**Advanced International Training Programme on
Child Rights, Classroom and School Management**

Empowering Students' Participation

Final Report

Country Team: Egypt

Dr. Walid Yasin
Mrs. Tahany Shemeis
Mr. Mohamed Hamed

Mentor: Dr. Bereket Yebio

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FOREWORD

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in co-operation with Lund University has developed a Programme covering Child Rights, Classroom and School Management. The guiding principle in the course and the whole training program is the right to education of all children. The programme also tries to develop a child rights based approach in education. It is designed to give opportunities to compare and share experience with participants from other countries while taking into consideration the Convention of the Rights of the Child, Education for All and other internationally agreed declarations. A child rights based approach has the potential of contributing to the broader efforts of improving educational quality and efficiency, which is the goal of most developing countries.

The training programme consists of three phases. The first phase took place during 3 weeks in Sweden in May-June 2009. The main content of the first phase consisted of studies in the subject area, combined with visits to relevant Swedish institutions, including different schools. The training was aimed at stimulating the transformation of conventional top down approaches to teaching and learning to those that are participatory, rights based, learner friendly and gender sensitive. One of the objectives under this aim of the training was for the participants to develop skills, understanding and attitudes in favour of child rights based education at classroom and school level. By the end of this phase participants outlined a project work to be developed in their countries upon their return. As the members of the Egyptian team, we decided to focus on **Empowering Students' Participation**. The second phase consisted of a follow up seminar to present the progress in the development of the project work during 2 weeks in Indonesia in November 2009. The third and last phase was a visit by our Mentor from Lund University in May 2010, when we together visited some key people in government and non-government organizations, reported the outcomes of our pilot project and appealed for support for the continuation of the activities initiated by the pilot project.

We are very grateful to Sida for offering us this training opportunity. We would like to thank our Mentors for having given us the opportunity to have this wonderful experience. Our thanks are due to all the training staff for all arrangements and facilities that made it possible for us to undergo the training in Child rights, Classroom and School Management.

We acknowledge the continuous support and guidance offered by two prominent educators who helped us through the program; from the early stages of this program until the wrapping up of the training program. Our gratitude are extended to Prof. Dr. Hossam Badrawi, Member of the Egyptian Parliament and Head of the Education and Scientific Research Committee, the National Democratic Party; as well as Prof. Dr. Hassan Al Bilawi, former Senior Advisor to H.E Minister of Education and Head of Policies and Strategic Planning Unit, MOE Egypt .

We appreciate the enthusiasm and support of the three pilot schools' leadership, teachers and students for allowing us to be in their schools for the different tasks of the project. We cannot forget their efforts in implementing the Pilot Project. Our thanks are extended to H.E Governor of Dakahlia, District Directors and Undersecretaries in the three Governorates where pilot schools are located.

We really would like to thank all our friends from the other countries who shared with us the programme and gave us the opportunity to know a lot about their countries.

Finally, we hope that the information presented in this report will help those interested in promoting the efforts to enhance democratic participation and human rights in general and child rights in particular in our country.

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A. Background

1. Local background to the Project

Egypt's strategic geographic position, long and rich history, and current size of population have made it a regional leader, politically, culturally, and economically. Egypt is located in the north-eastern corner of Africa, and is bordered by Libya, Palestine, Israel, Sudan, the Mediterranean, and the Red Sea. Over 95 percent of Egypt's land is desert, with the remaining land comprising the Nile Valley and Delta. Approximately three percent of the land is arable, with permanent crops on 0.5 percent of the land. The Nile Valley above Cairo is not more than 20 kilometers wide at any point, while the Delta is 250 kilometers wide (150 miles) at the seaward base and about 160 kilometers (96 miles) from south to north.

During Egypt's long history, the Nile River has played a dominant role in Egyptian life. It extends for some 1500 kilometers through the length of the country. Approximately 98 percent of the population lives along its banks, as they have for more than 6000 years. While the population of ancient Egypt experienced declines as well as increases, in modern times the population has only increased. In 1975, the population was estimated at 45 million; in 2006, at 76 million (CAPMAS, 2007). At the same time, there has been a noticeable drop in annual population growth rates, from 2.1 percent (1975-2004) to an anticipated 1.8 percent (2004-2015). These drops are also reflected in a declining fertility rate, from 5.7 births per woman in 1970-75 to 3.3 births per woman in 2000-2005(Human Development Index, 2006).

According to the Egypt State Information Service (2008), there are 40 seaports in Egypt, with an overall capacity of 66.8 million tons (2005/06). There are a total of 9435 kilometers, 796 stations, 1800 trains, and 28 railway lines. There is also a paved highway network of about 48,100 kilometers. There are 30 airports around Egypt, through which an estimated 21.7 million passengers pass annually (2005/06 figures). In addition, some 311.4 million tons/kilometers (2005/06 figures) are transported by air annually. It is anticipated that these facilities will need to be increased and maintained in order to meet the needs of the growing population and the country's economic goals.

Cairo, one of the world's mega-cities, is the largest city in the Middle East and Africa, with a population difficult to estimate (probably around 18 million), due to the continuous development of urban sprawl. Almost all nations have diplomatic representatives in Cairo, which gives a cosmopolitan atmosphere to the city, alongside its many popular quarters. It is also home to some of the finest Islamic monuments in the world, not to mention its proximity to ancient sites. However, its size and its near-constant growth present challenges to those in charge of development in the greater Cairo area. In education, school construction is particularly difficult, given the scarcity of suitable sites for new schools, and will require innovative solutions.

Egypt has a long history of a highly centralized government (Mayfield, 1996), from ancient times through the present day. The current government is committed to instituting a high level of decentralization of services; in fact the education sector may serve as a pilot for decentralization of other government sectors. In the past, Egypt was often ruled by external powers, which it finally succeeded in ousting (although it took several decades) in the early 1950s. Since then, Egypt has had a republican form of government, with an executive president. The Parliament is in

the form of the People's Assembly (Maglis El-Shaab), which has the power to issue legislation. There is also an upper house; the Shoura Council (Maglis El- Shoura) which serves as a debating chamber. Both of these chambers include elected members as well as a number of deputies appointed by the president. Egypt is a multiparty system, with the largest number of seats in the Maglis El-Shaab being from the National Democratic Party. Citizens aged 18 and over are eligible to vote in elections and referenda. Clearly, a functioning democracy depends on the basic literacy and numeracy of the electorate: ensuring the success of democratic rule is one of the most important "public good" outcomes expected from education.

