Action research for the development and integration of child protection policies and practices at private schools in Egypt

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American University in Cairo
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Action Research for the Development and Integration of Child Protection
Policies and Practices at Private Schools in Egypt

by

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Abstract

Violence against children is a widespread phenomenon in Egypt. The education sector has a large role to play in preventing violence and promoting child-wellbeing inside and outside schools. This study reviews the literature, assesses the current status and attitudes regarding School-Based Child Protection and documents a nine-month action research project conducted with International British Schools. Data is collected via six school visits, a baseline questionnaire administered to 60 respondents from 44 schools, field notes, participant feedback and participant reflections. The paper discusses lessons learned on the school’s needs, challenges and opportunities, as well as culture-specific aspects and contextual factors that need to be taken into consideration. The author then draws implications for policy development and implementation and capacity building on both the state level and the school level and identifies topics requiring further research. Findings show that there is a substantial lack in child protection policies and practices and that child-centered thinking is overpowered by the dominant focus on child disciplining and educator authority, reflected especially in the shortcomings of state policy and services and the limited scope of educator training. Capacity building efforts in Child Protection require trust-building efforts, reflective practice on underlying assumptions (e.g. regarding authority, confidentiality and sexuality), the establishment of preventive measures and responsive mechanisms, as well as increased child participation and empowerment, staff accountability and monitoring.
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"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." — Nelson Mandela
Chapter I: Introduction

Interpersonal violence is widespread in Egypt and all over the world (WHO, 2002; UNICEF 2017a, Stoltenborgh et al., 2015). It is viewed internationally as a serious health concern which, however, doesn’t have to be perceived as an unchangeable reality of the natural human condition, but as a phenomenon which can in fact be prevented (UNICEF, 2017a). Violence against children is deeply rooted and institutionalized in traditional and religious practices and remains unquestioned or hidden in shame and hence underreported in many cultures, including Egypt (UN Secretary-General, 2006). Sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, child labor, child trafficking are common harmful practices in Egypt, but also harsh discipline and domestic abuse. The rights of parents, caregivers and the community are often prioritized over children’s rights and their best interest, given their vulnerability and relative powerlessness, especially in collectivistic cultures (Hussein, 2010). Since the realization of the harm and cost caused by interpersonal violence by Western states and the international arena, a lot of research has been conducted to investigate the health consequences associated with violence in its different forms (Felitti et al., 1998; Norman et al., 2012, Silverman et al., 1996; WHO, 2002). The level of awareness and political will in low- and medium income countries with regards to violence and its prevention seems to be lagging behind (Stoltenborgh et al., 2015), which may be explained by an existing level of resistance based on cultural grounds (Lundy & McEvoy, 2012).

There is a large body of literature on child protection especially from Western states. The literature, however, either discusses policy issues on the wider scale of a child welfare system that is already in place, or interventions on violence prevention and reduction at schools.
Research on interventions in contexts where child protective services are not well-established, is rare, especially action research on school policy formation and implementation. No research could be found on school-based child protection in Egypt.

Hence, the purpose of my study is to investigate the issue of violence against children in relation to education and to explore ways to develop Child Protection policies and procedures with education professionals from British private schools in the Egyptian context.

All states have a moral imperative to protect children from all kinds of harm, which, by extension, should apply to all organizations, especially those in direct contact with children. In reality, however, child welfare and protection systems are well-established in the systems of only few countries and weak to practically non-existent in many others (Azer & Ebrary, 2010). Just like violence, child protection is a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency concern involving medical, judicial, social and educational expertise and services, to name a few.

Education has no small role to play in the protection of children and the prevention of violence. Firstly, the sector needs to ensure that children are learning in safe and healthy environments, secondly it needs to instill the values of non-violence and peaceful conflict-resolution, by teaching children stress-regulation and enhancing their socio-emotional skills, so that they can be constructive citizens and good parents. Moreover, schools can potentially play a vital role in the detection of abuse which takes place in the children’s home environment and work to support students, build up their resilience, as well as work in partnership with parents to improve communication with children. Unfortunately, teachers in Egypt are not trained in child rights or child protection and, are not seldom perpetrators of violence themselves, despite policies that forbid violent treatment of children at school (UNICEF, 2017a; Wasef, 2011). Consequently, there
is a lack in preventive child protection policies and practices in Egyptian schools; and in cases of suspected child abuse, interventions are likely to put children at greater risk.

This means that educators are a good place for child protection efforts to start. Addressing these issues in private schools would be an underexplored, but promising path. Violations of child rights are less grave and less prevalent in private schools, where higher-class children and their parents are more empowered and where teachers themselves mostly have had the privilege of higher-quality private schooling and a more “Western” educational background. Based on that assumption, development efforts are usually not directed to private schools in Egypt, which is a whole other parallel universe to public schooling, though the level of violence children are exposed to in private schools is not insignificant (Wasef, 2011). Private schools are permeable to traditional values and beliefs, especially as most staff members are Egyptians and many staff members come from middle to lower socio-economic classes, where violence is more prominent. With international curricula and international staff, blended with a majority of more traditional Egyptian backgrounds, private schools also provide an interesting site for intercultural discussion and for the investigation of cultural differences in perceptions. Furthermore, private schools have more material and human resources that can facilitate the process of developing and integrating child protection practices and are thus good candidates for positive models in Egyptian society. These positive examples are needed to present examples on Egyptian soil, with potential for a ripple effect within and beyond private schooling.

The British Council is the focal point for schools teaching British curricula and is thus in a position to facilitate larger-scale child protection efforts among 127 international private schools. As the Child Protection Consultant for British Council Attached Schools, I am responsible for developing solutions to help these schools establish and enhance child protection policies and
practices. Action research lends itself well in this situation, as it guarantees an interplay of research and action, where research directs and informs actions, and actions in turn inform and direct the research. If educators become more aware of possible risks and needs and/or of the advantages of having well-thought-of child protection policies and mechanisms in place, students will be in safer hands.

The general research question of the current study reads: “What can we learn from the literature and from explored child protection practices and activities? “

More specifically:

- What are the most prominent issues and challenges regarding child protection in Egyptian schools?
- What are the culturally relevant aspects that need to be considered?
- What are the lessons learned for capacity building efforts?
- What are the implications for educational policy formation and implementation?

Though my research will draw lessons learned and implications for replication and upscaling, findings presented are not representative of all schools in Egypt, seeing as the project scope is limited to private and not public schools, most of which are in Greater Cairo and other large cities, and not rural Egypt. Another limitation regarding the quantitative baseline study is that it assesses the level of integration of child protection policies and procedures and educator’s attitudes concerning their importance, but my research does not assess the quality of these policies and practices within schools. Furthermore, this research does not assess a specific program after its implementation, but rather investigates exploratory pilot activities to establish a
baseline and learn about the contextual situation, which will in turn inform the design of programs. On that basis, recommendations for further research could be identified.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Violence: A global Health Concern

Definitions and Prevalence

Violence towards children is a widespread phenomenon all over the globe, but which is often taken for granted as a “normal” part of their upbringing or hidden due to cultural notions such as “family honor” (UN Secretary-General, 2006). Especially in the case of sexual violence, victims rarely seek help (UNICEF, 2017b). Increased attention has been drawn to the prevalence of violence upon the realization that it is a leading health concern and a main cause of death especially for males between the ages of 15 and 44 (WHO, 2002). Interpersonal violence is estimated to amount to an economic burden of over 4% of the gross national product of some countries (Zayed et al., 2014).

Widespread attention to the issue arose in 1962, with the publication of Kempe et al.’s “The battered child syndrome” and was first addressed in a report issued by the Surgeon General of the United States of America with the title “Healthy people” in 1979 and since then gained momentum in the international community (WHO, 2002). The costs associated with short-term and long-term effects of violence are high, hence policy makers started attending to the issue, viewing interpersonal violence as a health risk which is both predictable and preventable.

The WHO published a World Report on Violence and Health in 2002 in which it defines violence to encompass non-physical uses of power, such as threats, intimidation and neglect in addition to the conventional physical understanding of violence. The definition reads:
“Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation” (WHO, 2002, p.5).

According to the WHO’s Global Status Report on Violence Prevention (2014), a quarter of all adults have been exposed to childhood physical abuse and one fifth of all women have been exposed to childhood sexual abuse. Child deaths due to abuse and neglect rate 2–3 times higher in low- and middle-income countries than in high-income countries.

Child abuse is not easy to define and definitions may vary greatly. Some definitions focus on the behaviours or actions of adults, others focus more on the harm or the threat of harm to the child, some definitions include the intentions of adults, while others don’t. The WHO compared definitions of abuse from 58 countries to determine common elements, resulting in the following overarching definition:

“‘Child abuse’ or ‘maltreatment’ constitutes ‘all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power’” (WHO, 1999, p.15).

Child abuse is further classified into the categories of physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation. Physical abuse refers to the infliction of actual or potential physical injury. Emotional abuse is the treatment that can negatively affect the emotional health and development of a child, such as exposing a child to humiliation and ridicule, intimidation, discrimination or restricting a child’s movements. Neglect means the failure to provide for the
child’s developmental needs, while able to do so, thus excluding shortcomings that are due to poverty. Sexual abuse is a distinct form of maltreatment as it is intended for sexual gratification. In addition to rape and physical harassment, it encompasses pressured sex, engaging children in child pornography as well as non-contact forms such as making them watch sexual acts (IRC, 2012). Exploitation is for the purpose of the abusers economic or other gain. Forms of abuse may overlap and maltreated children are often exposed to more than one form of abuse.

Research on child abuse is highly concentrated in high-income countries and focused mostly on sexual abuse (Stoltenborgh et al., 2015). Children’s exposure to domestic violence, i.e. parental/intimate partner violence, has gained increased interest in the 80s, as witnessing the abuse (especially of the mother) or its consequent injuries can be considered a form of emotional abuse (Holt et al., 2008), causing emotional and behavioral problems which vary depending on the severity of the abuse (Holt et al., 2008; Wolfe et al., 2003). Witnessing domestic violence furthermore increases the likelihood of becoming a victim of physical abuse by fifteen times (Holt et al., 2008).

According to studies on self-reported abuse, the prevalence rate of physical abuse is around 225/1000 and for emotional abuse is around 360/1000; physical and emotional neglect have a prevalence rate of 160 and 180/1000 respectively; the rate for child sexual abuse is estimated at approx. 125/1000. There are, however, drastic discrepancies in prevalence studies due to methodological issues. Studies based on informants’ reports, for instance, show 3/1000 for physical abuse and 4/1000 for sexual abuse (Stoltenborgh et al., 2015). Another study states that sexual abuse takes up 10% of substantiated maltreatment cases, almost 17% for females (Putnam, 2003). At this point it is important to note that not many victims to sexual abuse
disclose the assault to anyone; in Silverman et al.’s study (1996), only half of the sexually abused did.

Not rarely the violence children experience is part of the discipline they receive from their parents, teachers and other caregivers. Violent discipline is not in the least uncommon during early childhood: Based on data from 30 countries, 60% of all children aged 12 to 23 months are subjected to violent disciplinary means. Almost half of them experience physical punishment and around the same percentage are exposed to verbal abuse (UNICEF, 2017b). Violence towards children between the ages of two and four is estimated to be 75%; 62% in the form of physical punishment and 67% in the form of psychological violence. Hence, unlike widespread belief, children are mostly abused by family members and acquaintances. That holds true even for sexual abuse, though the perpetrator is not often an immediate family member (Olafsen, 2011); data from 28 countries indicate that around 90% of adolescent girls who were exposed to forced sex were violated by someone they know (UNICEF, 2017b). Silverman et al.’s (1996) longitudinal study on a cohort of 375 white adolescents/young adults states that the perpetrator was a family member for around 86% of the physically abused and 40% of the sexually abused among them.

Corporal punishment, being a widely practiced disciplining method, has received a lot of attention in scholarly literature. Though surrounded by some controversy (Larzelere, 2005), most of the literature has established that corporal punishment is associated with unwanted behavioral outcomes (Gershoff, 2010). What complicates the matter is that corporal punishment can be defined in different ways and is mediated and confounded by many variables; it can, for instance, be used in different ways and situations and will have different effects on children at different ages. There is no clear line as to where punishment constitutes abuse, which depends on
frequency, severity and context. Culture also plays a role in this issue, as the instrumental (versus impulsive) use of physical punishment and the child’s acceptance of it as normal discipline can mitigates possible negative effects. It also makes a difference, how much warmth the child receives from the caregiver and whether the corporal punishment is also accompanied by reasoning. Furthermore, one could argue that other non-physical disciplining measures can be equally or even more harmful, such as the abandonment, restriction or humiliation of the child. However, in the most comprehensive review on physical punishment which was conducted by Gershoff (2002), meta-analysis showed that though corporal punishment is positively associated with immediate compliance, it is negatively associated with the internalization of the moral values which are supposedly promoted by the parents, meaning that it hinders the development of an internal moral compass. Corporal punishment is also found to have a negative association with the quality of the parent–child relationship. Furthermore, the analysis established a connection with aggression, delinquent and antisocial behavior, with the possibility of becoming an abusive spouse or parent, and even with the mental health of people exposed to corporal punishment. Besides that, a strong correlation was found between physical punishment and physical abuse, making children who were physically punished at higher risk of becoming victims of abuse.

