasing the duration of the elections and announcing the results provides a greater opportunity for students to practice the process of running and presenting the electoral programs

> Increase the participation of students in schools with more than (5) classes in the completion of the process of participation and the formation of the appropriate

> The creation of a new mechanism to allow unions to accept donations and grants, in accordance with the legal rules and regulations governing the provision, allowing for increased financial capacity and spending on activities from community sources

> The importance of training students to resolve the decisions on the agenda of the Council of student unions of democratic systems and bias to the majority and acceptance of the other

> Within the participation of the special education schools to form a union for each school, taking into ac> unt the type of disability and providing all the necessary facilities and availability to enable the students to vote and run, with the provision of a representative of students with disabilities in the General Union of students of the Republic represents true empowerment of the concept of equality and distance from the negative distinction because of disability

Implementing bodies

> The Minister of Education as the one in charge of issuing ministerial decisions organizing the student unions, and also the affiliation of the general leader of the general union of students to the Minister

> Directors of directorates and educational departments

> Supervisors of social education

> The official representative of student unions

> Secretaries of ministries in education directories
> Masters of educational departments
> General union of the republic students

5

Physical Education in Schools

Prepared by

Hala Makhlouf

Abstract

Sports Education in Egypt is in need for a serious assessment and for constant improvement. The paper tries to discuss the situation of the sports in schools in Egypt and considers the available options to start from. It focuses on introducing martial arts to schools as a way to achieve the values and objectives of practicing sports in general and martial arts in particular. The paper then choses to work on two different, in nature and in application, types of martial arts. First is Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, a growing global combat sport that helps with building strong bodies and characters, and second is Wen-Do, self-defense techniques developed mainly for girls to be able to defend themselves in harassment situations. Desk research, Care International's internal reports, and interviews were conducted in writing this paper.

General Situation Analysis

The situation of Sports in schools in Egypt reflects the situation of Education in Egypt in General. The lack of investment, the huge number of the students, and the grades-based Education system are all factors that tremendously affect the situation of sports in schools. Sport at most schools is not the best in Egypt and is limited to the physical education class once or twice a week, where kids run after each other or bully girls, or where mostly boys play football and girls sit and watch. Girls are the most marginalized groups in physical education in schools "Boys tease us and sometimes they throw rocks at us" (Care International in Egypt).

The situation of the private schools is not much better, except the very expensive ones that are properly equipped with sports facilities. There is still a lack of investment in sports and generally students who excel at sports in school tournaments for example usually train at private.

Quality of education is a priority for Egypt's development and this doesn't exclude physical education. Activities, play and sports are rights for every child and planned applicable curricula are needed to effectively achieve the objectives of a good education. According to the UN, sports at younger age help achieve the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) of the UN as it's a vital tool to achieve peace and development, health, economic progress, etc. (Lemke, 2016).

Physical education has so many benefits and values hence a more inclusive approach is needed to be considered in sports at schools including but not limited to:

> It's anti-bullying benefits on kids at early age as a result of confidence and resilience gained from sports, especially if self-defense sports are incorporated

> It improves the morale and the value system of students by learning the ethics and values of hard work, commitment, fair play and the other values that usually comes with sports

> Switch the focus from only grades-based education, to a more comprehensive approach to child's wellbeing. Also how achieving in sports can give them grade bonus (Sports excellence grades)

> Combating harassment against female students, as they girls learn to be physically stronger and how to defend themselves, and for the boys to learn respect and to vent all their negative energy in sports

Policy Options

Different policies have been taken into consideration and applied in Egypt and elsewhere to improve the situation of PE in schools. Examples would be:

Improving the Existing Curriculum:

The existing PE curriculum published on the website of the MoE is very old and very basic. It also doesn't work towards changing the situation of the poor quality of PE in schools. A more interactive, fun and a curriculum that builds up to something and adds to the values, morals and physique of the students is needed. Also, a follow up is needed on the current application of curriculum in schools and why the boys get to always play football and the girls, if lucky, do some minor activities on the side or none at all. The curriculum and the PE teachers are key towards the improvement of PE in schools. However, this takes time, effort, and whole study and investigation of the current situation of the different stages of the curriculum. This is a macro scale policy though. It has to come from the MoE with consultation with experts and PE teachers. Improving the curriculum is very important though and a serious step towards improving the quality of education in Egypt.

Improving/building and Utilizing Already Existing Playgrounds:

Sports spaces and facilities are seriously needed in schools; however, the already existing playgrounds could be a good start to provide a space for kids and for the Physical Education classes. The playgrounds need improvements though, in addition to some investment and equipment to make them suitable

for kids to exercise and play. Safety is also important, so there is a need for safety procedures and tools. Utilizing the existing playgrounds by space management and adopt a multifunctional approach in using each space are some solutions. With some investment in sports materials, the existing situation could be promising to start with.

Alternative Solutions and Policy Recommendations

Egypt has a long-standing tradition of martial arts, from the painting of people grabbling, wrestling and fighting in organized steps on the walls of the temples and tombs of pharaonic Egypt, to the medals young Egyptian champions win in the Olympics and international competitions. Greco-Roman is the most popular form of martial arts in Egypt specially in popular and local gyms and youth centers. We have world champions who come from modest sports facilities yet achieved great results. We have big names in Greco-Romano, Judo, Taekwondo, Karate, etc. And this is because of the fact that the infrastructure of the sports doesn't cost much. Also, because they are individual competitive sports that depend mainly on the will and preparation of the athlete.

These policy recommendations aim to build on the already existing heritage of martial arts in Egypt and builds on the philosophy, values, and benefits of martial arts on kids, schools, and society as a whole (social, emotional, physical, learning, violence combating and crime preventing).

The paper focuses on two different techniques in approaching martial arts in schools. The first one is Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, due to its benefits but also its success in its school program in United Arab Emirates and its success in the favelas (slums) in Brazil. There is also a good foundation of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu in Egypt that could be built on. The second one is a more direct intervention that is Wen-Do, self-defense techniques for women that has been done in youth centers and other venues in Egypt. Both have a promising future in Egypt and could really help achieving the values of sports Education in Egypt and the benefits of martial arts of building emotionally, mentally and physically resilient kids. Both also can help prevent bullying in and out of schools.

Brazilian Jiu-jitsu (BJJ)

Brazilian Jiu-jitsu is a martial art developed in Brazil based on the old traditional Asian martial arts. BJJ is a combat sport that depends mainly on grappling with opponents, joint locks and ground fighting. BJJ is considered the gentle art of martial arts as it's mostly about controlling the other player's body without

strikes. The sport is vastly spreading around the world with international and local competitions of which Egypt has a few of them.

Brazilian Jiujitsu could be introduced to schools in Egypt in 4th, 5th and 6th grades, for both boys and girls (at age when it's still socially acceptable for boys and girls to play together) (Care International in Egypt), to help them at this young age develop confidence and build discipline to be able to defend themselves against bullying and absorb their own bullying energy.

BJJ in the Favelas in Brazil

Different dojos are providing free BJJ trainings in slums areas in Brazil. They give kids snack to encourage them to come to classes. The dojos sponsor the kids to save them from drugs, crimes and other acts that could threatens their lives and their future. The Tererê Kids Project launched by BJJ black belt star Fernando Augusto da Silva, who himself was saved from a criminal life by jiujitsu and he is paying back by introducing a social project. Some of the kids became world class champions. "Projects are very important in the community," Victor said. "For me, it changed my life and today it's my job. I believe they have the power to change a lot of people's lives and take them places they've never imagined" (Ball, 2017).

United Arab Emirates' School BJJ Program

United Arab Emirates is dominant in the sport it added to its school curricula. They sponsor interested students and pay for their trainings. "In truth, jiu-jitsu has penetrated the depths of Emirati culture, but not on a merely organic level: it's become an official government project, promoted by the seemingly endless resources of a shadowy ruling figure who has thrust the sport into the UAE's educational curriculum and national consciousness" (Blum, 2015).

A lot can be learnt from UAE in the matter of martial arts and Brazilian jiu-jitsu. It's a country that shares a lot of cultural similarities with Egypt. The school program is applied in 130 schools benefiting more than 76,000 students, both boys and girls (School Jiu-Jitsu Program, n.d.). UAE believes in the values learnt through training BJJ like commitment, respect for others, discipline, determination and sportsmanship (School Jiu-Jitsu Program, n.d.).

On learning from the UAE's experience and trying to transfer their knowledge, Motaz Atallah, a purple belt BJJ player and an expert in education reform, believes that martial arts have great benefits on people specially at younger ages. He believes that BJJ could help students as it sharpens their minds, make

them challenge themselves and look forward for something, it also contains their anger and negative energy. And on the feasibility of introducing BJJ to schools in Egypt Mr Atallah believes that it doesn't need huge infrastructure. Just a vacant space, foam mats that can be stored in the school storage room after the training, and the Gis (suits). It needs trainers though and as the sport is picking up in Egypt and becoming more popular it's getting easier and easier to recruit trainers as a step forward in spreading and mainstreaming the sport.