The current regional structure includes 27 governorates, with governors appointed by the president. The current constitution was promulgated on September 11, 1971 and amended on May 22, 1980, May 25, 2005, and April 2007. The latest amendments are an indication of liberalization in politics and reflect moves toward more involvement by multiple parties in political life. One concrete result is the rapid and significant development of school-based Boards of Trustees and other mechanisms that foster community and parental participation in education.

The political situation in the Middle East has created instability over the past six decades, a situation which has impeded development in Egypt in a number of ways. Recent international developments have added to this instability. Egypt has another fundamental political necessity beyond the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region: to take a leadership role in relation to control of Nile basin water. This task is naturally an extremely high priority for the government. Egypt also has a number of different refugee populations; educating these people effectively and with dignity poses unique challenges. There are also a number of economic migrants who use Egypt as a base for their business operations, given its central location in the MENA region.

According to World Bank figures, Egypt currently has the second largest regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) after Saudi Arabia. In 2006, the GDP was estimated at 618 billion Egyptian pounds (4). This is an increase over GDP for 2005 (LE 558 billion) and 2000 (LE 340 billion). The economy grew by an estimated 6.9 percent in 2006 and is expected to grow by about 7.5 percent in 2006/07. It should be noted that during this time, government subsidies of fuel (especially petroleum products), basic foodstuffs (especially bread), and basic goods increased significantly, from LE 25 billion in 2001 to LE 68.5 billion in 2006. The continuing need to subsidize basic commodities reveals a serious and chronic challenge to the government: the need to reduce poverty, and thereby, the gap between the rich and the poor in Egypt (Al Ahram Weekly, 2006).

Agriculture has been the traditional activity engaged in by the vast majority of Egyptians since ancient times. The warm weather and constant supply of Nile water make multiple annual harvests possible. Main agricultural products include cotton, rice, corn, wheat, sugar cane, sugar beets, onions, and beans. While efforts have been made since the 1970s to introduce desert-based agriculture, the gains in cultivated land have often been off-set by loss of fertile land to urbanization as well as erosion. Currently, about 40 percent of Egyptians are employed in agriculture, representing about 15 percent of the GDP. Education regarding new agricultural techniques cannot alone mitigate this situation, but it will be an important feature of sector development, and will require coordination with other Ministries. In addition, on a practical level, school based management can help coordinate both the school calendar and parts of the curriculum with the needs of the local agricultural population (Infoplease.com, Pearson Education, 2006, World Bank, 2007).

In addition to agriculture, another important sector of the economy is industry. Among the main industries are textiles, food processing, tourism, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, hydrocarbons, construction cement, metals, and light manufacturing. About 22 percent of Egyptians are employed in these industries, producing about 36 percent of the GDP. Education must provide key support to industrial development in cooperation with other Ministries-for instance, in opening up the regulatory environment for doing business in Egypt. It is clear that in almost every developmental activity, mutually supportive inter-ministerial coordination will be critical (World Bank, 2007).
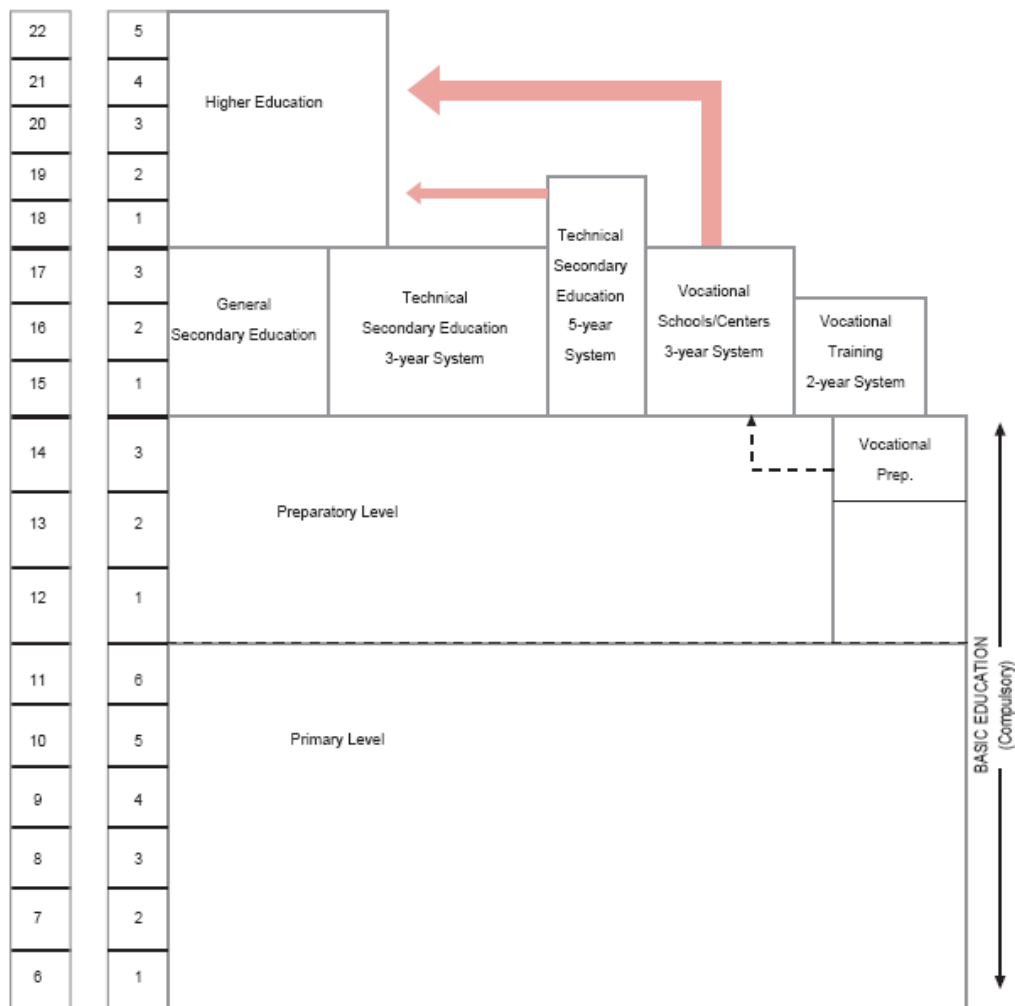
A key industry is the tourist sector, where Egypt should be one of the world's leaders, as it possesses more of the world's known antiquities than any other country (and the majority of its artifacts are still to be excavated). In addition to cultural tourism (i.e. visits to antiquity sites), since the 1990s, Egypt has become a world-class player in the leisure tourism market, with the development of seaside resorts, such as Sharm El Sheikh and Hurghada. However, tourism is a sector sensitive to political events, and, given the potential for instability in and around Egypt noted above, its obvious potential is often overshadowed by incidents that cause sector declines beyond the control of those working in this industry as well as the government. The tourism sector is heavily dependent on the education system, from preparing Egyptian archaeologists to fostering a well-trained, multi-lingual work force for the hotel and hospitality industry.