Demography and Risk Factors

Research indicates that the prevalence of violence in early childhood can be attributed to the caregivers age-inappropriate expectations of children in their care which results in punishing the
children for reasons they can’t grasp or which they can’t avoid in their early developmental stage (UNICEF, 2017b). Abusive caregivers are less supportive, empathetic, responsive and less playful with children and tend to be more controlling (WHO, 2002).

It is also safe to assume that many caregivers are not aware of the long-term harms they may be causing. Widespread societal violence, e.g. at schools, health care settings, refugee settings and armed conflict hotspots, increases the risk of child abuse (WHO, 2002). “Social capital”, the level of solidarity within the community, affects the risks of child abuse and socially disorganized communities present a greater risk of violent behavior (Zayed et al., 2014).

Though the literature shows different results in respect to the relation between abuse and social class, the synthesis of research conducted in various countries indicates that in most countries, wealth doesn’t significantly affect the likelihood of experiencing abuse (UNICEF, 2017b). It is important to note, however, that culture and quality of education may vary significantly across social classes in some countries more than others, which suggests that a sweeping declaration regarding the role of social class can hardly be accurate on an international level. Diverging research results would furthermore be due to the different ways of measuring social class, whether by wealth or income, level of education, occupation or other factors related to socio-economic status or context, such as the housing situation and also whether the family size, composition, cohesion and parents’ health are accounted for in the studies (Stith et al., 2009; Coulton et al., 2007; Mersky et al. 2009). Crowded neighborhoods (Zayed et al., 2014), household overcrowding, frequent changes in the family composition are associated with increased child abuse rates, especially neglect (WHO, 2002). For sexual abuse, the absence of one or more parents, as well as parental dysfunctions such as maternal illness and alcohol abuse, parental drug abuse, social isolation and punitive parenting are risk factors (Putnam,
Results also depend on the definition of abuse used in the respective study and, thus, the types and forms of abuse in question. Some research suggests that sexual abuse is equally prevalent across all social classes (Olafsen, 2011; Putnam, 2003) and that, similarly, emotional abuse and milder forms of neglect show no significant differences across social classes, while physical abuse, severe absence of care and supervision and other forms of maltreatment may be more prevalent in lower social classes (Parton, 2014). There is also bias in the reporting and recording of child maltreatment in lower social classes (Hussey, 2006). Despite the variance and controversy around social class, it is generally agreed, however, that poverty is a risk factor for abuse and neglect (WHO, 2002).

More specifically, the parents’ stress and social isolation presents a risk of child abuse, which may be due to loss of income, work or health problems. Parents’ personality factors, such as low self-esteem, poor impulse-control, antisocial behavior, as well as their mental health also increase the probability of resorting to abusive behaviors. Receiving social support decreases the likelihood of child maltreatment.

Though it is widely believed that victims of abuse tend to become abusive parents, and though there is some evidence in support of that notion, the connection is overstated (WHO, 2002). Just as there are instances where the cycle of abuse is perpetrated by victims of abuse, many parents who were exposed to abuse try to avoid exposing their children to similar pain. Around one third of abused children grow up to become abusive parents (Putnam, 2003). The cycle of abuse may be more applicable on a wider, societal scale, and in relation to levels of awareness, as stated above.

Within the family, mothers – especially, if poor, single and young - are reported to more commonly resort to abusive physical discipline in many countries, arguably for culture-bound
role definitions, while fathers are more associated to severe physical injury. In the case of sexual abuse of both female and male victims, the perpetrators are predominantly men (WHO, 2002).

With respect to child characteristics associated with abuse, the WHO (2002) states the following risk factors: In the vast majority of countries, girls are at more risk of infanticide, educational and nutritional neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation (up to 3 times more than boys), while boys are at greater risk of severe physical punishment in many states. Regarding age, the risk of sexual abuse is heightened in adolescence. As for other forms of abuse, young infants are most prone to fatal abuse, whereas the peak ages of non-fatal abuse differ among countries. To name a few examples, abuse is at its highest between the ages of 3 and 6 in China, between 6-11 in India and 6-12 in the US. Special risk groups are premature infants, children with disabilities and twins. (WHO, 2002).

In their meta-analysis, Stith et al. (2009) examined the effect sizes of 39 risk factors pertaining to the child, the parents, their relationship and the family in relation to physical child abuse and to child neglect. With regards to physical abuse, they found large, medium and small, but significant effect sizes for three, fifteen and fifteen risk factors, respectively; for neglect, they found respectively five, six and nine correlating factors. Large effect sizes found in relation to physical abuse were parent anger/hyper-reactivity, family conflict and family cohesion. The five large-effect risk factors associated to neglect were parent anger/hyper-reactivity, the parent–child relationship, the parent’s perception of the child as a problem, parental stress, parent self-esteem (Stith et al., 2009). The study shows that there is a wide range of risk factors, which means that assessment of child maltreatment needs to take a multi-factorial approach and, by extension, intervention needs to be designed accordingly.
Violence at School

By default, the culture of societal and parental violence towards children is reflected in schools. It is spilled over in teacher-student relationships, as disciplining methods are often naturally adopted from childhood experiences. In cultures, where harsh disciplining measures are considered the norm, educators can even be encouraged to use the same methods for the purpose of child-rearing. Though there is a lack of internationally comparable data on adult-student abuse to children, it is a globally widespread phenomenon. Similarly, sexual harassment flows from society onto the school grounds, whether inflicted by school staff or peers. Gender-based violence is the main reason for significant gender disparity in educational outcomes, including the fact that girls are burdened with domestic work besides their education (Chisamya et al., 2012; EFA GMR & UNGEI, 2015).

Another issue of concern is bullying among school students. According to the UNICEF international report on violence towards children and adolescents (2017), one third of youth between 13 and 15 of age experience bullying. Both sexes are at risk of bullying and being bullied, while males tend to resort more to physical forms of bullying. Bullying can be direct (in the presence of the targeted person) or indirect (such as spreading rumors); it can be physical, emotional or social, verbal or nonverbal (such as ostracizing the targeted person). In general terms, bullying is unwanted aggressive behavior which is repeated or very likely to be repeated.
by one or more people where there is an actual or perceived power imbalance (Save the Children et al., 2013).

Violence at school and on the way to and from school hinders the educational process: In the United States, 6% of students reported being absent from school at least once in the past month due to safety concerns in a nationwide study conducted in 2015. According to data from Ethiopia, India, Peru and Viet Nam, violence from adults and students at school is not only the most common reason for children’s dislike of school but also correlates with lower scores in mathematics, self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Among school-age indicators examined, parent participation in school was negatively associated with most maltreatment outcomes (Merskey, 2012).

**Effects of Child Abuse**

The effects of abuse are manifold. The literature lists a wide range of potential short- and long-term physical, sexual-reproductive, psychological and behavioral consequences. Though most of the research was conducted in Western states, some evidence suggests that it also applies to middle-to-low-income countries (Norman et al., 2012).

Besides potential death and physical injuries, child abuse causes developmental delay (WHO, 2002). According to the UNICEF (2017) and other seminal literature (Gershoff, 2002), even non-abusive corporal punishment negatively affects children’s social-emotional development. Moreover, there is strong evidence for depressive and anxiety disorders, sexually transmitted diseases and risky sexual behavior, higher risk of drug use and suicide attempts in survivors of all forms of abuse (Felitti et al., 1998; Norman et al., 2012, Silverman et al., 1996; WHO, 2002).
Silverman et al. (1996) report alarmingly high rates of suicide ideations which later develop into extremely high rates of suicide attempts in physically or sexually abused adolescents.

The WHO (2002) also associates child abuse with PTSD and socio-emotional issues like feelings of shame and guilt, low self-esteem and poor relationships, sexual/reproductive problems, with delinquent and violent behavior, with hyperactivity and sleeping disorders, with cognitive impairments and poor academic performance, as well as a range of psychosomatic and a number of physical diseases. However, it doesn’t specify which specific types of abuse are associated with which health issues and behavioral problems.

Silverman et al. (1996) show that girls who were exposed to sexual abuse are more likely to suffer somatic complaints, social problems, thought problems, attention problems, and aggressive behavior at the age of 15 and PTSD (Post-traumatic stress disorder), antisocial behavior, and alcohol problems at the age of 21. They furthermore established higher degrees of internalizing behaviors, e.g. withdrawal and somatic complaints, as well as externalizing behaviors, such as delinquency, aggression and showing off. Sexual abuse also results in age-inappropriate sexualized behavior in children (Putnam, 2003), one important indicator for detecting possible child sexual abuse.

With respect to physical abuse, research literature shows a strong link to childhood behavioral/conduct disorders as well as eating disorders (Norman et al., 2012). Silverman et al. (1996) show evidence of significantly more externalizing behavior in young adults (age 21) who were physically abused, as well as internalizing behavior in physically abused females at 15 and males at 21. Upon examining psychiatric disorders in the physically abused 21-year-olds, they found - besides depression, anxiety, drug abuse and suicidal ideation - higher rates of PTSD and antisocial personality disorder in males and females. The literature also shows some weak or
inconsistent evidence for obesity, type 2 diabetes, alcohol problems, smoking, cardiovascular diseases, headaches/migraines, arthritis and ulcers.

Though the effects of neglect and emotional abuse are insufficiently researched, some research suggests that they are also connected to eating disorders, obesity, type 2 diabetes and alcohol problems (Norman et al., 2012).

In their seminal ACE Study, Felitti et al. (1998) explored the effects of exposure to several types of abuse and other adverse childhood experiences (ACE’s). The study established that adults who have been exposed to four or more types of abuse or family dysfunctions in their childhood were significantly more likely to report poor health and more prone to the leading causes of death, such as obesity, alcohol problems, smoking, ischemic heart disease, skeletal fractures, cancer, chronic lung disease, and liver disease.

Building on the ACE Study, Anda et al. (2006) also found a graded increase of effects in four or more experienced adversities in relation to affective, somatic and sexual disturbances, substance use, perceived stress levels and impaired childhood memories.

This suggests that there is a significant psychosomatic connection linking child abuse with poor physical health, while due to the Western mind-body dichotomy, symptoms are treated without considering the underlying psychosocial risk factors. This also aligns with research that demonstrates how stress affects mental and physical health (Anda et al., 2006).

It is evident that abuse affects different children in different ways and to varying degrees (Holt et al., 2008; Putnam, 2003). This is due to the specifics of their environmental childhood experiences as well as their genetic makeup which predisposes them to more or less vulnerability
or resilience, respectively (McCory et al., 2010). Twin studies, however, confirm significant differences in the behaviors and health of abused versus non-abused twins (Putnam, 2003).

There is a high likelihood that abused children develop more than one disorder (Anda et al., 2006; Felitti et al., 1998; Silverman et al., 1996), which can show during childhood or remain “silent” until later in life (Anda et al., 2006; Teicher & Samson, 2016).

One relatively new discovery that explains the connection of abuse to physical disease and the silent period between the assault and the onset is made by research progress in epigenetics (McCory et al., 2010). Epigenetic mechanisms can cause genes to be silenced (becoming dormant) or expressed over time (becoming active). Maltreated and control children had significantly different methylation values, indicating a change in the expression of genes in abused children which causes increased risk of health problems later in life (Yang et al., 2013).

Research on the neurobiological effects of childhood maltreatment and neglect also made significant progress in establishing associations with abuse and neglect to changes in structural as well as functional aspects of the survivor’s brain. Most notable examples of structural changes are reductions in the hippocampus, the part of the brain which is primarily responsible for the formation and retrieval of memories, in the case of abuse, and changes in the corpus collosum, which is responsible for the communication between the right and left brain hemispheres (McCrory et al., 2010; Teicher and Samson, 2016). Another significant structural alteration is the increased volume of the amygdala in children exposed to neglect, a part of the limbic system which is critically involved in the encoding of emotional memories and reacting to facial expressions and potential threats. The review also shows different effects of abuse and neglect on different parts of the cerebral cortex. Interestingly, different types of abuse seem to affect corresponding parts of the brain, for example some studies show that verbal abuse affects
language functions, sexual abuse affects the area of the somatosensory cortex which corresponds with tactile sensations from the genitals, while alterations to the visual cortex and its connection to the limbic system is specifically connected to witnessing domestic violence.

Functional brain research shows atypical activity in different brain regions, including a decrease in the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain enabling complex behaviors and higher-level thinking (McCrory et al., 2010). Abused subjects showed enhanced threat detection and speedier detection of fearful stimuli, as well as reduced reward anticipation, which both cause an inclination towards avoidance vs. approaching in situations where there is an avoidance-approach-conflict. Furthermore, functional testing demonstrate that maltreatment can diminish one’s ability to regulate emotions, to correctly attribute thoughts and intentions to others and to be mindful of one’s self in social settings, thus affecting emotional responses, social cognition and self-awareness (Teicher & Samson, 2016).