BJJ in Egypt

Mohammed Omar (Zizo), co-founder and brown belt head coach at Anubis for Martial Arts, said "Brazilian Jiujitsu was properly introduced in Egypt by Karim Shah in 2009". Mohammed Omar started Anubis for Martial Arts in 2012 and one of the reasons why he started Anubis he said "Mainly to let others experience the benefits BJJ had on my life. Every aspect of my life changed since I started training. It almost felt not fair to keep this experience just for myself, I was sure that many people needed BJJ in their life, just like I needed it. It just changes the way you see everything. BJJ shows you who you really are and this can be easily applied to anything else you do in your daily life". He believes in the impact of BJJ on one's daily life outside the gym; "A lot of things that we normally get exposed to don't give you a chance to truly test yourself, but BJJ gives you this every single class. It's a new start to know when do you get motivated, when do you quit, what mindset suits you best and helps you perform at your best and this puts you on track to know what you need to work on in general to be better, the mats never lie".

On anti-bullying and the other benefits Brazilian Jiujitsu has on kids Zizo commented: "Mainly the benefits that I have seen in BJJ for kids is that it makes a huge balance between them socially. The bully confident kid becomes humbler and the shy kid becomes more confident. So, after a couple of month training BJJ they all become the same and respect each other for who they are. Another important aspect of-course is showing them the discipline behind BJJ everything from standing in a straight line at the beginning and end of class to shake hands after trying to choke each other out. The effect BJJ has on kids is definitely huge and part of it is hard to explain but as time passes by it just creates a much healthier balanced environment for the kids to be in on the long term".

Kareem Yasser, a national champion in Judo and a blue belt in BJJ, believes that BJJ in dealing with bullies. He was bullied when he was a kid so he started Taekwondo, Judo and finally Jiu-jitsu. Mr. Yasser thinks that violence is part of human nature and it should be channeled in the right direction. BJJ is an outlet

for these energies and kids who do BJJ are confident that they can stand up to bullies. He believes that anti-bullying awareness campaigns are good but can't be enough. "A bully will not stop bullying others, especially when not monitored, unless they know the other kids can defend themselves".

Brazilian Jiujitsu like other martial arts has a belt rank system; white, blue, purple, brown and black, but unlike the martial arts it takes a lot of time for a BJJ student to get promoted from one belt to the other. Islam Talaat, a BJJ purple belt, a black belt Judo, a black belt Aikido, and trainer at Anubis and other affiliated gyms, has been giving Aikido and BJJ trainings for 8 years now.

"I have been doing martial arts since I was 7 years old, I'm 34 now and I'm still into it. I started martial arts like any other kid who is a fan of action movies, Bruce Lee, super heroes, etc. I also trained so many sports, I continued pursuing martial arts for the self-defense, intensity and above all its philosophy and values". Mr Talaat believes that BJJ is more comprehensive and more advanced than any other martial arts due to the fact that the Asian martial arts are more conservative, traditional, and ceased to develop their techniques. BJJ also forces you to use your brain, it's like playing chess and making strategic moves.

Talaat also believes that it helps students to learn to commit, they commit to the training and to the sport, and in turn anything else in life. It also teaches them teamwork, responsibility and handwork. Talaat believes that the sport is still spreading in Egypt: "We need to have more places so people can have access to the sport. It could be through campaigns, in youth centers, schools, social clubs, etc.".

Abdelrahman Zelafy, kids and junior's trainer at Anubis Martial Arts, explains how the students develop through the sport: "In the beginning students are afraid to get beaten and their reaction and reflex is generally slow and weak, sometimes nonexistent. After a while they develop the skill, they know how to react and defend hem/herself. They get the needed experience". He also thinks students become better at studying because they have something to look forward after school; the training. The kids get motivated by the concept of promotion, getting a stripe as a step to a higher belt is very motivating and rewarding for the students, for them it's better than playing with a PlayStation. He explained that they once challenged the kids for a push-up competition, they did 80 push-ups when they knew that the prize was a stripe.

"It got a lot of sparring, which is fighting matches, more than any other martial art. Students get used to be put in difficult situations and learn to get out of them, in judo for example the match ends when one of the fighters falls on the ground, in jiujitsu we continue from there, we learn to control from a top position and to defend from a bottom position. It's a ground sport. The fight happens from all positions, unlike other martial arts" Mr Zelafy explained.

Testimonies from BJJ Students

Abdelrahman, eighteen years old BJJ player said that he learnt to work under pressure, to push his limits and to learn how to survive. That's why it helps with bullying. "I found an outlet for my energy. I used to fight a lot but now I don't need to. Martial arts are an acceptable sort of fighting. I used to be bullied from bigger students and all what I could do was to throw rocks or glass at them and run. Now I know how to defend myself".

Sixteen years old Mahmoud believed Brazilian jiu-jitsu helped him greatly. Physically he is stronger and more fit. He lost 20 kgs since he started the sport. He is fond of BJJ "I did almost every kind of sport, water polo, karate, football, basketball, horse riding, fitness, etc. but I found myself in Brazilian Jiu-jitsu".

Testimonies from BJJ Female Students

The sport is not only for men and boys though. It's true that men outnumber women in the sport, yet a lot of potential and space is still there for girls and women to join. Farah Abdelmeguid, a squash world class champion who also a blue belt in BJJ says: "In my opinion women should be training martial arts more than men, especially in Egypt, because they consider women a fragile gender, therefore some of them take advantage of this by using their dominant strength to physically attack women. Learning BJJ can help change that by learning how to use an opponent's strength/weight against them, and/or by learning how to defend yourself if someone is trying to choke you using proper techniques". She also adds on the impact of BJJ on her life: "Aside from the gained physical aspect to it, BJJ has helped tremendously with my confidence. I'm no longer afraid of confrontation or to express my thoughts in any particular situation knowing I can handle myself. It also taught me how to stay grounded, patient and committed". Malak who is 17 years old and new to sport said the first two classes were intense but she liked it. Malak trains Ballet and Gymnastics but she liked how interesting and different jiu-jitsu is. She believes girls should train martial arts more. "People won't mess up with you if you do. It's for self-defense, fitness, combating harassment and achieving gender equality". She thinks

traditions and societal constraints are the main reasons not a lot of girls train martial arts.

Feasibility and Implementation Blueprints:

1. A pilot project can be introduced to two or three schools. A class or two can be chosen from each and give them classes twice a week. It could be done during the PE classes
2. Potential cooperation with already existing gyms that train BJJ and other martial arts around the country
3. A group of students who are constantly bullied (based on the advice of the school's social advisor) can be given bursaries to get trained at different BJJ and/or martial arts gyms
4. Successful programs are already there to learn from, UAE, Brazil, etc. A cooperation between Egypt and UAE to learn from their experience is very favorable
5. BJJ curriculum teaches commitment, dedication, respect and love for the other.
6. It's a continuous way for self-improvement. It helps them mentally with strategic thinking. They have to act from a difficult position. They need to learn to depend on themselves, to think of other techniques, and to get out of positions. It helps with their self-confidence, self-discovery, they will not be scared of trying and discovering new territories and they will challenge themselves
7. BJJ helps make kids physically stronger, tougher and more concerned about their health and the quality of the food they eat
8. Most of their energy goes to training. They learn to save their energy for the sport
9. Families love jiujitsu because it's safe and because their kids learn how to defend themselves
10. It only needs a space, playground, empty classroom etc., puzzle mats and training suits
11. Either the trainings happened at schools, or at neighboring gym/ youth center, it will be easy to coordinate through the activities or the PE teacher
12. A winter and/or an intensive summer camp could be a good way to introduce the sport and initiate it in schools
13. Future BJJ school level tournaments like football and other sports, could help spread and motivate students to play
14. It could be introduced through an anti-bullying campaign with a BJJ part to it to help balance kids' energies

15. There are several BJJ anti-bullying programs including the Geacie's Bully-proof in California. Their model can be studied and applied here in schools as well

16. It will save underprivileged kids from the streets, like what's happening in Brazil

17. BJJ is not an aggression sport. It's a defense sport it doesn't require attacks. It teaches students how to control the attacker's (opponent's) body so it won't harm others

18. Different BJJ programs are being introduced to police and army officers around the world so they won't act violently in enforcing the law

19. Invite world class black-belts from UAE or Brazil to come and give TOT and help make a generation of trainers in Egypt

20. Choose and experiment with some of the previous recommendations and develop best practices and try to see how it can be mainstreamed in schools from there

Wen-Do

Girls and women are encountering gender-based violence on a daily basis hence a serious need for a self-defense tools specifically designed for women. Girls at schools are not spared from violence and at this age, where there is still a chance for them to develop their personalities and be confident in their bodies and with whom they are. Martial arts are a dominantly male sport. There are women who excel world widely and in Egypt but still there is a need for more involvement of women in the martial arts and combat sports.

One of the newly developed techniques designed mainly for women is Wen-Do. It's developed from Jiujitsu, Judo and Karate, and other techniques were added along the way. The word Wen-Do stands for Wen, for women, and Do for way in Japanese. Wen-Do has been introduced in Egypt in 2013 by Sherin Salem and since then tens of women have received the training.