Since the early 1990s, President Mubarak has made education a top priority in Egypt. A key event which sparked this concern was the 1992 earthquake, which affected many educational buildings. A large number of buildings were not safe to use. Concerted efforts were made to make up for these losses and, at the same time, to provide the infrastructure necessary to insure equal opportunities for education for all children in Egypt. Those efforts resulted in an increase in the education budget by 240 percent during the 1990s. A total of 13,709 schools were built between 1992/93 and 2005/06. This number is more than twice the number of schools that were built in the preceding 110 years. This growth in schools was accompanied by an increase in enrollment in basic education for boys and, especially, girls. Basic education is now nearly universal. Secondary enrollments also rose in the past decade, but have now stabilized at lower than desired levels, and, thus, now require additional attention. These achievements place Egypt at the forefront of countries that have made significant progress in access to education since the Education for

All initiative was established in 1990. While the main focus during this period was on access, the concept of quality also existed in the form of teacher training programs and in the project to equip all Egyptian schools with computers for educational purposes. Since 2000, the concept of quality in education has crystallized with the publication of the National Standards for Education in Egypt in 2003. Based on these National Standards, the concept of school-based improvement was introduced in 2004 through a number of pilot projects. Building on this historical process, in March 2006, an Education Management Information System (EMIS) was introduced, based on the concept of decentralization (which was included in the National Policy Framework of Education in Egypt that the Ministry of Education (MOE) issued in March 2006). Thus, over the past 15 years, the three inter-dependent areas of access, quality, and systems management have emerged to serve as the foundation stones of the current National Strategic Plan. While all three areas continue to be important to the achievement of the country's education goals, quality is now the focus (MOE Strategic Planning, 2007)

The Egyptian pre-university education system is the largest in the Middle East and one of the largest in the world. With some 17 million students and approximately 40,000 schools (public and private) in the different educational levels, the pre-university education system is expected over the longer term to make a significant contribution to Egypt's economy and to play an essential role in increasing its national income. 90.2 percent of all students in Egypt are included in the public and private education sectors (83 percent and 7.2 percent, respectively). Together, public and private sectors have approximately 821,000 teachers, 711,000 administrators, and 105,000 workers together constituting some 1.6 million employees. The remaining 9.8 percent of students attend Al Azhar (2) schools. The pre-university education system consists of three levels: primary, preparatory, and secondary (See Figure (1)). Basic education, which comprises nine years (a six year primary and a three year preparatory level) is intended to include all children aged 6-14. Basic education has been guaranteed as a right of every citizen under every Egyptian Constitution since 1923. Primary school education has been compulsory since the 1930s.

Figure (1) The Egyptian Educational System (PSPU, 2007)

Students who pass the primary end-of-level exam move on to preparatory school. Those who do not pass after two attempts move to vocational preparatory or withdraw from education. Based on their performance in the preparatory level exam, a student may go to general secondary, technical secondary, or withdraw from formal education. Graduates from general secondary schools may be eligible to enter university, depending on their score on the secondary end-of-level exam; while almost all technical secondary graduates enter the workforce (the top five percent may attend Higher Institutes or university for further training).

At present, pre-primary education is not part of the formal education system. There are a number of providers involved in this level of education, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Solidarity, and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), Al Azhar pre-university education, a number of international and local NGOs, and the private and cooperative sectors.

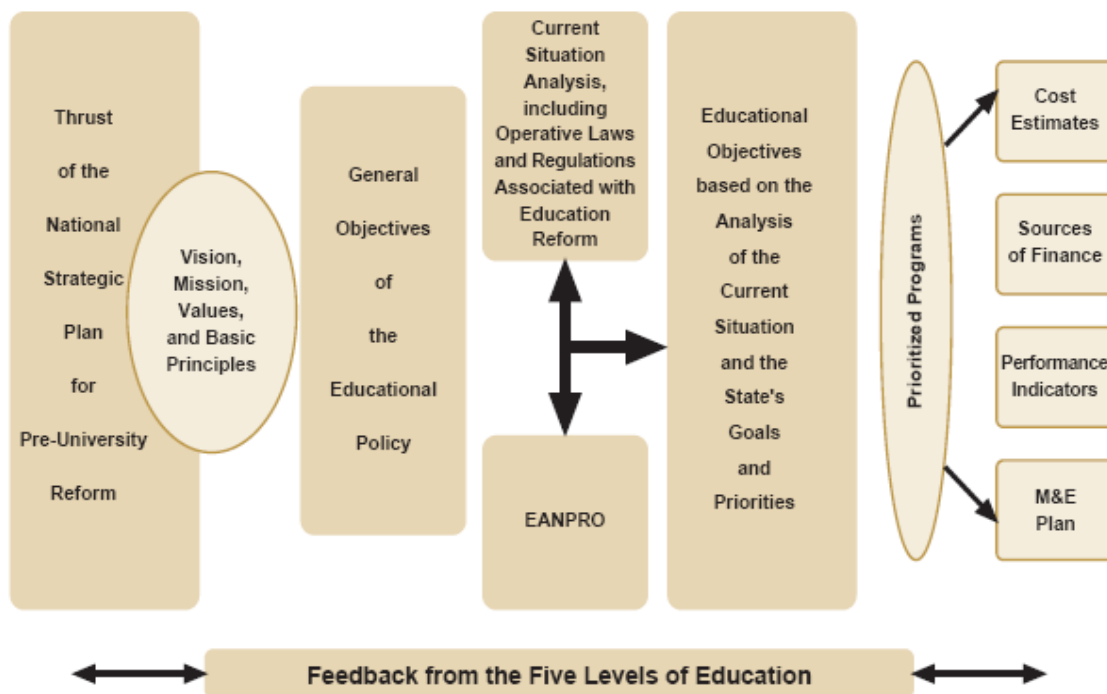**Figure (2): National Strategic Plan's Structure**