Studies reviewed by Teicher & Samson (2016) show that the alterations taking place in the brain vary according to the types of abuse or neglect a child is exposed to. Differences between males and females in associated brain alterations have also been reported. Furthermore, the literature suggests that different areas of the brain go through different sensitive periods, hence the timing and type of abuse make a difference in the magnitude of its effects. The hippocampus, for example, proves to be most susceptible between the ages of 3 and 5, whereas the prefrontal cortex has its sensitive phase between 14 and 16 years. The literature also suggests that there is a delay period between the exposure to maltreatment and its neurobiological effect, which can last a few years, thus confirming aforementioned “silent” periods.

McCrory et al. (2010) and Teicher and Samson (2016) argue, based on their research syntheses, that these changes in the brain are not merely to be viewed as non-specific stress-induced
damage, but as adaptive responses of the brain, which role it is to shield itself from damage and survive in a world perceived as malevolent. All the brain alterations associated with maltreatment are also associated with an array of psychological disorders. Research on survivors of abuse showing no overt symptoms of psychopathology shows the same alterations, however, which suggests that the association of brain changes with psychological disorders is confounded by exposure to maltreatment and that researchers need to control for maltreatment and neglect when studying the neurobiology of psychopathology. The connection between maltreatment, psychopathology and neurobiology requires further investigation. It is evident, however, that maltreated persons are at higher risk of substance abuse, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, suicidal symptomatology, psychosis (Norman et al., 2012), compromised cognitive functions (Hussey et al. 2006), and show a poorer response to treatment (Teicher & Samson, 2016). According to Green (2010), maltreatment is estimated to account for 45% of early onset psychiatric disorders. Teicher and Samson (2016) argue that the psychological disorders are caused by the brain alterations resulting from abuse, when these alterations prove maladaptive due to a mismatch between the reality the brain adapted to upon exposure and the reality it finds itself in at subsequent stages, similarly to soldiers whose brains adapt to prolonged combat and later develop psychopathology after returning home.

As mentioned above, however, not all children develop serious sequelae. According to Putnam (2003), 40% of abused children show few or no symptoms. One reason is the aforementioned silent period; 10-20% will deteriorate within the next 12-18 months (Putnam, 2003). Other reasons could be exposure to minor levels of abuse, coping styles which mask the children’s suffering, or resilience.
Resilient survivors of abuse and neglect show the same brain alterations, but may develop compensatory adaptations in other areas of the brain (Teicher & Samson, 2016). There is also some evidence of reversibility of neurobiological effects of abuse, such as in the Bucharest Early Intervention study, in which the once reduced volume of white matter recovered in children who were placed in quality foster care compared to children who stayed in institutional care (Smyke et al., 2009).

One established factor promoting resilience in children at all developmental stages is having a secure attachment to a significant caregiver, especially the mother (Holt et al., 2008). Caregivers have an important role in helping children deal with stress and model emotional regulation (McCory et al., 2010). Another important factor is the child’s self-esteem and locus of control, which buffer the effects of the abuse on one hand and facilitate the development of coping mechanisms on the other. Though abuse may erode the child’s self-esteem, the feeling of self-efficacy in another context or area (such as school) will help the child recover.

More research is required to understand resilient neurobiological responses to different types and timings of maltreatment and neglect in males and females, which would provide useful information for the treatment of persons exposed to abuse and neglect. There are great prospects in this field of study, as future genetic and neurobiological research may help predict treatment outcomes via biomarkers for abused individuals, as well as assess their response to treatment (McCory et al., 2010).
Child Protection

Protection and Education

Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states, that

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmed to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement (UN General Assembly, 1989, p. 5).

While it is the states’ responsibility to guarantee children’s rights, communities and organization have a major role in child protection. ‘Child protection’ refers to programs that government and non-government organizations undertake in the community or wider society which promote the children’s right to protection from harm, sometimes mandated for a group of especially vulnerable children, such as unaccompanied refugees, orphans or street children. The term ‘child protection’ also refers to the codes and systems within any given organization, whether it is a company, school, government agency or NGO, that aims at minimizing the risk of harm inside or around the organization, whether the harm is intentional or unintentional (Jackson et al.,2005.) Some organizations and resources use the term ‘child safeguarding’ to emphasize preventive
practices, but for the purpose of this paper, I will use child protection in its broadest sense and will use both terms interchangeably.

Children can be exposed to harm from various factors and sources, whether environmental factors related to health and safety or from persons or system. They can harm themselves or be harmed by peers or parents, caregivers or other adults, or be exposed to societal abuse, i.e. a social environment which condones violence against children through its traditional practices. (Jackson et al., 2005)

To alleviate interpersonal violence, the WHO World report on violence and health (2002) recommends that nation states conduct research on violence and means to prevent it, to develop and monitor action plans which promote primary prevention (e.g. enhancing awareness and parental care, reducing access to guns) and strengthen responses by health, judicial, policing and social services, and to integrate violence prevention into their education and social policies. Hence, child protection and violence prevention are complex and require multidisciplinary and multi-agency efforts.

Child protection is connected to education in more than one way, which can be summarized in two dimensions: children protection in education and child protection through education. Child protection is a condition for successful learning and healthy child development, hence governments and organizations need to ensure the provision of safe, secure and inclusive learning environments. In addition, teachers, school nurses and other education professionals can play a vital role in detecting abuse and supporting children who were exposed to it (GCC, nurses,
Through education, children acquire or enhance the awareness, knowledge, skills and resilience they need for self-protection (Save the Children Canada, 2014) and adults learn how to best treat children, how to prevent, detect and respond to any harms children might face (Jackson et al., 2005).

Government agencies, or more specifically ministries of education, can foster child protection at schools by integrating protective care and services in schools, providing policies and guidelines for schools to abide by which establish accountability and reporting and referral mechanisms required for communicating about alleged and established cases of maltreatment and perpetrators, by building capacities in child protection across the sector and by monitoring the schools’ implementation and documentation of child protection policies and following up on cases of abuse and absenteeism (GCC, UK Department for Education, 2016; Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture & Arts and Youth and Sports, 2010).

**Good Practice**

Organizations can establish child protection policies and practices by working towards prevention and preparedness for response and intervention. Field experience and research culminated into a set of widely agreed on standards among international development organizations, which includes developing, implementing and monitoring the adherence to a child protection policy and behavioral guidelines for children, focusing on harm prevention, ensuring access to support and inclusive implementation, promoting non-violent behavior and child protection practices, providing education and training and collaborating with stakeholders and partners (Tearfund & NSPCC, 2003). Concerning the promotion of non-violence, research
suggests that teaching children of all ages how to get along better is slightly more effective than teaching them not to respond aggressively (Milne, 2007).

The main guiding principles for work in child protection are to act in the “best interest of the child” as top priority and to make sure to “do no harm” by intervening or refraining from intervention, while using a rights-based approach (Child Protection Working Group, 2014; Jackson et al., 2005). Under these two overarching principles, child protection workers are to ensure accountability and transparency, act on sound knowledge, demonstrate cultural sensitivity, maintain professional boundaries, ensure non-discrimination, respect confidentiality and ensure information protection, empower children and families, maximize their participation and seek their informed consent/assent (Child Protection Working Group, 2014; Jackson et al., 2005).

A child protection policy can be defined as

‘A statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that the organization is taking its duty and responsibility of care seriously’ (Tearfund & NSPCC 2003).

The policy should outline management structures and responsibilities, including designating one responsible focal point, procedures for personnel recruitment and education, training/learning activities for staff and children, as well as reporting mechanisms for suspected or alleged abuse. It should furthermore include behavior protocols for staff (and children), guidelines for communication about children and for reacting (internally and externally) to accounts of abuse,
as well as ramifications for established misconduct (Jackson et al., 2005; The Keeping Children Safe Coalition (KCS), 2011).

The school administration and all staff who are in contact with children need to be trained to prevent and detect different forms of abuse and neglect, and to respond to allegations (KCS, 2011). Response requires case management. Case management is usually divided into the following overlapping and intersecting stages: identification and registration/reporting of potential abuse, assessment, case planning, implementation and/or referral, follow up and review and case transfer or closure (Child Protection Working Group, 2014).

These aspects require a large number of personal and professional competencies, such as empathy and communication, observation and assessment, stress-regulation, problem-solving and conflict-management, developing and implementing plans and critically reviewing progress, team-work, understanding child rights, child development and the tools of case management (Child Protection Working Group, 2014). For capacity building efforts to yield positive effects and real change, however, training needs to tap into teachers’ beliefs and attitudes (Fullan, 2007). Therefore, efficient and effective solutions must be found to develop and integrate child protection policies and practices in large numbers of schools, without undermining the quality and depth of capacity building activities.
The Situation in Egypt

Legislation and Policies

Article 80 of the Egyptian Constitution of 2014 guarantees every child’s (any person under 18) safe shelter, family or alternative care, health and emotional development. “The State shall provide children with care and protection from all forms of violence, abuse, mistreatment and commercial and sexual exploitation”. It furthermore prohibits the employment of children before completion of preparatory education or in jobs involving danger. The constitution also guarantees children the right to a judicial system which provides them legal assistance and separate detainment. In conclusion, the article states that “The State shall endeavor to achieve the best interest of children in all measures taken against them.”


Child Law No. 12 of 1996, amended by Law No. 126 of 2008 outlines legislation for the child’s basic rights as well as the care of vulnerable groups, such as disabled children, working children and children outside parental care.

The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) was established via a presidential decree (No. 54) in 1988, which was amended by presidential decree No. 273 in 1989. It is mandate to propose policies and develop national plans related to the protection and development of children and mothers, to raise awareness and capacities, as well as to coordinate, monitor and evaluate related activities nationwide. In 2005, a free Child Helpline was established
within the NCCM to receive and investigate complaints and allegations of abuse and refer/report them to relevant state authorities.

Law No. 126 of 2008 orders the establishment of a child protection committee at each governorate and sub-committees at district level, comprised of representatives from the government’s health, education, security sectors as well as civil society representatives. Their role is to identify, investigate, and refer cases of children at risk of abuse, and deal with perpetrators. These measures are however still being put to action and require capacity building that is still in progress for nationwide implementation (UNICEF, 2016).

Similarly, the Ministry of Education issued a ministerial decree (No.287 of 2016) in September 2016 under the title of “School Order and Discipline”, in which it calls upon schools to form school-based protection committees chaired by school principals with members representing teachers and parents, student affairs, student unions, psychologists (if any). The committee’s role is to meet on a monthly basis or whenever necessary to find solutions to disciplinary problems and make decisions based on a majority vote, as well as to coordinate with or refer cases to the social services unit within the ministry. The principal is responsible for the implementation of planned actions and activities are to be reported to a child protection sub-committee in the respective idara. The decree outlines the rights and responsibilities of the school, its teaches and students (but not the ministries responsibilities) sets a detailed framework of non-violent disciplining measures to be taken for the different kinds of disruptions or disobedient actions by the students, including issues such as not wearing the school uniform or not participation in the national anthem. The decree thus confuses discipline with child protection and mentions no procedures to be taken with regards to staff misconduct. Though a ban on corporal punishment in schools was banned in ministerial decree No. 591 in 1998, the new degree neither draws upon it
nor explicitly cancels it, unlike the preceding decree 234 of 2014 with the same title. Hence, the new decree seems to shift its focus – maybe due to resistance from educators – back to teachers’ rights and seems to make rights conditional to protection. Though the establishment of a protection committee may spur dialogue and actions related to child protection, the decree by no means reflects a rights-based approach.

The literature on citizenship education in Egypt clearly characterizes it as the ‘normative’ type with the aim of raising obedient citizens and with a big gap between the rhetoric of the Ministry of Education and the actual content of social studies textbooks (Faour & Muasher, 2011). Concepts as the rule of law, social justice, and political participation are rarely mentioned, while citizens’ dependence on the government for the provision of goods and services is emphasized (Faour & Muasher, 2011). Interestingly, the term “authority” prevails in the social studies textbooks over the term “citizen” (by nearly two to one) (Faour & Muasher, 2011). After the revolution, parts on human rights, women’s rights and non-governmental organizations were included in the curricula, but they continue to omit alternative histories and suppress diversity (Makkar & Atalla 2014). It is furthermore noteworthy, that the textbooks were not changed during the short rule of the Muslim Brotherhood and hence, glorification of the army and nationalism in the curricula persists until today, without acknowledging multiple perspectives and identities (Sasnal, 2014). This indicates, that child empowerment has no high stance in educational curricula, which arguably presents a barrier to child protection and well-being, assuming that suppressive environments are more conducive to child rights violations.