According to Yasmin Nasef, a certified Wen-Do Trainer, "Wen-Do is a self-defense tools made only for women, unlike any other martial art. The trainers as well are females. It's a space for girls and women to express themselves, not only for self-defense but also for their self-esteem". Yasmin started Wen-Do five years ago, she says that there are three Wen-Do generations in Egypt. Twenty-four student formed the first two generations and 6 were chosen out of them to be Wen-Do consultants and trainers in Egypt. Yasmin is one of them. Thirty-five trainer graduated from the third generation of Wen-Do, making it more accessible to bigger number of women. Ms. Nasif says that any girl can be

trained in Wen-Do. "It doesn't require a certain physique or fitness, It's all about the technique. Girls come in the beginning without knowing what the results will be. At the end of the ten hours training they break wood with their bare hands. It's all in the technique, and their head and how they perceive themselves".

Levels of Wen-Do trainings:

> level 1: Basics (How to defend yourself, how to react and what to do in harassment situations) - 10 hours in two days

> level 2: Advanced (How to deal with weapons and/or group attacks)

And in between there are ongoing exercises, meditation and different activities to ease them to the advanced level.

Basic Wen-Do Content:

> It focuses on specific spots in attackers' bodies

> It's based on role play for the whole situation, with minimal tools used

> It teaches girls about body language, space and physical boundaries and the right words to use in a verbal or a physical assault situation

Feasibility and Implementation Blueprints:

1. The basic ten hours Wen-Do training should be adopted in school for high school girls all around the country. At this age, young girls have already encountered a lot of harassment, bullying and other types of violence. They need to learn to be able to defend themselves and face these troubles on their own. It will also help them be more confident in their bodies and minds.

2. A pilot project can be done with different schools to assess its application and feasibility; 10 trainings for 10 different schools around the country

3. Wen-Do doesn't need a lot of infrastructure for the basic trainings, just a spacious place and some privacy

4. We already have some work done and expertise in the matter with plenty of hope and room for development

5. Its physical benefits, impact and results are instant. It's guaranteed that girls will be able to defend themselves after the training. The psychological and mental benefits could be sensed and felt right away. How girls become more confident and how they changed their perception about their capabilities and dealing with the taboos (self-

confidence, self-expression, self-worth, self-defense, among other benefits).

6. The government, represented in the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other development organizations like GIZ, are already involved and trying to adopt and mainstream Wen-Do in youth centers. Cooperating with them and making the training through schools as well is a great addition that ensures more girls train Wen-Do and learn how to defend themselves.

7. A TOT curriculum is already developed and in use. The approval and the accommodation of it in the school systems is all what is needed.

8. The trainers are already trained to work with different groups of women, refugees, kids, etc. and they have different tools for each group. Working towards mainstreaming it will not be a big problem as the curriculum can be easily adapted to different categories.

9. Mainstreaming Wen-Do in schools will popularize it and make it available at more sports facilities, gyms, clubs, etc. which means more combating of sexual harassment.

10. Female Physical Education teachers can be trained to be trainers and incorporate it in the Physical Education curriculum in schools after the pilot phase.

11. It doesn't cost much, just the fee of the trainer and in the future when broadly adopted and PE teachers trained in it, it won't cost any money at all.

12. Girls will actually get to benefit from the PE class. They will no longer sit and watch boys play football and/or not do anything at all. They can train in the empty class room.

Summary and Conclusion:

The paper discussed the situation of Physical Education in schools and provided several policy alternatives to be considered all of which need big investment and/or changes on the macro scale. The paper focused on policy options that could be piloted so there would be way to evaluate them and develop best practices and recommendations. The chosen policies are Brazilian Jiujitsu and Wen-Do for their benefits as martial arts on the mind and body. They can also be used in anti-bullying campaigns and in combating harassment. The recommendations suggest some actions to be taken and tools to be considered to facilitate the planning and implementation of the policies. The blueprints could be built-on and developed into detailed action plans in case of execution.

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6

Promoting a Positive Built Environment in School through Education Policy

Hatem Zayed

Introduction:

A school's infrastructure has been often linked to the learning environment within the school – which in turn can be associated with improved educational outcome. Moreover, a school's physical condition is considered when assessing educational quality in general. In this policy paper, I will aim to investigate policies that may constrain reform of the built environment in Egyptian schools. Constraints to an improved built environment include an inability to allocate needed funds for either renovation or maintenance, the lack of suitability of school buildings designs for students' needs, and the inability to maintain the school buildings beyond the completion of renovation. In this paper, I will pay particular attention to maintenance, and not renovation or full-scale construction, as I argue that it is key for improving the built environment and that cost-efficient solutions are overlooked with current complex policies for maintenance. I will first clarify the relationship between school infrastructure and the learning environment and present a brief background on the status of the built environment in Egypt. I will then tackle current policies that affect schools' ability to maintain their schools – namely the process that schools must engage in with the Ministry's decentralization unit, the productive school administration's role, and the central unitary account that can hinder schools' abilities to withdraw and deposit funds. I will conclude the paper with some policy recommendations that can be promoted by both the Ministry and development organizations.

Does the Physical Environment Matter?

A growing body of research indicates that the learning environment is key in the provision of quality education (UNESCO 2012). The term learning environment refers to the constellation of physical, social and pedagogical factors that foster learning (UNESCO 2012). Particularly, physical and organizational aspects of the learning environment matter. There is bourgeoning but compelling evidence that suggests that school infrastructure is intimately associated with improved learning outcomes (Barrett 2019). Indeed, in one study infrastructure alone explained 16% of variation in students' academic progress (Barrett 2016). There are several ways through which infrastructure impacts access to education and educational outcomes more broadly. For one, infrastructure quality – and particularly the quality of water and sanitation facilities – impacts enrollment and completion rates as well as teacher absenteeism (Leathes 2011). Additionally, the sufficient presence of schools that are close to students' homes encourages attendance. Finally, parents' perception and satisfaction are largely shaped by infrastructure quality and bears heavily on their decision to retain children in school.

Reasons for an infrastructure gap in the education sector are varied and include poor and insufficient school construction, over-crowdedness due to high rates of enrollment, and lack of maintenance among others. In Egypt, there are systematic failings of basic infrastructure that disproportionately disadvantage the poor. These infrastructure failings span a range of factors, chief among them and the focus of this policy brief are school construction and maintenance.

What are the Issues around the Built-environment in Egypt?

School construction

The key issues around school construction in Egypt can be discerned as stemming from unprecedented enrollment rates that have resulted in insufficient numbers and maldistribution of schools, high classroom densities, and inefficient allocation of resources. Some of the specific issues pertaining to school facilities in particular concern inadequacies in sanitary facilities and drinking water, high classroom densities and lack of "purpose-built facilities" such as laboratories, libraries, and the like. These issues are integral to the provision of good quality education. School facilities can aid students in developing their knowledge and skills. High classroom densities cultivate an environment in which teachers, facing large number of students, may resort to beatings and abuse as a means to exercise control over students. Additionally, the lack of sanitation and drinking water directly impacts completion rates and absenteeism.

Over the past decade, Egypt achieved significant strides with respect to the number of schools built (Gershberg 2016). Indeed, the Egyptian government, mostly through the General Authority for Educational Buildings (GAEB), built around 14,000 schools in the period between 1992 and 2006 thereby substantially expanding enrollment in basic education (Gershberg 2016). The GAEB, however, has drawn a lot of criticism for what is perceived as excessively expensive school construction which is characterized by cost inefficiencies and a mismatch between stakeholder needs and actual implementation (Gershberg 2016, 19).

Maintenance

The noted expansion in school construction brought to the fore the need for periodic maintenance. Data on the number of schools in Egypt which require maintenance is not readily available, and what little exists likely suffers from gross underreporting. However, given the scale of inefficiencies of school construction and the overly centralized status of GAEB, the need for

maintenance– from fixing broken windows and painting walls to fixing bathrooms and other facilities – is likely pressing.

Unfortunately, major bottlenecks exist with respect to maintenance. It is exceedingly challenging for schools to request maintenance from GAEB, particularly those located in poorer areas, which often suffer from neglect relative to schools catering to a more affluent demographic. Maintenance shortfalls in turn have dire implications for student and teacher morale and absenteeism (Manga et al., 2013, 2). When it comes to sanitation, the maintenance inadequacies are particularly detrimental.

More recently, some maintenance authority has been shifted from GAEB to the governorate level of MoE (to "muderiyyas" or municipalities), which in turn allows schools some control over maintenance funds. Although school principals have generally welcomed the transfer of some funds for maintenance to schools, they have noted the inflexibility and short timeframe set for using the funds (World Bank 2018).