Figure (3) Egyptian Strategic Education plan

Summary of the Strategic Education Plan 2007/08 – 2011/12

VISION: A commitment to provide pre-university quality education for all, as one of the basic human rights adopting a decentralized system based on community participation as a cornerstone; enhancing the education system in Egypt to be a pioneering model in the region; and preparing citizens for a knowledge-based society in a new social contract based on democracy, justice, and constant futuristic vision.

Fundamental Policy Goals for the Development of the Education Sector

Fundamental Goal-1:
Continuous reform and improvement of educational quality according to the National Quality Standards

Fundamental Goal-2:
Development of effective monitoring and evaluation systems based in part on the institutionalization of decentralization

Fundamental Goal-3:
Foster equitable educational opportunities for all children in Egypt, achieve inclusion of children with special needs, and provide second chance education opportunities for out-of-school children.

Figure (4) Programs of the Strategic Plan

I. Quality programs

Curriculum & Instructional Technology
Goal 1: Undertake comprehensive curriculum and instructional technology reform

School Based Reform
Goal 2: Introduce school-based reform at all levels of education

HR & Professional Development
Goal 3: Introduce Human Resources Development system

II. Management Programs

Decentralization
Goal 4: Achieve decentralization of management at all levels of education

ICT
Goal 5: Complete the Infrastructure of ICT

M&E
Goal 6: Develop an effective M&E system

Construction
Goal 7: Improve school construction system

III. Delivery and Quality of Access Programs

Early Childhood
Goal 8: Expand access to quality pre-school education

Basic Education
Goal 9: Carry out Basic Education Reform

Secondary Education
Goal 10: Modernize Secondary Education

Community-Based Education
Goal 11: Provide education for girls and out-of-school children

Special Needs
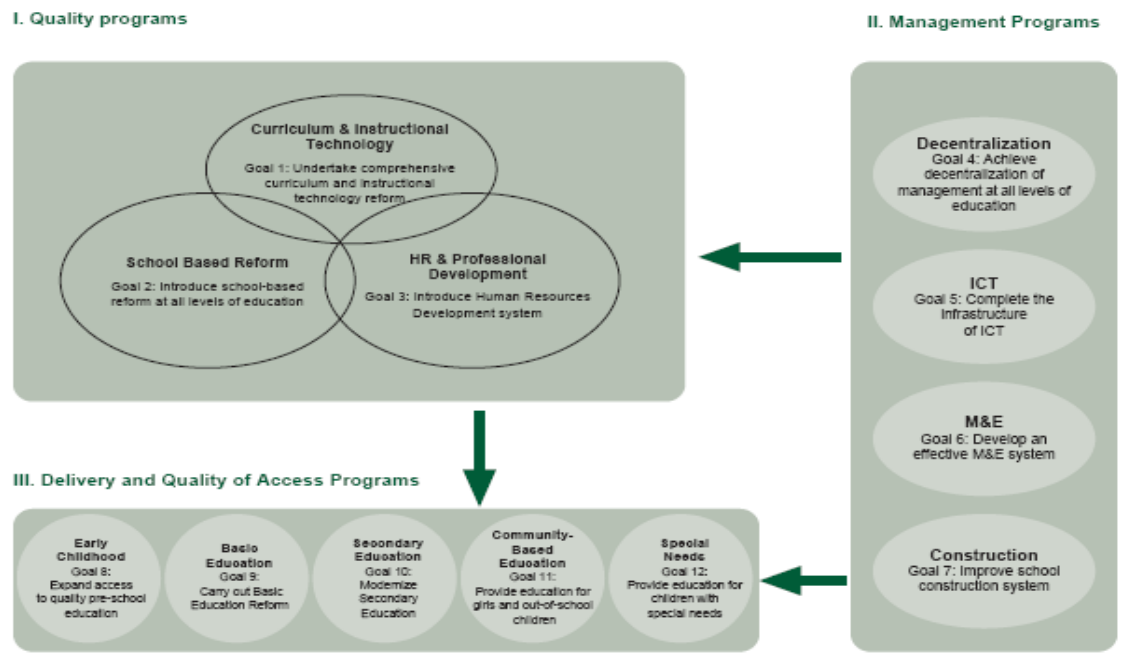Goal 12: Provide education for children with special needs

Table (1): Higher Education in Egypt

Egyptian Higher Education in Numbers (public sector)

Description	2007-2008
# of Universities	17
# of Faculties	300
# of faculty members	38363
# of faculty assisting members	26532
# of students admitted	318590
# of students enrolled in graduate degrees	1386715
# of graduates	231704
# of students enrolled in post graduate degree	120508
# of graduated of post graduate degree	36378

2. Child Rights in Egypt

The National Council for Childhood & Motherhood (NCCM) was established in 1988 as the highest government authority entrusted with policymaking, planning, coordinating, monitoring and evaluation of activities in the areas of protection and child development. In 2009, NCCM was turned to be one of the three key affiliates to the newly established Ministry of Family and Population.