Regarding Egypt’s “Vision 2030” which incorporates its Sustainable Development Goals, all education-related goals aim for higher academic achievement, higher quantitative capacities and for economic growth. It mentions “a society that provides protection, and support to
marginalized and vulnerable groups”, and respect for diversity, but that vision is not translated into concrete indicators. There is no mention of child protection, violence prevention or tolerance, which puts in question the state’s realization of the problems and costs associated with violence in its society (Sustainable development strategy: Vision 2030, n.d.)

**Violence in Egypt**

The most prominent child rights violations in Egypt are female genital mutilation/cutting (62%), sexual harassment (over 95% of girls and women), with prevalence being among the highest in the world (HarassMap, 2014; Ministry of Health and Population et al., 2015; UNICEF, 2010; UN Women, 2013), severe violent disciplining (43%) (Ministry of Health and Population et al., 2015) or other forms of inadequate care. Other issues, especially in lower SES and poorer areas are early marriage (6.4 %) (Ministry of Health and Population et al., 2015; Malé, C. & Wodon, Q. T., 2016), child labor (7%, with 89% engaged in hazardous work) (ILO & CAPMAS, 2012) and other forms of exploitation (UNICEF, 2017b). Many of these violations are grounded in customs and traditions attributed to, but not strongly grounded in religion (Al-Azhar University International Islamic Center for Population Studies and Research, 2016). Other growing issues of concern are child trafficking and the large number of unaccompanied migrant children (UNICEF, 2017b). In general, children in Egypt don’t get access to adequate welfare or justice services, manifested in the highly inadequate alternative care and juvenile detention facilities (UNICEF, 2017b).

*Examining violent deaths.* There is a significant lack in available data concerning violence. One way to learn about violence and neglect is to study their incidences and effects post-mortem.
According to the UN Global study on Homicide (2013), homicide rates were at just more than one per 100,000 persons at 2009 and then saw a steady increase until 2011, with numbers almost tripling to 3.5/100,000 homicides. Yet, these rates are still lower than in most African, Asian, and American countries. The vast majority of victims were men (87.8%) and the most common weapon of choice was using a firearm.

As for child mortality, trends over the past 15 years show a steady decline by around one third, according to the Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (2014). Barring the deficiency in recorded births and deaths, around 27/1000 children died under the age of five in the period between 2000 and 2014, around 80% of which died within their first year and 52% of which during their first month – not including the governorates of North and South Sinai.

Rates of under-five mortality in urban areas are around 30 percent lower than in rural areas, reaching 42/1000 in the lowest wealth quintile and 19/1000 in the wealthiest segment (Ministry of Health and Population et al., 2015). 41/1000 of diseased children were born to illiterate mothers and 25/1000 to mothers with a secondary or tertiary education. Child deaths strongly correlate with the infants’ size at birth. There is no significant difference in the child’s sex. The timing of child birth, however, does make a difference, regarding the mother’s age at childbirth, with mothers younger than 20 years forming a special risk group, as well as the time gap between births, with rates being highest for children born less than two years after their older sibling (56 /1000) (Ministry of Health and Population et al., 2015).

Though the causes of death weren’t examined in the Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (2014) to show how many child deaths are due to abuse and neglect, the evidence presented above shows that poverty and lack of maternal education, as well as early marriage pose a risk.
There are few studies of medico-legal autopsies to learn about violent deaths in Egypt, but there are some consistent results. A study of 89 child deaths from violence in the governorates of Port-Said and North Sinai finds that abandonment of infants was the number one reason (El-Elemi & Moustafa, 2013).

In alignment with two more studies examining 151 girl deaths in Cairo and Giza and the deaths of 41 children under 14 years of age in Damietta and Dakahlia, the main cause of violent deaths is via blunt trauma to the head (El-Elemi & Moustafa, 2013; El-Hak, 2009; Kotb & Ibrahim, 2014). They established that in a vast majority of cases, the perpetrator is male, between 20–29 years (El-Elemi & Moustafa, 2013; El-Hak, 2009), a peer, neighbor or relative (El-Eleimi & Moustafa, 2013; Kotb & Ibrahim, 2014), and in cases of home violence most often the father (El-Hak, 2009).

Some evidence indicates that violent child deaths take place mostly in the home setting (Kotb & Ibrahim, 2014), with single parenthood appearing to be a significant risk factor (El-Hak, 2009). This is in line with the finding that violence against adolescents in Egypt occurs more often at home, followed by streets and the neighborhood and then at school (UNICEF & NCCM, 2017). Zayed et al.’s study on adolescent Egyptian girls yielded somewhat different results, however, with home as the primary site for exposure to physical violence, but followed by schools and then the streets (2014). This may be due to less time spent on the streets in comparison to males, or a higher level of violence at vocational schools, possibilities which will require investigation. According to that study, verbal violence was most prevalent at school.

Demographic examination also indicates that death from violence and neglect were more common in poorer areas (Kotb & Ibrahim, 2014) by illiterate perpetrators, while more that 15% of the violent deaths were still caused by parents with higher education (El-Hak, 2009).
Egyptian children seem to be most at risk of abandonment and neglect in their first month, while at highest risk of violent abuse or assault between the age of 15 and 18 years (El-Eleimi & Moustafa, 2013; Kotb & Ibrahim, 2014). Children are at lowest risk between middle childhood and early adolescence (El-Eleimi & Moustafa, 2013; El-Hak, 2009; Kotb & Ibrahim, 2014). There is slight indication that there is a difference as to the type of fatal assault and the age risk which requires further investigation (El-Eleimi & Moustafa, 2013). Though suicide rates are generally low in Egypt, some cases of self-inflicted deaths were observed (El-Eleimi & Moustafa, 2013; Kotb & Ibrahim, 2014) and there seems to be an upward trend (WHO, 2017).

**Surveying Prevalence and Attitudes.** Surveying of child abuse and neglect is practically non-existent in Egypt prior to 2009 (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). As is the case with literature from other countries mentioned above, most of the research conducted on child abuse is about physical violence and the emotional and educational neglect and economic exploitation associated with child labor and early marriage. There is little research on emotional violence and neglect per se.

Emotional aggression, such as yelling, threatening and calling names is the most common form of violence against children in Egypt, used by slightly over 90% of parents (Ministry of Health and Population et al., 2015; UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). In terms of physical aggression, hitting the child on their extremities with bare hands is the most common form of discipline used by parents, reportedly taking place three times per month on average with teenagers (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). Almost one quarter of children were hit with a stick, belt or other object over a period of one month and, as previously mentioned, over 40% suffered severe forms of physical punishment such as being beaten up or hit or slapped in the face and head, forms that are significantly more widespread in rural areas (Ministry of Health and Population et al., 2015).
According to children surveyed in Cairo, Alexandria and Assiut by the UNICEF and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), slapping or hitting teenagers with a tool, or pinching/pulling their ears occurs on average once or twice per month. The same study reports that 5% of 14-17-year-olds experienced the most severe kinds of abuse (Type 4), such as being scalded, burned, being fed something extremely spicy, tied up, choked or threatened with a weapon (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). The vast majority of parents, however, uses a wide repertoire of less abusive disciplinary methods. Eighty-five per cent reported using reasoning as a parenting technique and 42% mentioned using alternative methods, such as distraction, negative punishment (e.g. removing a privilege) or grounding their child (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). Only 4.1%, however, use exclusively non-violent parenting strategies, according to the Ministry of Health and Population et al. (2015). A study in Alexandria with 400 children aged 9-14 and their mothers found that 76% were physically punished by their mother. For 39% this occurred once or twice a week, for around 3-3.5% once daily or more. As a consequence, and in accordance with the literature worldwide (Gershoff, 2010), children who were physically punished by their mother were more likely to say they had a poor relationship, not only with their parents, but also with siblings, peers and teachers (Abolfotouh et al., 2009).

As per the survey conducted by the UNICEF and the NCCM (2015), teenagers are pushed, shaken, pinched and grabbed by their clothes mostly by their peers and siblings. Mothers are more likely to resort to this type of physical violence than fathers, while hitting and kicking are mostly committed by fathers, followed by mothers. As for being beaten by a stick or other object, adolescents reported teachers and school staff as the main perpetrators, followed by parents, whereby a large gender discrepancy was noted. 30% of surveyed girls vs. 2% of boys aged 13-17 reported their mothers to be the one most likely to beat them with an object, while
83% of boys vs. 32% of girls reported teachers to be the one most likely to use this method. Some teachers also confirmed this differentiation in use and severity of physical violence depending on gender (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015).

As is obvious from the evidence, corporal punishment remains a widespread phenomenon, condoned by parents, educators, religious leaders and even children themselves. Some religious leaders state that punishment should be gradually replaced by reasoning as children grow. In some instances, teenage and adult respondents suggested that they prefer physical punishment over verbal humiliation (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). Despite its wide usage, on the other hand, almost 60% of parents were reported saying that physical punishment is unnecessary (Ministry of Health and Population et al., 2015). When asked about the most appropriate form of punishment, the majority of adult respondents named “grounding” children as the method of recommendation (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015).

Most surveyed school personnel working in direct contact with children admitted to resorting to physical punishment, which, however, contradicts the reports of students. Only 12% of school personnel knew about alternative forms of discipline, surprisingly the survey found that those lacking a higher degree were more likely to use discussion and praise; a finding which needs to be triangulated, confirmed and examined in future research, taking into account respondents’ position, authority, the type of school and its location, to name a few. Less than half of surveyed school staff (40%) stated that physical punishment at school is unacceptable, with around one third saying that is acceptable only in certain situations. Some of the reported reasons for physical punishments were as trivial as drinking water in class. Even the majority of parents (55%) believes that their children being hit by students is acceptable or acceptable under certain
conditions (33%), most preferably by a stick or ruler on their palms. Some even ask the teachers to hit their children (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). Almost half of the school personnel surveyed felt that the 1998 ban on corporal punishment in schools shouldn’t apply to all cases, and almost 40% in urban areas believed that the ban causes indiscipline and disrespect. This is in accordance with the literature on child rights education and its observed resistance on the part of teachers to raise child rights awareness for fear that it undermines their authority (Lundy & McEvoy, 2012).

Zayed et al. (2014) show how violence is perpetrated in Egyptian society towards and amongst girls, especially younger students in highly crowded urban areas, with the highest violence exposure score being at school from teachers. Another study with parents, teachers and recent alumni (aged 18-20) on corporal punishment at schools (Wasef, 2011), confirms that it is a widespread phenomenon, showing a significantly higher prevalence of 96% in public/experimental schools compared to 58% in private/language schools. 96% of Teachers at public schools and 54% of teachers at private schools admitted using physical punishment. Despite the variance, these numbers are high, given the fact that corporal punishment is banned in Egyptian schools. Parents report that are teacher never penalized for corporal punishment by 50% at public schools and 33% in private education.

Another form of violence highly relevant to schools is bullying. According to the Global School-Based Health Survey (WHO, 2011), of 2568 Egyptian students aged 13-15, 70 % were bullied at least on one day in the past month, with no significant difference between boys and girls. Approximately two thirds of male students and one third of female students reported getting into a physical fight at least once in the past year, with one third ending in serious injury.
A study measuring bullying in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the US indicates that Egyptian and Saudi boys and girls engage in bullying more than American boys and girls and that boys engaged more in bullying than girls across all three cultures (Hussein, 2010). One possible reason is the collectivistic nature of Saudi Arabian and Egyptian cultures, which tends to have more authoritative parenting styles. Authoritative parenting is correlated with bullying among children (Dake et al., 2003). Another aspect that is associated with bullying is the high level of competition in academic achievement, which is the case in both Arab cultures (Hussein, 2010). Furthermore, it is posited in the literature that low educational quality, high teacher-student ratios and corporal punishment being the main method of disciplining can result in frustrations due to low academic achievement and the feeling that education is useless, which can be expressed in the form of bullying (Hussein, 2010). The evidence also indicates that girls engage more in bullying when in a same-sex school, hence resulting in higher victimization rates in the Saudi Arabian sample (Hussein, 2010). Bullying, doesn't take place only in physical space, however. With increased access to information technology, e-safety is another imminent child protection concern, with violence taking place across online and offline spaces, a prominent form of which is cyber-bullying (Livingstone & Smith, 2014). Hong & Espelage (2012) suggest action research to be conducted to investigate interventions on bullying.

Concerning verbal violence, teenagers consider it normal and acceptable coming from parents, as long as it is not excessive or in front of friends or stranger. They, take offence, however, in being cursed by a teacher (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). In Zayed et al.’s study, more than two-thirds of adolescent girls experienced verbal violence at school, a rate that is much higher than in USA, for example, where prevalence is reported at 13.5 % (2014). Nasser & Abu-Nimer (2016) highlight the need for developing teachers' conflict-resolution skills in Egypt, which should be
considered when working on violence reduction at Egyptian schools, specifically decreasing
teacher’s willingness to punish.

Domestic (spousal) violence against women is another aspect that exposes many children in
Egypt to emotional and potential physical harm. Based on the Egypt Demographic and Health
Survey, one third of ever-married women aged 15-49 years in Egypt have ever experienced some
form of spousal violence, with 25% reporting exposure to physical violence, 19% to emotional
violence, and 4% to sexual violence. Violence of women towards men and violence between
unmarried partners were not investigated in the survey.