Decentralization Efforts by the Ministry of Education:

The Ministry of Education started efforts to decentralize the ministry by 2008. While not all functions of the Ministry were decentralized, construction and maintenance were areas that saw great reform. While decentralization is generally a positive change on the part of the Ministry, it added very difficult procedures and complicated bureaucracy that may discourage schools from doing any maintenance. This can be seen when reviewing the steps needed to undergo simple maintenance – which should be done on a regular basis by all schools. This section will briefly present the procedures set by the decentralization unit in the MoE. All information presented in this section is retrieved from the Decentralization Support Unit's 2013-2014 annual plan (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Each year, municipalities receive a budget from the Ministry of Education allotted for maintenance and renovation. The Ministry stipulates that 50% of the budget be used for simple maintenance while the other 50% be used for other renovation needs.[1] The municipality, after taking into consideration the needs of the Idaras, divides the money between them. Each Idara calculates the needs of all schools in their administration (with a specified pre-determined budget for each classroom and each student) and distributes the money to all schools. The

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[1] The decentralization manual does not have a clear definition for simple maintenance or renovation. However, there is a clear cost limit. It counts as simple maintenance if the cost of maintenance is within the 300 EGP per classroom as per guidelines proposed to the Ministry by GIZ.

administration reserves the right to exclude some schools if they had recently received renovation or maintenance from GAEB or any other source. Each administration is responsible to fill out a certain form and send it back to the decentralization unit, which reviews the form and responds with their approval. Upon approval of the unit, the plan is sent to schools to seek the approval of the Board of Trustees. Once all approvals are received, the school is permitted to request an advance to carry out the simple maintenance it requires.

The decentralization unit stipulates 9 steps before the start of renovation:

1. The school principal calls for a meeting with school staff to set and review the school improvement plan
2. The school reviews the plan to ensure that it does not differ from the approved items by GAEB (there are 77 items that are approved)
3. The school puts together a budget and spending plan for the maintenance
4. The school principal presents the reviewed plan to the school staff
5. The school administration presents the plan to the BoT and seeks their approval
6. The BoT meeting gets documented and signed by the president of BoT and the school principal
7. The school sends the plan to the decentralization unit for review and approval
8. The school displays the school improvement plan in a visible location in the school so that it can be easily reviewed by any BoT member or parent in the school. It should be displayed throughout the entire school year
9. The school also adds the budget and actual expenses to the same displayed plan for others to view

After following these detailed 9 steps, each school is given a list of guidelines on how to manage the advance received from the decentralization unit. These guidelines include for instance that the school can only request an advance with a maximum of 6,000 EGP at a time with a few exceptions (that the advances are requested by different individuals in the school and are being spent on different items), and that it cannot be used in following years if there is a surplus from the maintenance expenses. To settle an advance, the school goes through a similarly complicated procedure and must do it within a two months period from the date the advance was issued. Additionally, if the year is near an end, the advance must be settled, even if the job has not been completed yet. In the case the individual, who requested the advance, was not able to settle it in time, he/she will be fined with a penalty.

As mentioned above, such complicated bureaucracy may act as a deterrent for schools to undergo simple maintenance on a year to year basis. Not only is the process lengthy and complicated, but mistakes by those who issue advances may entail that they will be personally fined. Moreover, the 6,000 EGP limit for the advance (note that this figure may have been reviewed as the country has seen high levels of inflation since 2014), places a limit on the options available for the school administration to do maintenance. The guidelines provided by the decentralization support unit stipulate that the school cannot use more than one advance on the same item – which basically entails that only very inexpensive items can be done as part of simple maintenance. With such a small sum of money, school administrators may wonder whether it is worth it at all to go through the effort of acquiring these funds to undergo the maintenance. Moreover, since each employee can only issue one advance, it might be difficult to convince enough staff to request advances, considering the risk that they may be fined for any issues in the settlement of the advance. Finally, the condition that the money must be spent to completion before the end of the year entails that some maintenance tasks might be left incomplete if the year is about to come to an end. The school will then have to return the money and re-apply the following year to complete whatever task they had begun. This can act as a further deterrent and may even be financially inefficient since the job will likely cost more to restart in comparison to the cost of continuing it in the previous year. It is for these reasons that it might be in the interest of the school to seek other sources of money, unless the above process is reviewed.

Other Sources of Revenue for Schools – Opportunities and Limitations of the "Productive School" program:

Schools are commonly encouraged by the Ministry, development organizations and NGOs to find other sources of revenue – particularly through mobilizing resources from the community, the parents, and the BoTs. Realistically speaking however, with high levels of poverty in most parts in Egypt, schools may face difficulty in acquiring needed funds from the community. Parents may face difficulty in procuring basic educational material for students, let alone donate to the school. Another option for mobilizing resources has been given to schools recently – to become "productive schools". Following Ministerial Decree number 12 for year 2002, a committee for productive schools was created. In 2003, this committee was decreed (decree number 35) under the auspices of the Technical Education Department within the ministry. In 2006, a third decree (number 356) returned the committee under the auspices of the General Education Department within the ministry. The objectives of this committee included that it will increase the creativity and innovation of students, increase

the competitiveness among students, strengthen their self-confidence, encourage community participation (especially for parents), and contribute to the decrease in levels of unemployment through improving vocational skills of students – among others (Ministry of Education, Administration of Productive Schools, Management Objectives, n.d.).

However, these committees can also be used to mobilize resources for schools. The committee, within the Ministry, specifies three types of projects that can be carried out by schools – marketing projects, service projects, and product projects. Marketing projects refer to the trading of products in school or outside of school that directly contribute to the educational process, such as uniforms, learning materials, etc. Service projects refer to any project where students or teachers provide services to the community that surrounds the school, so long as it does not contradict with the values of the school. Finally, product projects refer to when the production units within the school engage in the production of something that can be sold within the school or within the community. The committee provided some items as examples for production units within schools – including accessory making, recycling, leather products, wood products, textiles and fabrics, children's toys, copper products, pottery, as well as many others (Ministry of Education, Administration for Productive Schools, 2018-2019 Plan, n.d.).

To start any project, the production team must conduct a feasibility study and submit it to the committee on the level of the administration (idara). The production team must then keep track of all expenses and revenues made and report on it as well. The administration for productive schools within the Ministry also released an approved memorandum in 2006 on how the profit from the production units in schools can be divided.[2] The following breakdown was approved: 35% for production unit team, 15% incentive for the students who participated, 15% for the school committee overseeing the production unit (school administration, social worker, secretary), 15% to be spent on school needs (renovation or maintenance), 12% for investment in the same project, 5% for the administration, municipality, and ministry, and 3% for the financial advisor in the school. With this breakdown, only 15% of the profit can be used on the schools' needs – a percentage that is likely to translate into a very small sum of money considering how small of a scale most school projects will be.

Another common source of revenue used by some schools is to rent out its sports fields to members of the community. This option was also encouraged by many international organizations and NGOs. Most schools that have the resources to rent fields had probably not spent money in the building of the field,

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[2] See https://goo.gl/TssBu6

and thus the revenue received from the renting can be considered pure profit. However, sports field renting is far harder to regulate from the Ministry. Thus, it is not uncommon to hear stories of school principals and staff members that exploit the lack of regulation and not report the full amount of revenue accrued from the fields.[3]

One strong deterrent to start a production project in school is that all funds must be withdrawn from and deposited in the central unified account. Law number 139 for year 2006 stipulates that no governmental service agency may have a private account separate from a centralized unified account, to be overseen by the Ministry of Finance, in the Central Bank of Egypt.[4] This has limited the flexibility of schools in starting new projects and in requesting funds or even making deposits (2017 ،أهرام). The guidelines provided by the Productive Schools Unit condition that schools must make all financial transactions through this account. This account generally acts as a deterrent to school activities owing to its high levels of bureaucracy and fear from issuing advances due to associated penalties and stringent limits. For instance, it constrains the role of school staff and renders them unable to plan for basic activities like school trips, let alone start a production unit within the school. This may also encourage poor reporting of revenue made from any resource mobilization source utilized by the schools.

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[3] See for instance the following news report: http://massai.ahram.org.eg/Archive/Inner.aspx?ContentID=6663
[4] See law for more details: http://www.asa.gov.eg/attach/665_law_139_2006-127-1981.pdf

Table 1: Decentralization Solutions for School Maintenance

Maintenance Models

Approaches to school maintenance vary in the global literature. Below, I delineate maintenance models which have been used in the literature to ensure an adequate learning environment (Manga et al. 2013, Gershberg 2016). Examples were extracted from (Winkler and Gershberg 2003, Weidman and DePietro-Jurand 2011).

> **Devolution to local governments:** In this model, a maintenance department at the district or governorate level handles all maintenance requests. This approach is characterized by the following elements: 1. Local bidding with reliance predominantly on local labor, 2. Lower costs due to localized bidding, 3. Community ownership, and 4. Monitoring that is more proximate to needs (compared to other more centralized approaches) which in turn leads to greater responsiveness and better work quality (Gershberg 2016). Examples of countries that have implemented this type of decentralization include Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Mexico, and Argentina.