The NCCM tasks encompass a multitude of social sectors to include the following:

- Setting development orientations for the national plan pertaining to childhood and motherhood in the fields of society, family health, education and culture.
- Following up and evaluating the implementation of public policy and the national plan for childhood and motherhood, in light of reports submitted from ministries and authorities.
- Compiling information, statistics and studies in fields pertaining to childhood and motherhood and evaluating their indicators.
- Proposing the appropriate cultural, educational and informative programs and raising public awareness of the needs of childhood and motherhood as well as their problems and ways of tackling them.
- Proposing training programs capable of raising the standard of performance in implementing childhood and motherhood activities.
- Cooperating with governmental and non-governmental organizations working in the fields of childhood and motherhood at the regional and international levels, and encouraging voluntary work in these domains.
- Giving opinion on conventions related to the childhood and motherhood and participating in implementing aid agreements and assistance offered by other nations and organizations to Egypt.

Egypt has made significant progress over the past decade toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals, with substantial gains in child survival rates, school enrolment, immunization coverage and access to safe drinking water. Poverty remains a problem, especially in Upper Egypt, impacting the health, education and well-being of that region's children.

Activities and results for children

- In February 2006, Egypt was declared polio free, with no reported cases of the disease since 2004.
- UNICEF procured 25,000 'clean delivery kits' to improve maternal care in high-risk districts. Ten thousand medical personnel were trained in safe childbirth practices.
- In 2005, UNICEF supported the Hope Village Society in establishing Egypt's first-ever shelter for pregnant girls and young mothers living on the streets.

Issues facing children in Egypt

- Nationwide, net primary school enrolment exceeds 94 per cent, although impoverished regions such as Upper Egypt lag behind.
- HIV/AIDS prevalence remains low in Egypt, but there is no comprehensive national strategy in place to contain the virus.
- Some 98 per cent of the population has access to clean water, but 42 per cent of rural households lack hygienic sanitation systems.
- Studies show that many Egyptian girls and women have suffered from some form of female genital mutilation/cutting.
- There is a need for additional services to protect children from violence, abuse and neglect.

Despite the MOE's effort to ensure access to all school age children, there are some groups who remain outside the school system, including children who have dropped out of mainstream schools (estimated at 0.22 percent and 2.9 percent of the age group from the primary and preparatory levels, respectively), and those who never enrol because of either extreme poverty or complete lack of access. To provide education for these children, the government has provided various forms of schools or educational institutions. Since 1992, the Ministry of Education and other partners have been providing a number of initiatives to reach the hard to reach. The Community schools, the one-classroom schools, and the small schools all fall in this category. The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), together with other government agencies, has been working since 2000 to provide education for girls and street children. These efforts resulted in the establishment of the Girls' Friendly Schools, Schools for Street Children, or Children in Difficult Circumstances. All these initiatives have together created a type of education referred to as Community Based Education (CBE).

B. CRC Pilot Project

1. Formulation of the problem:

In reference to the first chapter, Egypt was among the first countries that ratified the United Nation Child Rights Convention (UNCRC) in 6th of July 1990. According to the African Report on Child Wellbeing (2008), the Government of Egypt came out as 17th in the Child-friendliness Index, out of the 52 African governments covered in the assessment. This was mainly for two reasons: first, as a result of the Government of Egypt's fair commitment in allocating a relatively high share of its national budget to provide for the basic needs of children; and secondly, as a result of the effort and success in achieving favourable wellbeing outcomes as reflected on children themselves. However, the Government of Egypt was found to be one of the child friendly governments in Africa, the efforts in the field of education still needs some improvement. The quality of education in schools gives cause for concern and may be an explanation for high drop-out rates; the problem relates to pedagogical methods, curricula and the lack of adequate educational material.

It was recommended that the text of the Convention should be disseminated as widely as possible among the public at large and, in particular, among teachers and members of other professions working with children. **Thus, this project will focus on empowering students' participation through raising the awareness of the school community members and working on the pedagogical part with the teachers**.

2. Project Aims:

- Develop and implement a model that exemplifies a school community which provides the opportunities for the child to express his opinion and to be heard (articles 12 of the CRC).
- Provide a school environment that that works for the best interest of the child (articles 3 of the CRC).

3. Project Outcomes:

- The school community aware of CRC with special focus on CRC article 3 & 12.
- Training materials on learner-centred approaches to provide opportunities for children to express themselves.
- Trained subject matters teachers and teachers of activities (School media, library classes) on the developed materials.
- Learner-centred activities developed and implemented by the teachers with their students.
- A group of change agents composed of teachers and students who advocate the experience in nearby school communities.

C. Implementation of the project

1. Target groups of the project:

a) *Target areas*:

- Awareness raising
- Extra curricula activities

b) *Target groups*:

- Teachers (major target for all interventions)
- Students

c) *Stakeholders*:

- School Board of Trustees (BOT)
- Key Ministry of Education Officials responsible for the targeted school

2. Place of Pilot Project implementation

Three pilot schools were public schools. They were selected to represent different community backgrounds and educational contexts. In this way, the pilot schools represented urban big cities (Cairo), town (Tanta) and a rural area (Meniet El Nasr). The rationale was to try the CRC activities in more than one context to figure out any differentiation of implementation, challenges as well as impacts.

- Al Zahrat Experimental Language School, Heliopolis District, Cairo Governorate.
  It is a K-12 public school; it has around 3 to 4 classes in each grade, around 120 students in each grade so it is about 1200 students each year. The staff of teaching and administer around 120.

- Kamal Hafez Primary School (K-6), Meniet El Nasr District, Dakahliya Governorate.
  It is a K-6 public school; it has around 20 classes, around 500 students. The staff of teaching and administer around 35.

- El Menshawi Preparatory school for Girls, East Tanta District, Gharbia Governorate.
  It is a 6-9 public school; it has around 30 classes, around 800 students. The staff of teaching and administer around 50

3. Main activities of the Project:

- **Selecting the targeted school for implementation.**
  The selection of pilot schools was done in consultation with educational leaders at the different districts. Again, the school represented various demographic environments and backgrounds. Also, different educational stages were considered. As a result the three pilot schools covered primary, preparatory and secondary stages. They also considered gender aspect. Two schools were co-education while there was a female students' school.

- **Developing training materials and tools to monitor performance.**
  The team developed a two-day training materials to be used for training the target groups. The main sources were the International Training on Child Rights Convention that took place in Lund, Sweden. Other reference materials were used also, to help the audience grasp the rationale and practices of CRC and be able to promote the students' participation which was the ultimate goal of the pilot project.