Being slapped (22%) pushed, shaken or thrown at with an object (17%) and being insulted (16%)
were the most common forms of violation women were exposed to, with around 10% reporting
an occurrence during the past month, respectively.

As for sexual violence, 4% reported that their husbands forced them perform sexual intercourse
when they did not want to and 2% forced unwanted sexual acts on them. More than one third of
women subjected to spousal violence were injured as a result, 7% suffered serious injury. Seven
percent of women even reported experiencing physical violence during pregnancy. Controlling
for age didn’t show significant differences in the likelihood of spousal violence and controlling
for education showed a significant, but not large difference.

Of ever-married women aged 15-49 surveyed, 34.7% reported being sometimes afraid and 8.5%
were often afraid of their husband. Upon exploring husbands’ controlling behavior, 72% stated
that their husbands got angry when they spoke with other men, 35% confirmed that their
husbands wanted to know their whereabouts at all times and 7.5% were even forbidden from
meeting with their female friends. On the other hand, only 1.7% reported that their husbands constantly accused them of being unfaithful.

As for neglect, 10% reported experiencing emotional forms of neglect, such as lack of kindness, attention or consideration, feeling unwanted or unimportant or feeling unfavorably treated compared to their sibling(s). Girls suffering emotional forms of violence or neglect expressed being treated worse than their male siblings (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). Physical (nutritional, hygienic, medical) and educational forms of neglect were reported by around 5 per cent of teenagers (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). According to the Demographic and Health Survey, approximately 4% of children under the five years of age were left alone or in the care of a child younger than ten for more than one hour in the week prior to being questioned (Ministry of Health and Population et al., 2015).

**Level of Awareness.** When asked about their rights, adolescents named the most basic forms related to survival and development, including education. Levels of awareness varied greatly between Assiut with (27%), Alexandria (57%) and Cairo (70%) (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). It can be assumed that younger children have no higher level of awareness, if not much less.

Less than half of the teenagers knew exactly what to do when exposed to violence or abuse beyond telling a relative or friend or adult and only few children know of the Child Helpline. The survey shows, however, that only 15-30% of children exposed to violence and abuse in these three cities, disclosed the incidence to anyone (UNICEF & NCCM, 2015). This lack of discloser is in line with the literature, which can be viewed as a sign of lack of empowerment, regardless
of whether it is secrecy due to shame or fear or whether or lack of reporting due to the perception
of violence towards children as “normal”.

Similarly to children’s lack of awareness, less than 20% of parents knew of Egypt’s 2008 Child
Law and the majority only know the general headlines. Only 3-7% of parents in the three
governorates were familiar with the child helpline and not one parent reported ever using it.

As for school staff, just over 50% had knowledge of the 2008 Child Laws, 20% knew of the
helpline and 5% tried to use it before.

Mohamed (2016) shows in her research with 64 private school educators that there is a lack of
awareness of the children’s rights and children’s rights education amongst educators in Egypt.
Only fifty-three private school teachers had ever heard of the UN Convention on the Rights of
the Child, which is no surprise when one learns that over 70% reported that child rights weren’t
tackled in the teacher preparation and teacher development programs they attended. Children
rights are also not embedded in curricula, seeing as 64.2% of respondents reported that they
don’t have human/children rights education at their school. One responded noted that child rights
are needed in order to receive (international) school accreditation. In practice, slightly over half
of private school educators felt that their school respects or strongly respects children’s rights,
the other half of responses being neutral (30%) or negative. An aspect for further exploration
would be which rights they believed children enjoyed. However, when asked to what extent child
rights are respected in Egyptian schools, in general, less than one fifth of the responses were
positive (approximately 30% were neutral). This indicates the vast perception that children in
private schools, i.e. the wealthier segments of society, enjoy significantly more consideration and
freedom than in public schools. The vast majority (97%) saw that it is the school’s responsibility
to educate teachers and parents about child rights. This may indicate that they don’t see
citizenship education in human rights as an inherent part of their role as educators. They weren’t
asked about the state’s responsibility or their own role, which would be an interesting issue to
explore. Educators showed a high degree (85%) of initial readiness to learn about children’s
rights by attending a course on the subject. On the other hand, slightly above one quarter
believed that the child rights stated in the UN is an intrusion on their culture and religion, which
is not an insignificant number of educators (around two thirds disagreed). Due to the fact that the
survey demonstrates a low level of child rights awareness, this seems to be a preconceived
notion, driven by a defensiveness to perceived socio-political or even neo-colonialist influences
from the international community, which is driven by Western states. Although the child rights
convention was developed via a participatory process, that influence is a reality, which means
that child rights may not be in line with Egyptian cultural norms and common beliefs. This
discussion hence becomes imperative, when educating school staff on children’s rights, if one
aims to incorporate child rights in their belief systems. Moreover, the argument that child rights
are a Western notion could be an unconscious projection to avoid assuming responsibility, a sign
of resistance that is to be expected, as mentioned above. One indication that supports this notion,
is that educators interviewed brought up teachers rights and the lack of respect thereof
(Mohamed, 2016).
Chapter III: Methodology

Approach

The method used for my exploratory implementation study is action research, using quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. This choice is primarily based on the developmental nature of my research, as action research in its core entails collaborative, democratic processes consisting of steps that aim at contributing to social change (Kemmis, 1994), such as transforming educational practices (Cresswell, 2011). As Hopkins puts it, ‘action research combines a substantive act with a research procedure; it is action disciplined by enquiry, a personal attempt at understanding while engaged in a process of improvement and reform’ (Hopkins, 2008, p. 47). The foundations of this method of inquiry was laid down by Lewin, who focused on group processes and on identifying phases of projects (Costello, 2011). Furthermore, Coleman emphasizes that ‘action research is intended to combine a strong and rigorous research activity with a respect for participants’ knowledge and understanding. It therefore brings together theory and practical knowledge, to test each other with the purpose of developing practice’ (Coleman, 2007, pp. 484–85). It bridges the gap between academia and practices via a dynamic spiral of observation, action and reflection (Stringer, 2007) in which researchers are participants and learners (Mills, 2011) and where, by extension, research and praxis are innately intertwined. Critical reflection is used to review actions undertaken and plan future actions (Costello, 2011). It is used by educators as part of their professional development, in that they try out new practices to address problems and use reflective practice to serve individual and school improvement in a systematic and evidence-based manner (Mills, 2011).
Action research is criticized for being susceptible to ‘researcher bias’, since the researchers are involved as practitioners and for not being generalizable beyond their specific context. To address this matter, Robson identifies the following factors which can significantly reduce threats to validity: The researchers’ prolonged involvement, triangulation of data, negative case analysis (i.e. paying attention to what will disconfirm one’s theory) and keeping an audit trail via thorough documentation (Robson, 2002). In order to achieve rigor, it is hence recommended that the researcher uses multiple data sources, continually tests her assumptions and seeks exceptions and explanations for points of agreement and disagreement, while being willing to challenge her own ideas (Dick, 1993). As for generalizability, if, researchers outline the details of its context and the planning process, their reported findings can go beyond ‘internal generalizability’ within the setting (Costello, 2011) and be relevant to practices in settings with similar conditions.

Project Context and Process

Following the media circulation and individual reports of child abuse cases allegedly taking place in a number of its attached schools (“Ministry investigating sexual attacks on five school children”, 2016), the British Council in Egypt saw it necessary to include more activities and providing more support to schools in matters of child protection. The British Council offers language courses to children and hence has an internal child protection system which involves an induction training and quiz for its employees. It has no official responsibility or authority over its attached schools; it mainly facilitates the accreditation and exams processes for their British subjects and ICGE programs, in addition to offering capacity building services. In order to integrate child protection activities into their offerings for partner schools, I was hired as a Child Protection Consultant in January 2016. In the five years prior to my engagement, I had designed,
managed and delivered training programs at other learning centers or non-governmental organizations for (psycho-)social workers, teachers and managers/leaders working with orphans, street children or in public schools.

Before my recruitment, an internal team had already taken some actions to support schools in responding to allegations of abuse. The main milestones of these efforts were the development and circulation of a child protection statement, signed off by 79 attached schools, hereby launching Child Protection in Attached Schools (CPAS), as well as presentations delivered at the Principals’ Forum event in June and December 2016.

The main British Council personnel involved (to varying degrees) are the Country Exams Manager, who runs the department chiefly involved with partner schools, the Academic Manager, to whom I directly report, the Partner Schools Network Manager, the Deputy Country Exams Manager for schools, and the Head of Young Learners who functions as the British Council’s internal Child Protection Focal Point.

In the first month following my hiring, I reviewed documents and verbal reports related to previous child protection efforts with attached schools and studied policies and training/promotional material in the British Council’s internal pool of resources. We agreed that the following phase (8 weeks) should start with an email introducing me to schools, followed by a number of exploratory school visits at different attached schools and the development of a checklist survey to establish a baseline and motivate reflective practice within schools.

The following months from April to December, we were involved with responding to incident reports as well as introducing capacity building activities. Incident reports were either safeguarding concerns raised by the accrediting bodies during the process of assessing students’ exam scripts or
allegations raised by parents or other stakeholders of attached schools. These incidents required us to communicate with schools and offer guidance in their investigation.

Our first awareness activity was a child protection Q&A session conducted within a training day on early learning, visited mostly by KG and elementary school teachers from attached schools.

In an effort to build a community of practice involved in child protection, we sent out a call for action via email to all partner schools, inviting them to join us in forming a child protection working group. The rationale behind forming a working group was twofold. Firstly, our decision was based on the notion that forming a community of practice is believed to be of the most transformative methods of professional development (Kennedy, 2005), which is more participatory and empowering than the training or cascade models and hence more in line with the spirit of action research. Secondly, it allowed the project to evolve organically based on needs that crystalize from our discussions and reflections, instead of restricting it with a prescriptive action plan that is based on assumed needs. This allowed us to adapt and adjust the direction of our inquiry and actions after each session. The first CPAS working group session was titled ‘Setting the Agenda’, in which we shared our vision, gathered ideas and questions and held an activity on information and common misconceptions regarding violence, abuse and principles of child protection. The second session was titled ‘Planning for Action’, in which we defined child protection, its scope and the role of educators in protecting children and developed an overview on the elements of child protection policies. We furthermore added a ‘Spotlight on anger and aggression’, in which I described expected levels and forms of aggression at different age ranges and shared examples of and resources on anger management activities with children. The theme of our third working group session was ‘Developing our Safeguarding Systems’ and had the main aim of learning the details of child protection policies and procedures. In that November session
we added a ‘spotlight on violence against children’, in definitions, types and effects of violence and abuse were presented, along with facts and figures from world reports and seminal research reviews. We also included a ‘Partners’ practice’ section, in which one attached school (which we had visited at an earlier stage) presented its safeguarding policy.

Besides the three working group sessions held, we delivered a session in the October principles forum titled ‘Positive Practices in Child Protection; working towards a comprehensive Policy’ to an audience of approximately 150 school leaders, and a breakout session on ‘Building the CPAS Working Group’ to brainstorm with approximately 50 school leaders on themes and on criteria for schools to select a child protection focal point.

Finally, we offered one info-session on ‘Positive Discipline’ at a partner school with an audience of around 60 teachers in September and a one-day training to 25 professionals from different schools on ‘Disciplining Children’ in December. In them, we introduced and discussed a program for positive discipline which is available as a free booklet in English and Arabic and can thus be shared and discussed with staff and parents at schools. This first training session aimed at paying special focus to preventive child protection and encouraging self-reflection.

Data Collection Methods

For the collection of data, I selected the following qualitative and quantitative methods to learn about the background, context, participants, as well as my own practice as a consultant/facilitator:

Document analysis. Relevant documents developed by the team prior to and during the study can provide useful information as to the context and background of child protection practices at
private schools affiliated with the British Council, such as presentations, minutes of meetings, incident reports, feedback survey results etc.

**Quantitative baseline study.** An e-mail questionnaire was sent to education professionals working at international private schools in Egypt in general and specifically the 127 partner schools of the British Council. The checklist questionnaire includes 21 (one question was added at a later stage) semi-closed questions, of which 8 were optional, followed by two optional open questions (Appendix 2). The 13 required questions covered more basic child protection practices (which we consider essential) and the eight optional questions reflected more advanced child protection activities. The items of the questionnaire consist of categorical scales that measure school performance in child protection (‘Yes’, ‘No’, and ‘Other’) and attitudinal measures (‘essential’ – ‘desirable, but not essential’ – ‘not desirable’ and ‘other’) for 13 of the more basic checklist criteria. The two open-ended questions were related to the respondents’ learning and relevant school improvement needs. The questions were derived from prominent child protection toolkits and guidelines by two child protection professionals including myself and revised by two team members. The questionnaire asked respondents to include their schools name and check the type of curricula taught. This was to build a picture on international private schools in general and schools offering British curricula (British Council Attached Schools) in specific. The schools name helped identify and compare results by respondents from different schools. I conducted a descriptive analysis of the data, addressed in more detail below.