> **The individual school custodian:** In this model, maintenance funds are transferred to the school directly through school grants and allocation of maintenance funds is entirely up to the discretion of the school administration/management. In this model, boards of trustees – formally established in schools– may be granted control over maintenance funds. Examples of countries that have implemented this type of decentralization include Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal

> **Community-based approaches to maintenance:** This is where technical maintenance staff are derived from the community. These members of the community may form a committee in coordination with the school administration to provide the needed maintenance services. These approaches are characterized by 1) the use of locally available materials, which may be more affordable, but which may also at times be more costly given lack of economies of scale afforded by more centralized models, 2) maintenance that is timely and expedient as well as consistent with true needs, and 3) duties and responsibilities that are well defined. Alternatively, contributions may be sought from community members and parents. Examples of countries that implemented this type of decentralization include Tanzania, Uganda, Nicaragua and El Salvador

> **Delegation to NGOs:** In this model, the networks and trust of NGOs are leveraged. NGOs are mobilized to undertake periodic maintenance using their respective funds. Because they have more flexible and less bureaucratic standards and bidding processes, they may be more efficient and quicker to respond to emerging needs. Examples of countries that implemented this type of decentralization include Zambia and Senegal.

Policy Recommendations

> The Ministry's recent efforts towards decentralization are commendable and warranted. A great degree of evidence supports that decentralization has positive effects on educational reform more broadly. However, The MoE maintains difficult bureaucratic procedures that stifle efforts to maintain the school buildings. Accordingly, I propose the following recommendations:

> > Review the small 6,000 EGP maximum of the advances to allow for more options that can be carried out with the advances. Moreover, this will reduce the number of advances required, and thus the number of employees at risk of a penalty

> > Simplify the process of requesting and settling advances to remove barriers that discourage staff from undergoing simple maintenance at school

> > Allow for direct spending that can be settled upon completion of the simple maintenance in cases where there is a pressing need for maintenance or where a quick community-based solution is available

> The Productive Schools Administration within the Ministry of Education provides an opportunity for schools to encourage creativity and create learning opportunities for students outside of traditional educational curricula. However, the production units within the school are under-utilized sources of revenue that can aid the school administration in carrying out simple maintenance. Accordingly, I propose the following recommendations:

> > Revise the breakdown of profit from the production units to allot more than the current 15% for school spending. While incentives for staff and students are necessary for these projects to succeed, the Ministry of Education should provide these incentives directly instead of relying on the revenue from the usually small-scale projects. This would leave the school larger budgets to spend on maintenance.

> > Revise the condition that all financial transactions must be done through the central unified bank account to remove the barriers facing school staff when deciding to create production units. Seeing as investing in production units (training of students, getting

equipment, etc.) is costly, the unified account can be a deterrent for teachers who would otherwise not want to risk penalties or personally pay for the expenses of starting up a new project. Accordingly, private bank accounts, managed by the school Board of Trustees, can be created in local banks. These accounts can be supervised by the MoE administration to ensure adherence to financial guidelines. The same procedures can be followed in the renting of school property (example: soccer fields) to discourage corruption.

> At times, schools are poorly maintained simply due to lacking cleaning and maintenance staff. While this is usually linked to budgetary issues, low-cost solutions can be pursued. These solutions include creating maintenance teams from school staff and students, or from the community. The Board of Trustees can also play a role in mobilizing the community to support the schools with home-grown solutions to maintenance problems.

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7

The Quality and the Stigma of Vocational Training

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Abstract

This policy paper continues the discussion on the importance of vocational education in Egypt and the obstacles it faces. It starts with the current situation and the different efforts done to improve it. The paper presents two existing policies in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Egypt and their benefits and also the challenges they face. Two options are being discussed, the dual system in vocational training, the Mubarak-Kohl Initiative and TVET several reform initiatives.

Then the focus moves to policies that are doable and less complex to pursue. They don't require huge investments from the government, investment is vital in any education reform plans but it's not the main focus of this paper. The paper tries to find solutions that can be done with the existing resources and some logistics and coordination effort from the concerned parties.

Situation Analysis

Vocational education is one of the biggest challenges that face the education system, not only because of the lack of resources, nor the quality of education being derived to the students but also because of the bad perception of vocational training in Egypt. Students join vocational training when they fail to meet the grades needed for the high school system, hence a negative reputation for vocational training and an unfavorable attitude towards it from family, students and society. Ministry of Education (MoE) has to embrace a policy to reform the vocational training system and to work towards refuting its notoriety and gaining more prominence amongst students and society.

In light of the current challenges that face the Egyptian economy, and with the high unemployment rates (12.8% in 2017), according to the World Bank (The Global Economy, n.d.), a focus on skill-based education is strongly encouraged to be able to help flourish the local industries and cut unemployment. It's not only that Egypt is not investing in new industries, but it's also losing its heritage of the already existing ones due to dying of artisans and losing its skilled labor who age and die and don't train younger generations to continue the work. In a country where 40% of its economy is informal (Kassem, 2014), and its labor force is made of workers who receive a practical education from these informal workshops and factories that has no safety conditions and no fair wages, with child labor and abusive conditions, etc., good VET system is needed to absorb these labor force and equip them to the market where the government makes sure safety regulations are met and where no kind of abuse or mistreatment is conducted.

Vocational training is vital in every education system and in the workplace, yet it's considered as a low job and not respectful enough in Egypt. There is a need to change these ideas and focus on the need for skilled workers in the different vocations in Egyptian market. It is very important that society should be highlighted to students their parents in order to encourage them to join. A good vocational training prepares young people to the labor market that is in a crucial need for skilled workers.

There are plenty of problems with the current VET system in Egypt. The poor quality and the stigma are not the only issues. The machinery in most of the schools are depleted and obsolete, and/or not enough to cover the number of the students. Another big obstacle is the untrained teachers. Interviewing some of the students, they all complained about their teachers and how, some of them, lack basic knowledge and not equipped enough to teach. Therefore, vocational education is rarely students' and their parents' first choice. It's considered a second class. VET students are seen as less educated people hence a lesser opportunities and lower chances of employment. Students who go through vocational education programs are seen as failure as it means they didn't meet the grades needed for a conventional high school path and was left with vocational schools as the only option for them. There are also different initiatives involved in supervising the VET in Egypt. This make it difficult to manage and supervise the different complicated arrangements needed and this disperse the effort, responsibilities and the quality of the deliver education.

Policy Options

The Dual System, Mubarak-Kohl Initiative for Dual system (MKI-DS):
Inspired by the German system, a dual system was introduced to Egypt after Mubarak, the former president of Egypt, visited Germany in 1991. Germany has a good reputation in VET and having a dual program that actually works.

The cooperation between Egypt and Germany lead to the foundation of Mubarak-Kohl Initiative for Dual system (MKI-DS). Mubarak-Kohl received a lot of praise when it was adopted in Egypt. The program focused on the practical side of the VET. Students attend a school that is linked directly to a big factory. They attend two days of theoretical education at schools and four more days of hands-on education at their allocated training center (El-Masry, n.d.). This helped bridging the gap between the theoretical part and the practical one.

This system works on the actual needs of the market and meets them, hence the cooperation between the public and the private sector. The project stopped in 2010. There is a talk about reinitiating Mubarak-Kohl which is great and hopefully will be introduced to a bigger number of students.

The students usually graduate and work in these factories. It's effective and efficient in most cases but it doesn't include most of the students. Only those attending the dual system have the advantage of employment afterwards. The dual schools in Egypt are limited in number, hence a limited access to it. There is a need to increase the number of the TVET dual schools but it needs a lot of investment. It also requires plenty of coordination between different governmental bodies and the private sector. A strict supervision is also needed on the factories and/or training centers to make sure the students are getting the needed education and not being abused or taken advance of, especially that they are still legally children. A balance has to be sought between convincing the private sector to invest and participate in the Dual System in VET and monitoring and holding it accountable in the same time.

TVET Institutional Reform Initiatives through Partnerships:

Reform of the education system in Egypt is a huge challenge and therefore a priority. The institutions are huge and requires drastic changes and reform but it also needs to be gradual and effective. TVET reform should focus on improving the quality of education, teach a lifelong skill and improve the quality of living of its recipients. Several attempts of reform targeted the TVET system in Egypt. The efforts are fragmented though and not concrete. Different initiatives for reform involving several stakeholders are difficult to manage. Around twenty governmental bodies are involved in TVET and a coordination, let alone a consensus it very hard to achieve (Oxford Business Group, n.d.). Some of the reform plans were introduced through a partnership with the European Union.

The first phase was launched from 2005 till 2013. Big international organizations can help with providing technical support and in some cases, funding for the projects. It's not always sustainable though as it depends on external bodied in the foundation of such projects. These plans cease to exist once the treaty is over or the supply of money stops.

The problem with such programs is that they are large scaled and need a lot of work and plans, diplomacy, international cooperation, treaties and agreements to be agreed on and signed, etc. All this work takes a lot of time and money. Interventions on a smaller scale need to be considered and looked into, these

kinds of interventions that could happen without huge budgets and complex bureaucratic entities. Hence the proposed policy recommendations.