- **Awareness raising for the targeted school community.**
  Prior to the training sessions, a number of meetings took place with educational leaders and stakeholders to introduce the CRC background and proposed activities. It was very important to orient the stakeholders who consequently provided all the needed technical and logistic supports for the training and pilot projects.

- **Implementing the training that result in teacher's action plans for the targeted activities.**
  The training materials and activities were tailored to support the goal, however, it allowed good space for unique practices and activities that each school team decided to carry out with their students. After conducting the two-day workshop, each school team was asked to develop an action plan for their own project(s) that they would carry with their students.

- **Follow up on teacher's action plans implementation.**
  The training session was not an end. It was just the first stage in an ongoing process of implementing school's action plans. There were a number of visits carried by the Egyptian team. The purposes of these visits were to assist the schools' teams implementing their school projects and provided any necessary technical support. It was an ongoing process of discussions and exploration of the various ways to enhance students' participation by going them all the chances to express their thoughts and lead their own projects.

- **Presentation of Students' outcomes.**
  The students were able to lead their own projects with the minimum support from their teachers who were available to facilitate the students' activities. Students were able to plan, design, impellent and present their work. They were empowered to achieve their own goals. They were enthusiastic to take the lead and explore this vivid experience.

4. Project Implementation Schedule:

May-09	June	July	August	September	October
Lund, Phase 1		Drafting the training materials		Follow on the awareness raising impact in the school	Finalizing the training materials and tools.
Lund, Phase 1	Selecting the targeted school for implementation.				
Lund, Phase 1		Modifying and reviewing the training materials and tools.	Awareness raising activity		Collecting materials and data for the progress report
	Identifying the students' level of participation in school activities.				Prepare Progress Report to be sent to mentor

November	December	January-10	February	March	April	May	June
	Selecting target groups of teachers			Teachers implement their action plan			
Indonesia, Workshop				Follow up visits to support teachers while implementation		Mentor visit	
Indonesia, Workshop	Implementing the training		Teachers implement their action plan		Students presentation of their projects / activities		Finalise the report
	Teachers develop their action plan						

D. Project Outcomes

1. Pilot Project

Originally, Egypt's team was planning to have an extensive training program that focus on building the capacity building f the pilot schools community members on the CRC theory and practices. The proposed training program was designed to cover a wide range of activities and audiences. Based on the feedback from CRC mentors and colleagues, it was thought to have a more focused and intensive training that is more purposeful towards CRC implementation which special focus on enhancing the participation of the students in the pilot schools. Also, the pilot project was postponed couple of times due to the Swine Flu issue that overwhelmed the world and obliged the schools to be closed for a long period. It was made difficult to stick to the original plan and thus, an alternative plan was considered to fulfil the requirement of the CRC training in terms of project implementation.

Egypt's team project was a two-day training course followed by intensive meetings and visits to support teachers and students' work to implement a number of school activities initiated and implemented by the students. During the training the audience had the chance to be oriented on:
- the UN Child Rights convention
- Egypt's efforts to support CRC
- Identifying students' satisfaction regarding their involvement in the school's activities (Appendix 1: Students' Participation Questionnaire)
- identifying students' level of participation in schools activities (Appendix 2: The Ladder of Participation)

2. The project outcomes:

The pilot schools teams (teachers and students) were able to design and implement a wide range of activities where students took the lead. Students were able to move from the passive recipients of teachers' ideas and orders to be more proactive. They were empowered by good support and encouragement to take the lead. Students were enthusiasm to think "out of the box" and they were able to come up with innovative projects which they were convinced and enthusiastic to accomplish.

- Students designed and implemented a full self-managed school day by the students, who led all school activities.

- Students carried out a visit to Faculty of Science, Tanta University to visit the laboratories and collect more data about their science classes then they designed power points presentations that they used to share their learning out comes to their colleagues.

- Students activated their school parliament discussions and involvements where they manage to solve some of students' problems without just asking the school administrations to interfere.

- Community service activities.

- Students created a wide range and well represented school council that highlights a number of issues that students want to solve. Students managed to involve a large number of their colleagues in vivid discussions with school leadership to reach conclusions and solutions.

- Students designed and implemented a project called "The Young Leader" that aimed to enhance the leadership skills among young students.

- Students designed a number of extra-curricular activities and products to enhance their learning processes. They used these outcomes to foster a number of their educational concepts.

- Students designed a number of school media tools (magazines, broadcasts) to raise the awareness of CRC, support the students' participation and involvement in their schools activities.

3. After the Pilot Project:

- Teachers will revisit the schools activities to allow for more students' participations.

- Teachers will implement the students' participation questionnaire (appendix 1) to observe students' participation progress and satisfaction out of the experience.

- School leadership will involve more students to play an active role in the school activities.

E. Evaluation of the Results of the Project

During the pilot project design of the two-day training, the "Students' Participation Questionnaire" (appendix 1) was introduced to the teachers and school administration. It was thought to be a good tool for schools to evaluate and track the level of their students' participation. Then, the same tool could be adopted by the school for further usages.

No systematic implementation of the tool was considered at this stage of the project due to the time limit and postponing of the pilot project. However, teachers were trained on using the tool which can be used later.

In the feedback and follow up meetings, the teachers highlighted some guiding principles for promoting students' participation. Their points matched the UNICEF, the worldwide efforts fighting for children's rights and well-being has set up principles to ensure children's meaningful participation. These guidelines are useful for any form of participation:

- Children must understand what the project or the process is about, what it is for and their role within it.
- Power relations and decision making structures must be transparent.
- Children should be involved from the earliest possible stage of any initiative.
- All children should be treated with equal respect regardless of their age, situation, ethnicity, abilities or other factors.
- Ground rules should be established with all the children at the beginning.
- Children are entitled to respect for their views and experience.

F. Conclusions and recommendations

There is - of course, one might say - no absolute agreement as to how to enhance students' participation in the educational context, but generally speaking a huge efforts should be put towards the development of human personality and individual talent, a sense of dignity and self-worth, and mental and physical ability. The projects helped to a) instil respect for students' rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as for cultural identity, language and values. To enable people to participate effectively in a free society, b) promote understanding, tolerance, friendship among all groups, and to maintain peace, c) promote gender equality and respect for the environment.