**Qualitative analysis - Field notes and reflective questionnaire.** Data was collected through my own field notes and reflections throughout the process, including documentations of school visits and training session and minutes of meetings with team members, in which collaborative
reflections came place. During and after each activity, I wrote down ‘learning moments’, which were relevant to the research questions, i.e. moments that point to learning needs, challenges, cultural issues and the reception of activities and contents. These could be comments or questions raised, or my observation of participants’ body language (e.g. nodding, note-taking, tense body postures, preoccupation with phones). In all of our sessions, we included reflective questions to be answered individually or discussed in groups/plenum by participants, which we consider important for their as well as our own learning process. These reflections during and after each activity directed my inquiry in the literature and our choices of next steps. At most times, activities were reflected collaboratively in debriefing meetings with the Academic Manager, who was present at most sessions, or other team members. After writing down the learning moments and collaborative reflections, I conducted individual reflections in order to re-examine my/our interpretations and question the assumptions on which I based my inferences, which helped me switch to the etic approach of a scientific outsider.

Moreover, I administered a reflective question sheet with open-ended questions to a number of participating school professionals in December (Appendix 3). The reflection sheet required participants to indicate the place and type of the schooling they received (Egyptian, British, etc.), which of our CPAS activities they attended and whether they had received training in child protection prior to that. It then included 10 questions on their experience, lessons learned, gaps and challenges, cultural differences and suggestions with regards to school-based child protection. Half of the questions were optional, so as to not overwhelm participants or force them to answer questions they have no ideas on.
Research Participants

The quantitative e-mail questionnaire was administered to gather data on the schools' performance and the education professionals' attitudes in relation to child protection policies and practices. It was sent electronically to all 127 partner schools of the British Council, as well as networks of Egyptian school professionals, e.g. the "educationalists" Facebook page and fellow diploma and Masters students and graduates of the Department of International and Comparative Education at the American University in Cairo. The questionnaire was in English, as it was intended for English-speaking private school professionals (principals, teachers, coordinators). According to the numbers provided by the Ministry of Educations to the press, Egypt has 768 international private schools (Hussein, M.T, 2017). With regards to British Council data, the number of international British schools, which take up a lion’s share of international schools, is at 127, which indicates a discrepancy in the statistics. I received responses from 60 consenting educators of 50 such schools, 44 of which offered British curricula. Consent for the data to be included in the research was optional and was collected electronically as part of the questionnaire. Partner schools not giving consent were excluded from the analysis (n=3).

For attendance in the working group sessions, a ‘call for action’ was sent via email to all partner schools of the British Council inviting them to voluntarily participate in forming a child protection working group of approximately 15-20 participants. Likewise, an invitation was sent to all attached schools for other events and trainings. Participants were registered via their school coordinators. Most attendees came from Greater Cairo, only a few attended from Ismailia and Alexandria (n=7). A mailing list of all attendees was created for follow-up and for invitations to following sessions. The reflective question sheet was sent only to those who participated in a
minimum of three of the aforementioned child protection activities. This criterion applied only to 11 participants, … of which answered the question sheet. My research purpose was communicated verbally and in writing to participants, along with potential risks and benefits of filling out the paper. Their input was voluntary and there were no consequences to their contribution or lack thereof. Volunteer research participants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 1).

**Data Analysis**

Data was collected to learn about the status of the schools’ practices and attitudes concerning child protection, lessons learned from the process of developing related professional development activities, as well as the contextual issues, needs and challenges that need to be addressed when developing child protection policies and practices with international private schools in Egypt.

Quantitative data was obtained from the baseline questionnaire and feedback surveys and processed using descriptive analysis by calculating percentages. The items of the baseline checklist were grouped vertically into performance (Yes, No, I don’t know/Not sure, In process) and attitudinal variables (essential – desirable, but not essential – not desirable) and vertically into eight elements of child protection: written guidelines, accountable staff, preventive mechanisms, education and training, reporting mechanisms, response mechanisms, confidentiality standards and monitoring activities. Data from all schools were calculated cumulatively, and the percentages of our specific sub-group of British schools was calculated as well.
With regards to duplicate responses from the same schools, the standard deviation was calculated for performance variables to compare results. Responses with a standard deviation above zero were excluded from the overall results. For multiple responses from the same schools on school performance items, a one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (KS) was conducted to test for normal distribution, followed by a t-test to calculate the differences between responses. When results showed a sig value less than 0.05, responses of the school for such items were excluded from the results. In addition, the percentage of non-matching items was calculated, in order to get a picture of inconsistencies within schools.

Respondents of the checklist questionnaire also had the option of selecting the checkbox “other” and add qualitative comments rather than be limited by the provided responses, which were presented alongside the percentages for multiple choice answers and also included in the qualitative data analysis.

Qualitative data was obtained from two open-ended questions and the “other” option in the baseline survey, from my field notes and from reflective question sheet. A thematic analysis was conducted by hand coding and grouping text segments. Commonalities and interrelations, but also multiple perspectives were analyzed. Special attention was paid to triangulation, so only issues raised or observed by different sources were considered solid findings. Interesting ideas raised by only one person were reported as such, so as to raise questions for further research and verification.
Chapter IV: Findings

The central research question of my study reads: “What can we learn from the literature and from explored child protection practices and activities?“

More specifically:

- What are the most prominent issues and challenges regarding child protection in Egyptian schools?
- What are the culturally relevant aspects that need to be considered?
- What are the lessons learned for capacity building efforts?
- What are the implications for educational policy formation and implementation?

Data was analyzed according to the following three segments:

1. the status of the schools’ practices and attitudes concerning child protection,
2. lessons learned about the process of implementing related professional development activities, and
3. contextual issues, needs and challenges that need to be addressed when developing child protection policies and practices within the given context.

Implications were drawn from all segments to inform capacity building and policy making in Egypt within and beyond international private schooling, discussed in the final chapter.
Status and Attitudes

From the document review, the school visits, the baseline questionnaire and individual consultations, I developed a general picture on the schools’ integration of child protection policies and procedures, as well as attitudes towards proposed practices. I also learned about the school leaderships’ attitudes towards collaborating with the British Council with regards to allegations of maltreatment.

My summarized report on school visits can be found in Appendix 4. The quantitative results of the baseline questionnaire are presented in Tables 1 and 2, whereby it must be noted that French schools are not represented in the sample, although French comes second after English (American and British) in Egyptian schooling. Responses were furthermore grouped and discussed in the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents total:</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>Schools total:</th>
<th>44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Curricula offered</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current:</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>British:</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous 2015-2017:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>American:</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>French:</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>IB:</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support teacher:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>German:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Leader:</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator:</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead safeguarding officer:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2 School Performance and Educator’s Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Performance</th>
<th>Educators’ attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1: Codification of general Guidelines and Standards</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a ...a written Code of Conduct for all staff?</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a ...a written Child Protection Policy?</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13a ...the permission of every child/guardian whose image you use for publicity (informed consent)?</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 (L2)**...a strict and well-respected confidentiality code (discussing children with only people who need to know)?</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2: Accountable staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a ...a Student Support Counselor?</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a ...a designated person responsible for the development and/or implementation of child protection activities/policies and procedures? (CP focal point/officer)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 (L2)...a staff appraisal system which takes into consideration respectful treatment of children and involvement in child safeguarding?</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Group 3: Preventive Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Partial (%)</th>
<th>Not Applicable (%)</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6a...a Criminal Record Check system for all staff?</td>
<td>39 (91%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 (L2) ...an anti-bullying policy known to all students?</td>
<td>29 (73%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a...a system that ensures students are safely collected from school?</td>
<td>40 (93%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a...a Risk-assessment system for event planning/trips?</td>
<td>27 (66%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Not consistently. Depends on the destination and type of event
- We do not have a standardized system, however before any event/trip is arranged the Head of Department, Activity Coordinators and School Administration evaluate the activity before its implemented.

### Group 4: Reporting mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Partial (%)</th>
<th>Not Applicable (%)</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12a...a secure and detailed filing system for documenting child protection cases (allegations and concerns) and for following up?</td>
<td>29 (71%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 (L2)...contact information visibly displayed at your school for complaints or concerns?</td>
<td>31 (78%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11a...an anonymous channel for students/staff to report potential cases of abuse?</td>
<td>19 (49%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Done through school counselor
- by the School Psychologist

- not consistently

### Group 5: Response mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Partial (%)</th>
<th>Not Applicable (%)</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8a...a standardised response mechanism for dealing with allegations of abuse</td>
<td>27 (66%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 (L2)...an external communication strategy for handling allegations of abuse?</td>
<td>18 (43%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Group 6: Education and Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Partial (%)</th>
<th>Not Applicable (%)</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7a...a Child Protection Training programme for all staff?</td>
<td>16 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a...teachers who are all trained in detecting abuse?</td>
<td>17 (53%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 (L2)...routine awareness activities for the students' online safety?</td>
<td>20 (65%)</td>
<td>1 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- teachers only
- Again, not for admin. Only teachers
- The school depends on the personal evaluation of the teachers.
- Not all are trained
- Not consistently. Happens every once and a while
### Group 7: Monitoring system/activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 (L2)... student feedback surveys on staff or teachers?</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>- Previously, all feedbacks were mainly verbal or through, phone calls, emails, meetings, etc. except for complaints which had a written form. However, during this academic year, we are introducing written surveys for feedback from students and parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 (L2)... survey data about the use of violence or respect for child rights at your school?</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>- Not all year levels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* School which offer British curricula

**L2: Level two questions, e.g. more advanced policies and practices**
Codification of General Guidelines. With regards to the existence of documented guidelines, most schools (86%) had a written Code of Conduct for all staff, but only 60% reported having a Child Protection Policy (Fig 1 & 2). This shows that child protection is not treated as a special issue which requires written regulation by 40% of responding schools. But the vast majority of educators (95%) find it essential (Fig 3).

One respondent commented that “apparently, there is, but as admin, I've never seen it”, which indicates that attention needs to be paid to dissemination and to the inclusion of all staff, not only teachers and school leaders. Furthermore, a school professional responds that it is common practice to draft an “informative letter with incident if needed” for individual cases, but that there is no overarching policy. The difference between common case-by-case practice and written guidelines thus needs to be discussed. Another respondent adds that they “use the framework provided by the British Council”, which is not a policy, but a statement.

Educators’ concept and understanding of child protection and pertaining policies and procedures generally need to be deepened for many. Of the schools visited, two schools had a child
protection policy, which were even published on their websites. One of them had an elaborate policy, a complete safeguarding team of administrators and teachers from all levels and student support staff, a school leadership which keeps child protection as a fixed agenda item for all meetings as well as a computer system for documentation of child safeguarding concerns.

In other schools, child safeguarding measures were mostly related to health and safety, such as asking visitors for identification, regulations and risk assessments for children leaving the school site, the installation of fire extinguishers, supervision and camera surveillance etc. Some of the schools reported having clearly outlined system for a unified response to disruptive behavior (punishments) across the school, to be followed by all teachers and principals.

With regards to staff’s behavior towards children, around half of the principals we visited professed to shouting at the children. In addition, we observed some staff joking with the children using threatening language in Arabic, using phrases like “Come here, or I will hang you from your legs”.

According to the questionnaire results, confidentiality is codified and respected in the schools of almost 80% of respondents (Fig 4).

My observations cannot confirm this, however, as during my exploratory visits to six schools, confidentiality was breached in four of them.

School leaders or teachers in those schools either mentioned cases by name (and in one case even pointed at the children in question) or told a story about a case in which they promised children that they will keep a secret, then reported that secret to their superior behind the child's back. Possibly, mentioned school personnel didn’t see a
need in protecting information on children from the British Council, but it also shows that the principle of confidentiality is not necessarily strictly adhered to and can be compromised for certain purposes (e.g. reporting to superiors), which points to the need to discuss confidentiality and the need-to-know principle in specific situations, for instance through case studies.

**Accountable Staff** (Fig 5). A large number of schools have a counselor on site, and a similar number find it essential (83% and 90%, respectively).

But only 45% of schools report having a designated person responsible for the development and implementation of child protection policies and procedures. Around one third of surveyed educators find this aspect desirable, but not essential. Thus, the data indicates that many schools need to assign accountability in order to guarantee that child protection is taken seriously. For that, educators, especially school leaders, need to be aware of the importance of accountability for quality assurance.

The educators’ respectful treatment of children and involvement in child safeguarding is taken into consideration during staff appraisal in 76 percent of schools. This means that child rights are considered one aspect that educators need to pay attention to. How high the standards are at which school personnel are held does not emanate from this question and needs to be explored in more depth, neither do we know which rights are considered and whether certain rights and freedoms are neglected.