Policy Recommendations

Focusing on Vocational Education and Training in Preparatory Schools:

Students should be introduced to specialized and vocational training at a younger age. There are arts classes, agriculture, safety and industry classes in primary and preparatory schools. Proper attention should be given to this stage so students would have the chance to discover their own capabilities and skills. Improving the quality of vocational education in preparatory schools should be a priority and a step forward towards improving the quality of vocational education in general. Adopting a policy that focuses on vocational training in preparatory schools (where students take a vocational class or two per week), while improving the VET for high schools in the meantime.

Improving the quality of vocational education is a huge task. Vocational training is based on practical learning and this requires huge budgets of machinery and training of teachers to use these machineries. Focusing on vocational classes in early stages of education won't cost that much. As the curriculum is simpler and less specialized, the students get to learn basic knowledge. The tools and equipment are simpler and less expensive. They don't need a lot of tools nor big investment in the materials.

Vocational training at early stages of education also gives the students an idea about the kind of study they can expect if the decided to pursue it further. It's a good introduction to the specific fields of study. They will understand the benefits of VET and discover their own talents and develop their skills as it will also help them learn about their potential at a younger age. It's better to start working on the improving of the quality of education from preparatory schools and gradually invest in higher up in the education system.

One other important strategy is to work on in-school campaigns about the values and the future of vocational education as a mean to encourage students and their families (of the targeted age group, mainly preparatory schools) to join vocational high schools. An emphasis on the good qualities of vocational training should be highlighted to the parents and students. Benefits will be like:

> Learning a life time skill that can help in providing an honest work in the future

> Students graduate at a younger age, as they can work with their technical diploma, which means earning a living and be independent at a younger age as well

> VET graduates are considered young entrepreneurs when they start their own businesses, with the skill they have, then train others to do

> Due to the lack of skilled workers in Egypt, there is a higher demand for trained labor and that makes them expensive and get well paid

> There is always the possibility to go back to school and pursue a university or a higher degree at a specialized institute at any point in their careers

Interviewing Salma, a seventeen years old VET student who specializes in ornamentation says that she wanted to study it from the beginning. She loved drawing since she was a kid and she wanted to pursue it as soon as she could. She got quite high grades in preparatory school diploma that she could join the conventional high school education scheme but instead she decided to join the Ornamentation Technical High School so she can equip herself and sharpen her skills. Salma never regretted her decision "It could be better, but I don't regret it. This is what I want to learn and now". Salma is about to graduate and she wants to join the Faculty of Applied Arts and learn printing there. The is a problem though, she has to achieve very high grades in her technical school diploma to join the school of applied arts. "It's more difficult for us, though we are supposed to be trained at a younger age, not like the normal high school students, but the admission for us requires higher grades which is very difficult to achieve". Salma plans to bridge this by studying for two years at a vocational institute. "This will guarantee me joining applied arts", she believes. Salma hoped that she started learning ornamentation at an earlier stage. She thinks preparatory art classes are so basic. It would have been much better if she could have learnt more about the technicalities of drawing and painting.

Salma is one of the few people who actually joined the VET scheme because she wanted to. She had the skills and the potential of a talent that needed to be nourished and developed. She did her homework of asking on her own about how to pursue her passion and after some inquiries she learnt that she can study ornamentation in a technical high school. Kids at a younger age has the right to this piece of information as well. They need to learn about the different channels to follow a skill or a talent. Students need to get exposed at earlier stage to see if they have the seed, the willingness to learn and the commitment to the skill. She concluded that "My family supported me. I was happy I joined. Teachers are not always great but I've learnt a lot".

General recommendations:

> Emphasizing on the benefits of vocational training

> Raising awareness and holding educational campaigns for students, families and teachers on the importance of VET at a younger age

> Give more attention to VET classes in preparatory schools so both the students and families would feel the value of VET and its impact on their skills

> Make enrolment to VET institutions based on will and not lower grades

> Propose VET workshops and summer schools at schools and youth centers, to compensate the lack of resources and time throughout the year

> Holding advocacy campaign promising to improve the quality and the gradual investment and improvement of vocational training

Cooperating with the local councils and governments, and other schools to practice:

Another policy to be adopted is to cooperate with the local council, other schools and other local government bodies. There is a lot of maintenance, ornamentation and other work needed by schools, local governments and other entities. These bodies hire people to do the job despite the vocational schools supposedly qualify the students to do such jobs. A cooperation could help these students practice and find real projects to work on. This will compensate for the lack of materials and tools at schools as these entities have their own maintenance budgets. They can compensate for the tools and materials and give the space for the students to practice under the supervision of their own teachers. The school should make rules and regulations to ensure the safety and the wellbeing of the students. It also should make sure that students are not used in any way. The council and other entities will get the job done, they will compensate for the lack of adequate resources at schools, and the students will get the chance to learn practical skills that are needed in the market.

Racha Saafan, a plastic artist who has been training the students of an Ornamentation School, believes that there is a huge gap between what students learn and what the market needs, from designing to executing. They don't know how to think of a design. Even if there is a lack of resources, they can still learn these things. "The situation is not very promising. They don't even get to learn the curriculum and apply what they study. There are no tools. The students

paint on a paper all the year, not any other medium, like glass, walls, wood, etc. Only two of the students I trained had a previous experience in painting on glass and that was a personal initiative outside the school, despite it being in the curriculum but they never learned about", Ms. Saafan said.

She favors such cooperation with local governments and municipalities, as the students will get to paint the walls in public spaces. It will give the students a chance to manifest their training. Painting and drawing on the walls of public entities, even their own schools and neighboring schools, to do the maintenance of other schools, these jobs, and others cost the local councils and schools a lot of money. Instead the local governments can help schools with their already allocated budgets for renovation and maintain work. Considering schools limited budgets and resources, the local governments can let the students do the work instead of hiring someone to do the job.

Salma, the student at the Ornamentation School, complains that the tools and paint are so expensive. Students have to buy all the materials themselves as schools don't allocate enough materials for students to use. "It's quite disappointing that we get to pay all that money. They should subsidize the tools for us a little. They are so expensive", she said. A cooperation like this will also help in getting students to learn and do practical work without spending all the money that a lot of them cannot afford.

Salma also complains about teachers. "Teachers are not necessarily good. Some are keen to teach us and some are not. Some of them don't really know much and not qualified to teach. They should be better trained", she believes. Ms. Saafan agrees with Salma, "A lot of teachers are not qualified, and if they are, they focus on the theoretical parts of the subjects and not the practical ones, despite it being a vocational school". She also criticizes their behavior of not encouraging students and sometimes threatening them with controlling their grades. "Such a bad attitude for educators to adopt", she believes they need constant training and to exert more effort in teaching. "Some of them they even have the terminologies and some basic knowledge". Teachers need training of trainers (ToT), to better explain and equip them to teach the students. She believes that teachers disappoint the students. They don't teach, they don't encourage them to try and experiment. They don't want them to ruin the fabric despite the whole process of learning is about trying and ruining the fabric. A practical approach to education will force the teachers to exert more effort and to teach the students the practical stuff. If such cooperation happened, the teachers will be the one responsible for the final product at the end of the day and they know they need to take it seriously.

Ms. Saafan wishes for such cooperation to happen. Students then will learn the stages of a wall paining. They will learn from the early stages of designing an idea, on paper, then its execution. They will have access to tools they can't afford, neither can their schools. They will know how to get an idea and build on it, the main principles of design. They will learn how to copy. Most of them are good at copying but it's not enough. Copying is an early stage of painting and they need to be able to work their own ideas. They don't know how to magnify a painting they are copying. They never experiment with big spaces because of the availability of resources is limited. Tools like compressors, paint and brushes are expensive. "The girls have a condescending self-image, though they are artists and they can be better. It's very disappointing", She said. The girls have a great potential. They will learn if you let them and give the chance. They need training and encouragement. They need exposure to the real world and its skills.

General Recommendations:

> Cooperate with the local governments for maintenance and renovations work. To improve the situation of the facilities with the existing resources already allocated for these designs and renovations. This will let them get hands-on experience that will bridge the gap between their schools and the market. Also this will be considered as a previous work experience and will help them in their job applications after graduation and to build networks for future job hunting.

> Cooperate with factories and companies to take their left over materials that were going to be dumped but are still safe for the students to use and experiment with. This could work as a corporate social responsibility and sponsorships of these companies to take materials from them or just agree to take the left-over fabric, paint, etc.

> Create simple system of cooperation and logistics for sustainability and for allocation of materials and factories waste.

> Make employment fairs at VET institutions and link employers to students and schools, and provide summer jobs and apprenticeships to older students.

> Acknowledge, legalize and incorporate informal VET and workshops to combat hazardous situations, prevent child labor and to improve the image and the status of VET.

Conclusion

TVET in Egypt needs constant reform and investment, meanwhile smaller scale and less costly interventions shall be introduced to gradually tackle the problems facing the TVET system in Egypt. The paper proposes improving the quality of the technical, arts, and other vocational classes in preparatory schools as it builds the skills and talents of the students at a younger age and it's also not a very costly way of investing in TVET. It also suggests cooperation with the neighboring schools, local councils and the entities to provide the students with a way to practice their education while fixing the problems the local governments face at a lower cost.