First and foremost children's participation needs an enabling environment. Children open up when they feel what they say has significance and when they understand the purpose of their involvement. This should be in the focus of both school administration and teachers who needs to work collaboratively to enhance such situation.

Because children think and express themselves differently from adults, their participative processes should build on concrete issues and experiences and real life situations, and vary in complexity based on the **evolving capacity** of the child. Starting exercises might be consultations and opinion surveys on various subjects directed by adults. Planning, implementing, managing, monitoring and evaluating programs are a more developed means of participation. Child-initiated projects, research, self-advocacy, representation or co-management with adults of organizations and institutions are highly educative and strong experiences for older children.

Meaningful participation processes develop a wide range of skills and competencies. Children gain new information, learn about their rights and get to know others' points of view by active listening. Forming and articulating their opinion, they improve their communication, critical thinking and organizational and life skills. They experience that they can make a real difference.

To achieve the culture of students' rights in leading their schools activities, the implementation of children's participation is an ongoing mission. Its biggest barrier is engrained adult attitudes. Therefore, capacity building for both children and adults on students' rights, students' participation, facilitation, ethical practices, and research is necessary. All people working with and for children should internalize the basic principles of students' participation and develop capacities to facilitate, support and promote it. Organizational and personal commitment is essential. Although building a culture of participation requires human and financial resources, the results validate the effort.

Based on the pilot project and observed activities in the pilot schools, are a number of recommendations that could be directed to different stakeholders who needs to collaborate for enhancing the educational environment to allow for effective participation of the students. Chief among these recommendations are:

- *School administration* needs to understand the philosophy and rationale of CRC and to be oriented on the related articles and guiding principles which they need to incorporate in their schools' contexts and practices. This will help the leadership of the educational organization to be aware of the implications and requirements of such change to provide a positive culture for better education that meets the child's needs. This supportive culture will not only help students but also their teachers who will play a key role in the educational activities based on the understanding, support and delegation from the school leadership. The end result of this encouraging culture is having a powerful and effective team who are serving as change agents; i.e. teachers.
- *Teachers* need to be trained and have hands-on activities on the good practices of CRC implementations in schools. This will help the teachers to create their own activities that need to be tailored to fit into their students interested, background and culture. Teachers will be able to give more freedom to the students to select their activities and projects, rather just to be implementers of what teachers design or order students to perform. Teachers need to think out of the box and try innovative methods of carrying out their activities. They need to consider the students' input while designing their classroom activities as well as extra-curricular activities. Teachers need, also, to collaborate with their colleagues to design cross-subjects activities that will bring different and discrete subjects and specializations to the same table. This will be of an added value, simply because they are having the same goal; serving their own students.
- *Students* need to be aware of their rights and to have good opportunities to practice and to be empowered and prepared for such active role from early stages. There is a need to be up to the level and behave according to the expected level and granted trust. The students' self-esteem and trust needs to be highlighted and encouraged. Students' creativity is unlimited and they can make use of many aspects around them to express themselves and serve their school and community.
- *Community leaders* need to play an active role in supporting the students' initiatives and activities. They need to provide them with sincere guidance and appreciation. Community leaders need to attend awareness raising activities on CRC and focus groups and seminars on how to be more supportive and helpful in collaborating with the schools in their neighbourhood.

To conclude, all stakeholders need to collaborate together to accomplish their common goal and educational target. Having a common ground and understanding of CRC philosophy and implications will help translating its articles into real best practices for the sake of empowering the students to take the lead. Students need to be considered as active players and more proactive rather than recipients. All possible efforts and channels needs to be explored for the sake of *Empowering Students' Participation*.

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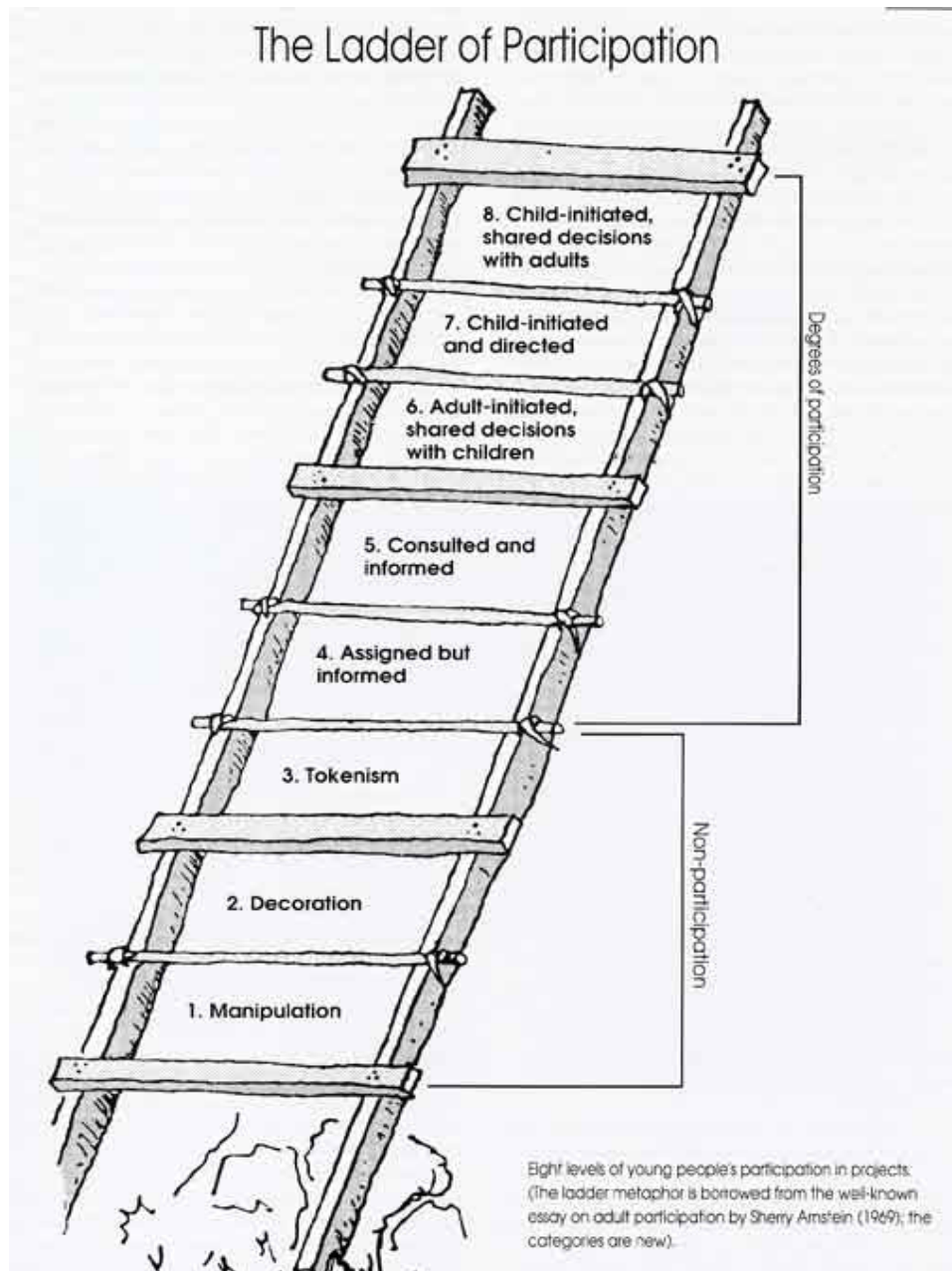- World Bank (2007). Education Sector Note. Unpublished Document.