### Figure 5 Accountable Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable, not essential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Support Counselor</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated CP focal point</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of CP in staff appraisal system</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

66
**Preventive measures.**

Around 90% of schools report conducting criminal record checks before hiring school personnel and a similar number has a safe collection mechanism for children leaving the school campus. Whether this applies to all staff and all students at all times and what the details of the preventive systems entails also requires further exploration. Two thirds of schools report conducting risk assessments for events and trips and 73% report having an anti-bullying policy, which raises a question on whether they are comprehensive and consistently implemented.

**Reporting Mechanisms.** As for the documentation and reporting of child protection incidents or concerns (Fig. 7), 71% of schools have a filing system that is secure and detailed for such incidents. Two respondents add that this is mainly done by the school counselor, which indicates that teachers may not be part of the reporting process or that documentation occurs only in cases referred to the counselor, i.e. after the decision is made that the case requires psychological investigation or intervention. Seventy-eight per cent of schools have contact information visibly displayed for children and adults to report suspected or alleged cases of maltreatment. However, only half of the schools provide anonymous channels for reporting. Respondents find having a good filing system more important than having an anonymous reporting channel (90% vs. 73%). An observation we made during a school visit was an exceptionally accessible and approachable school principal, based on our own impressions, but also the reports of students and staff of that
notedly small school. This surely facilitates the reporting process, but other, anonymous channels would allow for more students and staff to reach out to the administration.

**Response Mechanisms.** Two thirds of the schools have a standardized response mechanism for dealing with allegations of abuse. With regards to the schools’ external response, on the other hand, responses indicate that 43% of schools have a strategy in place (Fig. 8).

**Education and Training.** With respect to child protection awareness and training, the questionnaire includes three items. One item is a general question on whether or not schools offer a child protection training programme for all staff, one item refers specifically to teachers’ ability to detect abuse, and the third question is regarding raising student awareness on e-safety. Around 40% of schools report that they train their staff in child protection and specifically have their teachers trained in

![Figure 7 Reporting Mechanisms](image1)
![Figure 8 Response Mechanisms](image2)

![Figure 9 Education and Training](image3)
abuse detection. Almost one fifth didn’t find such training essential, though 92% find it essential that teachers are able to identify cases of abuse. Two respondents specified that only teachers receive training in child safeguarding, but not other staff. It is not clear, if respondents who answered “yes” had all kinds of staff in mind, including junior administrators, teaching assistants, cleaning staff and drivers, for instance. It is also not clear whether all types of abuse are covered in their trainings and how frequently training is provided.

As for routine activities to raise students’ awareness in online safety, 60% opt that they have such procedures in place, while one respondent reported that such activities are not exercised consistently. Of the visited schools, I found that one all-girls school had a weekly class called ‘Etiquette’ in which girls are taught about values, how to protect themselves and receive sex education. The lack of a formal curriculum allows the teacher of this class to incorporate important issues and be flexible to the students’ needs. In another school, a social worker was active in conducting child protection activities with children and involved in facilitating the parent council, but firstly, she was only active in the national section of the school and secondly, her colleague exhibited significantly less awareness and activity. Furthermore, in one school, the lead child protection officer made a podcast for parents on child protection and posted it the school website.
**Monitoring activities.** To understand the problem and to ensure accountability and implementation of child protection standards, schools need to gather data from students and staff. Only half of the schools gather feedback from students on staff and around one third report having school data on violence and child rights. One educator added that feedback was previously collected verbally and now introduced as written surveys from students and from parents. How far these surveys incorporate elements of respectful, non-violent treatment, warmth and attention would require closer investigation.

Another point raised by a respondent is that feedback on staff is not gathered from students at all year levels, which raises a question on the participation and inclusion of younger children.

**Student empowerment.** Of the aforementioned checklist criteria of child protection, some can be indicators for the involvement and empowerment of students. Fig 11 shows the negative responses for these criteria to identify gaps. Only the item of informed consent for publishing pictures of students has few negative responses, noting that the question does not differentiate between the parents’ and the child’s consent/assent. For all the other criteria, negative responses range from 40% (lack of e-safety awareness) to 63% (lack of school data on violence and rights). These numbers indicate that schools are not paying a lot of attention to the student’s awareness and their voice with regards to child safeguarding. In our school visits, we learned of no curricula, projects or initiatives related to children’s rights and also found that sex education is limited to basic biological processes in most of the visited schools.
Differences within Schools. The baseline questionnaire mainly yielded results from different schools. Some respondents, however, worked at the same schools. I received duplicate responses from four schools and multiple responses (3 and 5) from two schools. Analysis showed the variance between different schools which resulted in the exclusion of contradicting data from the aforementioned results (Appendix 5). The discrepancies between responses within the same schools ranged from 20 to 81 percent. Large variations could be due to different interpretations of questions or due to respondents’ respective positions or experience within their schools, which would indicate a lack of alignment and awareness among staff.

The Process of Development

Activities chosen for the development of child protection policies and procedures were based on the needs identified from the above quantitative data and the school visits, as well as the qualitative data rendered from the open-ended questions of the baseline questionnaire, feedback given during and after the sessions and my own field notes. Hunter (2001) mentions the importance of understanding the different conceptual, delivery, training, and organizational variables that can influence the outcome of school-based action research. I discuss such variables in this section in order to identify aspects that facilitate the development process. One
administrative aspect that limited the data received was that for the first events, feedback forms were sent to participants electronically after the session and usually after some delay, which resulted in no or little response. Upon distributing hard copy feedback forms from the beginning of the sessions, responses increased significantly, as is demonstrated in the comparison of the feedback on two events in Table 3.

**Knowledgeable Crowds: Listening to Suggestions.** Action research is based on the respect of its participants as knowledgeable stakeholders. The baseline questionnaire posed the questions “What is it you would like (or have liked) to develop at your school to minimize risk and improve child safeguarding?” and “How could an external entity (governmental or non-governmental organization) help enhance Child Protection practices at your schools?”. The most common answer was training and awareness, mentioned by 45% of all 60 respondents. Mostly, respondents referred specifically to the education of staff (n=22) in general, or specifically teachers (n=9) and administrators (n=2). A small number of respondents (n=4) also mentioned the training of workers, drivers and/or cleaning staff and a few mentioned raising parents’ awareness (n=3). Specific training topics mentioned by individual respondents were sex abuse, Positive Discipline, “the best ways to protect the child and preserve his rights and humanity”. One respondent suggested giving reflective essay questions to parents and establishing a point system for parent participation, based on which parents can get privileges, such as participating in parent meetings and being a judge in school events. Two respondents specified training activities to be conducted in Arabic for local staff.

Eleven respondents mentioned raising the awareness of children on how to protect themselves. One added that this needs to be done in an age-appropriate manner and another added that they
would like to develop classroom activities on the matter. One respondent wrote that they would like to “spread awareness among all stakeholders on regular basis”.

Besides face-to-face training, ten respondents mentioned the provision of resources, specifically good practices and templates (n=4), and case studies (n=3). Others focused on advice on cases, communication and referral (n=9). One focused on communication between schools “to protect our pupils and deter potential or known child abusers who try to apply to our schools”, while the other respondents mentioned the connection to external entities, especially in cases of home abuse. Some schools even required inspections (n=6), one of which suggested imposing sanctions. Conversely, two respondents were rather weary of external involvement, “because they’d interfere more than they should without understanding the context” and because external agencies need to provide “different approaches rather than negative re-enforcement”.

As a reply to the question on what they would like to develop, five respondents of the survey indicated that they have no need for further development with one stating that “The school is very safe already”. In one of the visited schools, the principal made a comment that teachers behave decently, as they have a 'good' socioeconomic background. This may be a sign of lack of awareness as to the prevalence of violence across classes and the wide and – I dare say – insatiable scope of child protection, or a sign of resistance to interference or change; which leads us to the subsequent theme.

**Resistant Crowds: Building Rapport and Trust.** Upon joining the British Council, I was told that schools were resistant to communication and collaboration in cases of alleged abuse. Before and during my work, all incidents we learned about were not reported to us from schools, but
usually from parents and/or the media. Upon contacting schools, we would usually receive a significantly delayed response or none at all. Even in cases where we made our intention clear that we are merely requesting an exploratory meeting with a school or that we are merely alarmed by the content of a student’s essay, we were often told afterwards by school staff that they were worried that we would accuse the school of something. Staff were usually very keen on presenting the best picture of themselves and in some cases even seemed aggressively on the defensive. Some seemed very relieved at the idea of tailoring policies to their needs and most of them showed interest in receiving resources and working on them by themselves. Others, however, showed great openness to the extent of disclosing their own mistakes. These incidents indicate that there are sensitivities to be considered and that a lot of trust-building is required to facilitate collaboration and development. Despite some level of resistance, it must be noted, however, that survey responses indicate readiness to learn and develop in the majority of educators, such as in the following response: “After reading these questions, I feel like we have to discuss new procedures about abuses, alleged and proved [sic]”.

In my work as consultant and facilitator, I assume that if there is resistance, there is lack of rapport and/or distrust, which could be attributable to several factors, such as the consultant’s position of power, background, sources or methods and behavior. I learned, however, that insecurities can simply derive from not understanding basic concepts and main goals. One reason is that in three different occasions a participant would raise the question “What is child protection?” My assumption was that even if we all might have a different understanding of child protection, everyone has some idea of what it is. I could observe a much higher flow of input and active participation after discussing the question “What or whom do we need to protect children from?”.
Another aspect that may affect the level of participants’ trust is the facilitator herself. Establishing similarities and commonalities seemed to increase rapport, I specifically observed that my bicultural background as an Egyptian who spent part of her childhood in Germany and received German education, but also has lived and worked in education in Egypt for over fifteen years increased my credibility in integrating ideas and concepts which may be perceived as Western in an Egyptian context. The benefits of having a Western background was also confirmed by the Academic Educator who also engages in capacity building. He observed that his British background and educators’ perception of him as a ‘khawaga’ caused him to be taken more seriously within this community. Another aspect which may affect rapport, since, as previously discussed, it plays a major role in Egyptian society, is the aspect of socio-economic status. It would be interesting to investigate to what extent differences in the social class and cultural background of the facilitator would affect participants’ trust. What I can observe with more certainty, however, is that having some experience in the field of education in general and in private Egyptian schooling in particular, encouraged participants to ask me about my own endeavors in child protection and to be receptive to my input. Furthermore, the fact that I conducted a lot of research and presented the results of my findings from academic literature was very well-perceived. The Vygotskian notion of the ‘more knowledgeable person’ who facilitates the construction of learning through scaffolding comes to play. Though participants are capable of constructing the knowledge themselves through collaborative inquiry, the facilitator needs to establish herself as a more knowledgeable person in order to gain the participants’ trust. A combination of theoretical, academic knowledge and a solid practical base gained by praxis-oriented training and field experience strengthens the facilitator’s position. The importance of this aspect is evident in the learners’ feedback (Table 3).
Table 3 Participant Feedback on two Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Session</th>
<th>The Facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working Group Session 3: Developing Safeguarding Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Items:</td>
<td>Number of Respondents: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very useful: 2/5</td>
<td>excellent: 3/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>useful: 2/5</td>
<td>good-very good: 2/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slightly useful: 1/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative items, comments:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Very well prepared and condensed. It needs more time as the info was very rich and needs more discussions.</td>
<td>- Helpful &amp; has a nice attitude delivering the info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The only one concern is my need for more sessions regarding the policy; though I do have the material yet as a session, the duration is not enough</td>
<td>- “I like your knowledge”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Maybe some items were not fully clear because of having a roleplay &amp; the scenes were distributed.</td>
<td>- “I like your way”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there something that didn't convince you?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Disciplining Children” Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Items:</td>
<td>Number of Respondents: 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very useful: 100%</td>
<td>Excellent facilitation: 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative items, comments:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- very intensive</td>
<td>- create efforts: detailed explanation, has patience for questions, fast and intuitive, happy to know her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- very useful, wonderful, fun and friendly meeting</td>
<td>- very knowledgeable and inspirational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- excellent, very inspiring and though provoking</td>
<td>- She was very engaging the whole time and was able to tackle points presented that were linked to the general topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- more time was needed for the topic</td>
<td>- Ms. Hana was a good facilitator, she is amazing in [sic]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It was useful, I discovered new ways to deal with my students and children in my family</td>
<td>- The facilitator is very keen to listen and answer questions even if not related to the subject at hand. I am eager to attend more sessions with her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I’ve heard lots of useful and productive comments from other teachers/administrators that made me feel that I’m not alone in my problems.</td>
<td>- Cooperative, helpful, respectful and good listener. Lovely Hana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Full of useful information</td>
<td>- knowledgeable, has good analytical skill, enthusiastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Very informative session and the instructor extended a lot of effort to cover as many [sic] information as possible.</td>
<td>- very knowledgeable, very neutral, promotes interesting discussion/opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Needs more sessions as it is very interesting</td>
<td>- Very professional, knowledgeable and well-trained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I really enjoyed. I loved the topics being addressed and I enjoyed participation in discussions.</td>
<td>- very useful and nice one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It’s great but need more time and take reference resources [sic]</td>
<td>- excellent and active as always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I need to teach my colleagues what I learned here.</td>
<td>- Very friendly and responsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Very informative and well-structured</td>
<td>- Knowledgeable, pleasant, cooperative and informative regarding all raised issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Very useful and interesting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Very interesting session that tackled many problems faced by teachers and administrators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggestions:
- Making forms to evaluate the progress and give us tasks to do after every session
- More sessions rather than a very tight schedule in one day

Is there something that didn't convince you? ---
As the feedback shows, the facilitator's attitude also plays a big role. One aspect that gained some participants' recognition is the fact that I have been working in development in the past five years, with public schools, orphanages and shelters for street children, as several participants asked me about these experiences and some even asked to join me in such endeavors. Giving them a glimpse of my authentic interest in education development as a personal cause may have raised some trust in my intentions causing participants to feel less threatened and allowing us to be on the same side via a shared overall vision.