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8

Mainstreaming the Readability Program in the Egyptian Education System

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Introduction:

Illiteracy among students in Egyptian public schools was recently revealed to be shockingly high – as 35% of students in preparatory schools were reported as unable to read and write (Ministry of Education, 2014). This figure was reported following interest in the topic that was fueled by several large-scale, heavily funded, development projects implemented by international NGOs and technical educational institutes – most notably funded by USAID. Through these development projects, the "readability program" was designed, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (MoE), to reduce levels of illiteracy among students in Egyptian schools. This program relied on innovative Arabic-teaching methods that entailed revised language curricula, modern teaching techniques, and rigorous assessment exams. In the early years of the program, very high levels of success, along with donor pressure, encouraged the MoE to scale the program to a national level. Since then, the MoE has committed to implement the program, but has saw mixed levels of success.

In this short policy paper, I will briefly review the Ministry's experience in adopting the program, discuss the challenges faced by development agencies and projects when implementing the program, and present scenarios for a potential way forward. I argue that the mixed success seen by the Ministry is linked to both its lack of ownership as well as due to unsuitable program solutions presented by the development agencies that implemented the program. Specialists in the program point to inconsistency in the Ministry's adoption of the program. While some entities within the MoE, particularly the Readability Unit, show a high level of commitment to the goals of the program, others are less committed and feel less ownership. However, the program itself, in its inherent design, may be unsuitable for scalability. Particularly in the early iterations of the program, which relied on very costly assessment methods and learning material, few low-cost solutions were presented to the Ministry that allow it to scale-up the program. Moreover, as will be demonstrated in the challenges section of this paper, some of the obstacles that implementing agencies faced when carrying out the program were only overcome due to their constant involvement in the target schools, the availability of financial solutions, and their ability to mobilize school-based stakeholders in their favor. Seeing as the Ministry lacks the financial resources available to these organizations and are unable to sustain the same level of presence in all schools across the nation, it unsurprising that there is a high discrepancy in the reading and writing levels of students in schools targeted by these organizations with students in schools that were not. Accordingly, for the Ministry to succeed in battling high levels of illiteracy in schools, it must benefit from a collection of lessons learned of all implementing agencies as well as be presented with low-cost solutions to some of the challenges that they met. In this paper, I begin this effort (see table

1), but it must be consolidated with the diverse experiences of organizations, experts, and most importantly – school-level implementors of the program for it to be most useful.

The Ministry's Adoption of the Readability Program:

In the past decade, the Ministry of Education has showed signs that it is willing to improve reading and writing skills of primary-aged students. This was clear through its creation of a unit tasked with the implementation of the program, called the Readability Unit, through Ministerial Decision no. 28 of year 2013. This unit was tasked with building the capacity of teachers to conduct the readability program in primary schools across Egypt. It was also tasked with coordinating with MoE Supervisors to support teachers in their role and to provide guidance and feedback on their teaching skills. However, since the very onset, other departments in the Ministry did not display ownership over the implementation of the readability program.

The unit was created following pressure from the USAID funded project – Girls' Improved Learning Outcomes (GILO) – which was active between 2009 and 2013. The readability program was first designed and implemented through the GILO project. The curricula and learning materials were designed in this project in cooperation with the Center for Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development (CCIMD) (Abou Hegab, 2017). Specialists in the implementation of the program report that the curricula and material development of the GILO program did not include the Department for Arabic Language Instruction – which explains their lack of ownership over it. While the GILO project, as well as other USAID funded literacy programs, demonstrated great success, the MoE has seen marginal success in implementing the program alone since then. The program relied on a measurement tool called the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). This tool had to be conducted individually with each student – which was very costly and time-consuming. Accordingly, specialized development agencies developed a shortened version of the assessment tool called "the diagnostic test," which could be used on a larger scale and required less time and money to conduct. The reviewed program also became shorter in number of hours required to complete the course. However, while the costs of the program were reduced, it still remained costly (due to required learning materials, and teacher trainings) and time consuming (it is prescribed that students enroll in a 36-hour program over 12 weeks).

Many development agencies and NGOs, most notably CARE International, have implemented the readability program in its reviewed iteration. The experiences of such NGOs have been marked with both successes and lessons learned, but the ownership of the MoE remained questionable in the years since

the establishment of the unit. In 2016, following a decision passed by the Ministry, the reading and writing capacity of students were measured through a test that relied on dictation. Specialists in the readability program criticized this method because it did not measure the myriad skills that the diagnostics test is able to measure, as well as increased the likelihood for cheating (Abou Hegab, 2017). A decision such as this, however, may confirm that donor-developed programs and tools were too costly to implement on a large scale. Even if the program, in its full scale, was implemented in schools, the lack of ownership from the Arabic Language MoE Supervisors entailed that no pressure or incentive was placed on Arabic teachers, nor was any guidance or support given. Thus, while the Readability Unit may have shown signs of commitment to its objectives, Ministry-wide ownership was lacking. This is evident when observing the 2014-2030 MoE Strategy. While it is mentioned in the strategy that 35% of preparatory students cannot read and write, the readability program is only mentioned once in the entire program and it is done in a very vague and general manner: that the MoE is committed to the "expansion of the readability program and support the teaching of Arabic Language" (Ministry of Education, 2014). No details are mentioned on how this will occur and no strategy has been produced by the Ministry regarding readability since then.

Two versions of the readability program were designed by development agencies – a remedial program implemented with students in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades as well as preparatory students and a preventive program that is typically implemented with the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades. One success achieved by the Ministry in recent years is that the preventive program was incorporated into the curricula of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades. This reduced the need for development agencies to implement programs that target those school years. However, despite this achievement, more recent assessments, conducted by CARE International for example, continue to reflect high levels of illiteracy in both primary and preparatory stages – usually surpassing the 35% average reported by the MoE in its 2014-2030 strategy.

Challenges with the Readability Program:

While the readability program was successfully implemented by several organizations, it remains difficult for the Ministry to adopt it in its current format without making any revisions. The below challenges represent some of the obstacles that development programs have faced in the past. Table 1 elaborates on the unique experiences of these projects further. The agencies carrying out these interventions, due to a high level of technical capacity and to available funds, were able to find solutions to some of these challenges. While Table 1 presents a more complete list, the challenges summarized in the below

section, however, are those that the MoE, in its current capacity, may struggle to overcome.

1. The readability program is very lengthy and time consuming. Even the revised versions of the program require a total of 36 hours over a period of 12 weeks with an average of 3 hours per week. This means that schools must free-up 3 hours per week, either through substituting physical education classes, or "activity classes" with readability classes or in organizing after-hour classes. Both scenarios may be unsuitable for students and teachers. To substitute physical existing classes, schools will be depriving students from integral educational opportunities – especially that physical education and arts are often neglected in public schools. After-hour classes may also prove challenging as some parents may not agree. These extra classes can also create an extra burden on students, which may discourage them from wanting to join them.

2. Several projects in the past, particularly those implemented by CARE international, have demonstrated that it is sometimes hard to find enough teachers to teach the classes. This is linked to the first challenge mentioned – as the readability sessions are sometimes conducted in times where trained Arabic teachers are unavailable to teach.

3. Teachers lack incentives to participate in these classes, as they are not given a financial compensation. Not only do readability classes take up time and effort, but teachers also must be committed to the extent that they play a role in convincing parents and students that the readability classes are worthwhile.

4. While Moe Supervisors are encouraged, by development agencies and NGOs, to support teachers in implementing the readability program, they have no systematic duty to play that role. Moreover, there is no systematic link between supervisors and readability coordinators – which further complicates the role that they can play towards the realization of the readability program objectives.

5. The readability program is costly, as it relies on extra learning material, curricula, and manuals. The costs of these extra material cannot be incurred by parents, nor can it be incurred by the schools. Thus, a scenario where the program, in its current format, is implemented by an entity that is not linked to a donor-funded project remains unlikely.

6. Complementing the readability program with extracurricular activities and events – like open days for students – has proven to be a successful strategy in the past. This approach, however, is very costly. Moreover, it will likely require a

group of volunteers to support the school in organizing such events as school staff may not be enough. The risk of inviting untrained volunteers to schools to work with children without the supervision of an NGO or a development agency is one that the MoE should not be willing to take.