H. Appendices

Appendix 1: Students' Participation Questionnaire

Please rate the following statements on a scale 1 to 4

4= strongly agree	3= agree	2= disagree	1=strongly disagree

Statements	1	2	3	4
1. My teachers treat me with fairness, courtesy and respect				
2. New students are made welcome at the school				
3. I feel that my school staff value my skills and talents				
4. Teachers are available in case of facing a problem				
5. I get extra help if I need it from my teachers/administrators				
6. School rules are fair and reasonable for all students				
7. I am never absent from school unless I'm ill				
8. My school teachers/administrators notice when I am good at something				
9. I receive constructive feedback from my teachers and colleagues				
10. My school celebrates the accomplishment of the students				
11. I feel that I have something to be proud of as a student				
12. My teachers keep me informed about my progress				
13. I'm recognized when I try my best				
14. I feel I am learning and making progress				
15. My teachers make school an exciting place to learn				
16. My school encourages me to explore different ideas and possibilities				
17. My teachers usually connect what I am learning to what I know				
18. I enjoy my learning and activities in my school				
19. I have opportunities to work collaboratively with other students				
20. I learn better when I am exposed to creative activities				
21. I comfortably share thoughts, opinions, feelings and questions in my school				
22. My teachers listen to students' ideas				
23. I am never afraid to ask questions in class				
24. School administrators at my school give students opportunities to make suggestions				
25. My teachers actively seek out students opinions and ideas				
26. I am involved in my school-wide decisions				
27. I know my school action plan and goals				
28. Teachers and school administrators encourage students to make decisions				
29. I and my schoolmates generally keep the school rules				
30. I feel confident voicing my opinions and concerns				

Appendix 2: The Ladder of Participation

The Ladder of Participation

8. Child-initiated,
shared decisions
with adults

7. Child-initiated
and directed

6. Adult-initiated,
shared decisions
with children

5. Consulted and
informed

4. Assigned but
informed

Degrees of participation

3. Tokenism

2. Decoration

1. Manipulation

Non-participation

Eight levels of young people's participation in projects.
(The ladder metaphor is borrowed from the well-known
essay on adult participation by Sherry Arnstein (1969); the
categories are new).

Appendix 3: Egypt CRC Pilot Project in Pictures

Training session on CRC.

Group work activity while the training session on CRC.

Follow up meeting: meeting some students to discuss and reflect on their projects' implementation.

Group photo: the Mentor, school teachers and students

Project: Students work together to decorate their class

The Mentor observes one of the students while presenting one of the projects.

الدقهلية اشادة سويدية بتجربة إعادة

٣ آلاف طفل متسرب لمدارسهم

كتب حازم نصر:

لم يتخيل د. بيرى كيت بابيو استاذ التربية بجامعة لوند السويدية أن تلاميذ المدارس الابتدائية بالدقهلية بهذا المستوى من الذكاء والمهارة والقدرة على استيعاب تقنيات العصر. أبدى دهشته وسعادته بالتلاميذ مؤكدا انه زار ٤٠ دولة لم يجد التلاميذ بها في هذه السن على هذا المستوى. استاذ التربية السويدى يقوم بزيارات لدول العالم المختلفة لمتابعة حقوق الطفل ومستوى التعليم الذى يقدم إليهم. اتجه لمحافظة الدقهلية قاصدا زيارة بعض المدارس بصورة عشوائية رافقه محمود عميرة وكيل وزارة التربية والتعليم الذى لم يكن يعلم شيئا مسبقا عن زيارته ولا الوجهة التى يقصدها. طلب الأستاذ السويدى التوجه لمركز منية

النصر ويدخل مدرسة بصورة مفاجئة.. أخبره مترجمه بانه امام مدرسة كمال البين حافظ الابتدائية فدخلها.. وبدأ يسأل تلاميذ الصفوف بالسنوات المختلفة ويختبرهم فى استخدامات الكمبيوتر وشبكة المعلومات «الانترنت» بخلاف اسئلة العلوم والحساب انه مستواهم رغم صعوبة الأسئلة.. كما ابدى اعجابه الشديد بمنتجات الاطفال من اشغال يدوية ومن انشطتهم الفنية خاصة الرسم. الأستاذ السويدى حرص على زيارة المحافظ اللواء سمير سلام بمكتبه ليقدم له الشكر على هذا الاهتمام بالاطفال مؤكدا له ايضا سعادته بتجربة المحافظة الرائدة فى مواجهة التسرب من التعليم واعادة ٣ آلاف طفل متسرب لمدارسهم.

الأستاذ السويدى مع اسرة مدرسة كمال الدين حافظ بالمنصورة

H.E General Samir Salaam; Governor of Dakahlia, meets and honor Dr. Bereket

Mentor's visit to a pilot school; meeting MOE undersecretary and school administration (The Egyptian News Newspaper)