Table 1: Development Agencies' Experience Implementing the Readability Program

Implementing Agency/Project Name[1]	Years	Target and Reported Success	Notable Challenges and Lessons Learned Reported
Girls' Improved Learning Outcomes (GILO)[2]	2008-2013	166 schools in 4 governorates. The EGRA test was conducted with 2,876 students and revealed high improvement on average between control and treatment schools (reaching almost 200% improvement in some areas of the test)	- Classrooms were not "student-friendly" and so GILO dedicated great resources to equipping schools with needed material and improving the learning environment through maintenance of classrooms. - GILO promoted general financial decentralization in the MoE and was met with the challenge of central-level institutions in the Ministry that felt directly threatened by the decentralization. - Scaling-up processes by the MoE, while recognized by GILO as very successful, were uneven across municipalities and districts. It is reported in the final report that some districts and administrations were more able to carry out the readability program than others.[3]

1 All information is extracted from final evaluations and reports found online of these projects/programs. Moreover, while the USAID-funded Education Reform Program (ERP) is the first program to implement a similarly styled literacy program in Egypt, I start the table with GILO as the EGRA tool and general program as it is currently implemented, was designed and mainstreamed through that project. Another project that achieved success in the implementation of the readability program, but not included in this table, is the Primary Learning Program.
2 See https://educationinnovations.org/sites/default/files/USAID%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf, https://educationinnovations.org/program/girls%E2%80%99-improved-learning-outcomes-gilo-0, and https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JTBC.pdf
3 GILO Final Report, pg. 59

Implementing Agency/Project Name	Years	Target and Reported Success	Notable Challenges and Lessons Learned Reported
Education Support Program (ESP)[4]	2012-2014	75 schools in 6 governorates. 17,597 students were tested in the screening test and 7,500 students were placed in Level A (42%) while 5,515 eventually participated in the program (31.3%). The evaluation of the program revealed high success levels (students in treatment schools showed improvement up to 0.39 standard deviations higher than control groups	- While trained on active learning, teachers often reverted to traditional methods of teaching – reflecting that more time or different methods are needed for capacity building. - Students did not have enough reading material to practice their newly acquired skills. Thus, it was recommended that some of the lessons take place in the schools' libraries if present. - While it was planned that Supervisors visit teachers at least three times during the semester, it was common that they only made one visit – and thus provided limited guidance and support to teachers. - Teachers reported that they often did not have enough time to go through all the material, so they would omit parts of the lessons themselves. Thus, it was suggested to either shorten the lesson or increase the time available for them.

4 See
https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/ESP%20Remedial%20Reading%20Report%20Egypt_July
  pdf.%202014

Implementing Agency/Project Name	Years	Target and Reported Success	Notable Challenges and Lessons Learned Reported
			- Lessons that were incorporated into the school day were preferred by both students and teachers than after-school class. - An incentive or reward system was suggested so that both students and teachers be motivated to continue the program. Non-monetary rewards were recommended. - The current program brings together anyone who has scored between 0 and 42 in the exam, counting them as unable to read and write. However, this brings together students of very different abilities which hinders the learning process. It was thus suggested that the category of "Level A" gets broken down into several categories.

Implementing Agency/Project Name	Years	Target and Reported Success	Notable Challenges and Lessons Learned Reported
CARE Egypt's Readability Projects: - **Early Grade Literacy in Egypt – EAGLE (2014-2015)** - **All Children Reading (2015-2018)** - **Improving Syrian and Egyptian Children's Access to Formal and Informal Education – ACCESS (2015-2018)** - **Promoting Equitable Education for Girls in Egypt (2016-2017)**	2014 Ongoing	CARE implemented the readability program in a total of 79 schools (20 in EAGLE, 28 in All Children Reading Project, 30 in ACCESS and 1 in Promoting Equitable Education for Girls). CARE exclusively targets students in the advanced stages of primary and in the preparatory stage. The schools were located across Cairo, Giza, Qalyubia, Sharqia, Minya, and Beni Suief.	- Readability camps were successful and served as a good solution to the limited time available for classes during the academic year. It was recommended however, after its application in the "All Children Reading" project, that the camps target more students, and are extended to last for longer durations. - Community involvement was key for the success of the program. Volunteers from CBOs could implement the program and thus reduce the reliance on under-staffed Arabic teachers, as they are also more flexible. - Despite that the "preventive program" is supposedly mainstreamed into the curricula of the first three years in primary school, high numbers of illiterate students still exist in the advanced primary and preparatory stages. This confirms that special teaching methods must be used when teaching the curricula. - There is existing stigmatization on students

Implementing Agency/Project Name	Years	Target and Reported Success	Notable Challenges and Lessons Learned Reported
		Diagnostic tests were given to all students in the target grades of the 79 schools. Students scoring as level A ranged from 30% to 70% (best scores were in 6th of October and Sheikh Zayed while the worst were in Upper Egypt). Across all projects, CARE succeeded in improving the skills of at least 80% of students from Level A to B or C.	being classified as unable to read and write. This was particularly apparent in schools in Upper Egypt. As a consequence, some parents did not want their children to participate in the program. To remedy this situation, CARE encouraged the BoTs, school teachers, and social workers to maintain a strong relation with parents and spread awareness on the importance of the program. However, this required a high level of commitment from these participants. - In some schools in Upper Egypt, many of the teachers who were originally trained by CARE were transferred to other schools, which threatened the success of the program. In response, the Arabic language supervisors trained teachers from other disciplines (like social studies) on the readability curricula and methods so that they can fill in the gaps. The level of commitment displayed by these supervisors, and the

Implementing Agency/Project Name	Years	Target and Reported Success	Notable Challenges and Lessons Learned Reported
			willingness of other teachers, was not seen in other target areas. - In some projects, particularly ACCESS, the BoTs presented a solution to the high cost of the program as they made financial contributions to support the implementation of the readability program in the 10th of Ramadan.

The Way Forward for the Readability Program

Mainstreaming the readability program into existing curricula: Pedagogical techniques of the preventive readability program were mainstreamed into the existing curricula for early primary stages. However, high levels of illiteracy persist in advanced primary and preparatory stages in schools targeted by more recent readability programs. This may be attributed to several factors. First, the readability program is most successful when coupled with modern teaching techniques. The risk of mainstreaming the program into curricula, without any further attention or focus from any agency, is that there is limited supervision on teachers' adoption of these techniques. Thus, adequate teaching techniques must be clarified in teachers' manuals for early grade curricula. Second, other than adding readability lessons, existing curricula should be reviewed to include more reading material that is conducive for the objectives of the readability program and less overly-complicated material that force students to memorize and not comprehend the material. Lessons learned from GILO and ESP present guidelines on suitable reading material for students.[5] Some of these recommendations include to increase repetition of words in text-books (as opposed to using too many unique words and adding a wide-array of vocabulary), to reduce multi-syllable and abstract words, to rely less on words that are unique to the classical Arabic as opposed to spoken Arabic, and the absence of direct phonological instructions for the pronunciation of words. For instance, many Arabic lessons in existing curricula rely on memorization of vocabulary that is seldom used in day-to-day reading material, and memorization of classical Arabic poetry without comprehension – even in early stages of education.

Review the role of the Arabic-language supervisors: Development agencies that implemented the program, as well as the readability unit, have encouraged MoE Arabic-language supervisors to play a role in guiding and supporting teachers. They have trained them and expected from them monitoring reports on the levels of teachers. This technique resulted in mixed success, as many of the projects reviewed in Table 1 revealed that the cooperation of the MoE supervisors was not always guaranteed. The presence of supervisors in school was rare and they were generally unwilling to cooperate due to their lack of ownership or shaky relations with readability coordinators. For this level of commitment to change, the decision must come from above. The Department for Arabic Language Instruction must review the roles and responsibilities of supervisors to guarantee their commitment to the objectives of the readability program. Following an official revision of their role, supervisors will become

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[5] See page 375 of GILO Final Report for further information on findings of Arabic language curricula review.

more accountable to the performance of teachers and thus improving the odds of their commitment to the program.

Reviewing curricula used in education faculties in Egyptian universities: Both development agencies and the MoE have spent millions of EGP on the capacity building of teachers in implementing the readability program. Even after extensive training, most of the reviewed projects in Table 1 confirm that teachers frequently return to traditional teaching techniques and find the new techniques challenging. This led many projects to suggest longer training periods for teachers, and thus increased the expense of capacity building programs further. To avoid repeating this high-expense each year, education faculties in Egyptian universities can be targeted to incorporate the methods of the readability program to existing courses and curricula for Arabic-language instruction. While this may not have an immediate effect on existing illiteracy levels, it may reduce it for future generations of students.

Promoting Community Involvement: While it is encouraged that the Ministry adopts the program, this should not entail a full retreat in the role of civil society. Findings from several projects, particularly CARE International's "All Children Reading" project, confirm that community involvement can improve the results of the readability program. While the MoE can take many strides towards mainstreaming the program, issues of high cost and time remain. Civil society, and other actors in the community, can provide low-cost solutions. CBOs can organize interactive and fun events for students over winter and summer breaks or after class – and can also play a role in battling the stigmatization against students taking literacy classes. Moreover, BoTs, as well as other community players, can play a role in financially contributing to required learning materials for the success of the program. Generally, if the readability program is successfully mainstreamed into the objectives of existing Arabic-language curricula (as is recommended at the start of this section), extra learning materials should be reduced. However, as was reported by many projects, equipping schools with reading materials in their libraries can create a conducive environment for literacy in Egyptian schools and even provide extra tools, such as interactive games and e-learning resources, to be used by teachers.

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