Truly embracing the concept of continuous learning and modelling openness is another factor I identified from my reflections. Creating an atmosphere of openness proved difficult in the sessions, which prompted me to incorporate every useful way I know. In my introduction to the positive discipline training, I therefore shared my experiences with teachers who affected me positively or negatively during my own childhood as well as my reasons for selecting the specific program/booklet on positive discipline. While setting the stage for the training, I asked every participant to specify one thing they would like to know and one aspect they would like to improve about themselves in relation to communication with children. I participated in this individual reflection exercise and volunteered to present my answers first. Seeing as the previous session on the same subject wasn’t perceived as very convincing, I made a point of raising the question if there is anything that they aren’t convinced with before resuming with the training after each break as well as in the feedback form. Table 3, as well as participants’ reflections show that “the way the sessions were facilitated and how open the forum was for questions and comments” is important to the participants, in addition to being useful to the researcher-facilitator.
During school visits, consultation meetings and working group sessions, it was evident to our team that schools are worried about investigation and interventions. Additionally, competitiveness between schools could be observed. It was challenging for me to refrain from judgment and reproach and from slipping into an investigative role. Establishing a positive attitude from within was difficult when faced with resistance or distrust. Having team members with me who knew about the school and paid attention to other issues helped break the ice and divert the focus, when needed. Taking a strength-based approach helped me focus on good practice, even when negative practices were observable. Presenting these positive practices in the working group was also a convincing learning experience for the participants, who actively took notes and asked for the report document.

An important realization I made during this process is my own judgement of international private schools, which was based on the expectation that they have the human capital and material resources to pay more attention to child rights and protection. The fact that almost all these schools are for profit and largely depend on a good reputation, makes them prioritize the schools best interest at the expense of the child’s best interest in some cases. The fear for their school’s reputation caused some to respond rashly and defensively to allegations and also hindered the openness needed for collaboration and capacity building. It dawned upon me that it is school leader’s duty to look out for their school's best interest and that incidents of child maltreatment put them in a conflicted situation. Based on this realization, I showed understanding for such shortcomings and sought to find a solution that would resolve this conflict. In the plenary session I held at the Principal’s forum, I therefore addressed this seeming conflict of interest by suggesting the appointment of another school professional with the primary role of representing the child's best interest and therefore create a discussion between the school leader and the
designated person with the aim of finding a compromise. I presented these conflicting interests as false dichotomy, arguing that the child’s best interest may not be in the immediate interest of the school, but handling the situation in a way that serves the child’s interest surely serves the school and its reputation in the long-term. As a lesson learned for myself, I adopted the assumption that participants/schools are doing their best they can based on their resources and value systems, which increased my own level of tolerance and empathy.

With regards to learning activities, I took the risk of including tasks of critical reflection, collaboration and motion, while aware of possible resistance. With regards to reflection, I noticed some deficiency in meta-cognitive skills, which requires the facilitator to find suitable, thought-provoking questions. In sessions where there was a mixture of teachers, administrators and school leaders, I asked participants to answer questions by moving on a scale from one to five in the room or standing up when a certain statement applied to them. In the principals’ forum with around 150 attendees, I distributed blue cards for them to raise, if a certain statement applied to them, as well as a matching exercise of documents and pictures relevant to the presented elements of child protection. Participation was high and the activities had an ice-breaking effect. Attendees enjoyed interactive tasks which aren't very challenging (physically or mentally), especially when they were of personal relevance, e.g. “I had a teacher I was very afraid of”. In one working group session (No. 3), I asked participants to prepare and act out scenes in groups which reflect aspects of child protection mentioned in their respective checklists. The groups did produce the theatrical scenes, though some school leaders showed some inhibition within their teams and didn’t participate in the performance. In addition, one participant commented that “Maybe some items were not fully clear because of having a roleplay and the scenes were distributed”. This shows that such active forms of learning are new to some
participants and cause some uncertainty to inhibited and ambiguity-intolerant learners, which shows a need for summarizing the main learning points after such activities.

The choice of content is another aspect requiring attention. As the learners’ feedback shows (Table 3), coming out with practical ideas and solutions besides the discussion of issues and concepts makes the training worth their while. This proved especially useful when addressing large and diverse crowds, discussed in the following section.

As for the issue of resistance, by building a community of practice that is generally in contact and collaborating in equal partnership, not only in the critical cases of abuse allegations, at least a number of participants will start sharing their concerns and issues, which might eventually result in them welcoming the British Council to conduct visits at their sites and approaching us when critical issues arise. Developing an idea about child protection good practices, i.e. what is expected of them, and giving them time to integrate these standards in their own schools might further reduce insecurities as well.

Large, diverse Crowds: Issues of Dissemination. With 127 partner schools, we have to explore ways to increase dissemination and reach larger crowds. The positive discipline info-session with an audience of approximately 60 teachers was a trial at addressing a large number of people in a short time, but was not considered very convincing by many of the attendees (only by 25%) according to their feedback. We then decided that an issue such as this one, which requires changing the perceptions and attitudes of a considerable number of teachers.

Moving forward after this lesson, we were very careful in planning the Principals’ Forum, which according to my colleagues’ reports, had previously seen moments of outward dissent by the
audience. As mentioned above, I addressed the issue of conflicting interests while demonstrating an understanding of the positions school leaders find themselves in. The aforementioned ice-breaking activity helped pave the way to imparting my critique. But I decided to focus the majority of my address on easy steps school leaders can take to protect children, which in their entirety would cover the different elements of a comprehensive policy. The idea of presenting such positive practices was described by the Head of Exams as ‘a learning moment’, who was first opposed to my deleting parts of my presentation that included more criticism.

The audience was given the opportunity to communicate their questions on comments on the distributed cards, as well as to give feedback in the event’s feedback form. The audience’s feedback was very positive. The lesson learned from these experience is that it is best to consciously avoid controversial/provocative statements, as they will be difficult to discuss with such a large audience. Such issues require examining assumptions and beliefs. The maximum one can do with a large group is raise questions to provoke thought, but while being careful not to publicly pass judgments without presenting supporting evidence. Providing solutions (feasible ideas for good practice) especially when addressing problems in school performance was well-perceived. One example that gained a lot of attention was to ask students to draw a map of the school and color the areas in which they feel safe or unsafe in different colors, then opening up a discussion. The school leaders’ thoughts were provoked by showing an actual map and the following quote I had received from a student: “The school is not safe…No matter how many security guards they get, it is not safe. Because children can harass you and then the biggest punishment they get is a vacation [i.e. suspension]!”.

The challenge is not only that the target audience is large, but also largely diverse. As can be seen from our exploratory activities, some schools have well-established child protection
systems, while others still have no clear concept of it. Making the session beneficial and keeping a well-balanced stress level for all participants proved difficult so far when it comes to sessions on school systems. Moreover, school educators have very busy work routines. This puts further pressure on the facilitator in making the sessions enriching and yet not overwhelming for the different participants. Table 3 shows several comments addressing this issue. One solution was to introduce the segments ‘spotlight on’ in which social and emotional information is presented and discussed and ‘partners’ practice’ in which schools with good practices can show their work and possibly learn from the participants’ questions and comments. For me as a facilitator, I have to be very careful to include simple, basic ideas, as well as more advanced elements. So far, four participants from schools with advanced safeguarding practices showed genuine interest and described the sessions as very useful in their feedback. One testament was the comment: “I thought I knew everything about Child protection”.

Another significant issue is the language barrier. Many staff members don’t speak English well and thus have limited access to professional development activities and resources. Unfortunately, there is a significant educational gap which can be observed along with the language difference. To mitigate this issue, we added in our invitation that we recommend bilingual staff members capable of disseminating this information to colleagues in Arabic and in English and I selected resources which have an English and an Arabic version.

The regular sessions we held so far were all in Cairo and reached a relatively small percentage of schools and school personnel. Therefore, we plan to conduct sessions in Alexandria, send resources to schools on a monthly basis, as well as come up with online solutions to develop a more inclusive community of practice, such as an online discussion forum, a contextualized handbook and an online induction course. One way of doing this is further building the capacities
The Context: Needs and Opportunities

From our interactions and reflections, several context-specific issues can be deduced with regards to participants’ professional development needs, the school climate and challenges faced on the school level, as well as wider cultural issues.

Challenges on the School Level. School professionals mostly complain about lack of time and support in ensuring the well-being of their students. Participants mentioned that they are often too busy with teaching their class and often forget to follow up on cases or even take appropriate action. This may be due to cramped curricular requirements, which reflects the Western influence on education that focuses on cognition vs. other aspects of development, that is rooted in Western culture since Aristotle’s notion of the spirit-matter-dichotomy and the Ancient Greek orientation of education towards practical function (Merriam et al., 2006). Another aspect related to the problem of time is that teachers are often preoccupied with giving input. Here is where teaching methodology and classroom behavior intersect. Frontal teaching doesn’t allow instructors to focus on their participants and their individual needs, their time and energy are rather spent on imparting knowledge and their attention is focused on the subject matter. This is not to say that teachers don’t use learner-activating techniques, but their comments lend themselves to the hypothesis that classes remain widely teacher-centered, while learner-centered instruction may free up some of the teachers’ attention.

Furthermore, answers to reflective questions indicate that the professional preparation that teachers received has not engaged them in reflecting their own roles as educators, which may
leave common traditional notions unquestioned, such as having a single goal of preparing children for success in the workforce. Expanding one’s own perception of one’s role as a teacher may make us manage our time differently, as behavioral and psychological issues may then be viewed as a high priority task rather than a distraction. If such a view of education is encouraged by the school leadership, instead of merely focusing on academic achievement, teachers might be able to deal with children with more empathy and attention, report their observations and follow up on them more.

So far, only two participants/respondents complained of school leadership with regards to child protection. This is a sensitive issue which may require more trust-building and more intimate set-ups to be disclosed. When asked about internal resistance in the reflection sheet, one safeguarding officer reported that “there was a lot of resistance when the management decided to protect teachers rather than students”. This is a conflict of interest similar to the one described above and can’t be easily observed by an outside party on normal school days, but rather in specific critical situations. The level of student awareness and participation is therefore an important aspect of empowerment, which may raise the children’s (and their parents’) voices and establish democratic accountability. It could be argued that students, and especially their parents, are highly empowered at international private schools already. From the rates of self-professed corporal punishment, however, one can deduct, that students are not generally treated with respect, even if state and school regulations officially grant them this right.

The main complaints of lack of support are related to two different stakeholders; the parents and the government. From the school visits, baseline questionnaire, reflections and comments during sessions, the discord between parents and schools is evident with regards to disciplining practices. In several occasions, teachers mentioned observing signs of parental abuse on children
and children disclosing being subject to abuse at home. The majority of participating educators were unaware of the child helpline in Egypt, which two respondents mentioned as useful acquired information in their reflection and feedback. Whether reporting an incident to the helpline or authorities was in the best interest of the child, however, is a serious question. This could cause the child more harm, as there are no legislations that prohibit corporal punishment and more importantly, the implementation of the law does not indicate that parental abuse is criminalized in Egypt. Even if that were the case, the welfare system is subpar to say the least, putting children in conditions which may expose them to much more harm. As one respondent puts it: “I also feel that there is technically nothing that can be done about abused children. No matter how trained we are, how do we escalate serious problems?” educators also mentioned that many parents at international private schools have significant wealth, influence and connections with the authorities, which would prevent that they are faced with real consequences. Another participant, however, mentioned that the family’s reputation is something a lot of parents set value on, which can be used to make them refrain from using identifiable physical punishment of their children. Unless they are convinced of alternative non-violent disciplining approaches, however, this is no guarantee that they will resort to other non-tangible forms of abuse. Thus, using the family’s reputation as an argument may prove useful as a first step, but trust-building actions are required for more sustainable, meaningful change. On the other hand, the high importance attributed to family reputation could be a reason why parents are rarely “able and willing to seek help whenever required through the right channels”.

Other threats identified were bullying, especially frictions between students in the national and international school departments with different socio-economic statuses, cyberbullying, and danger around the school walls and in social/sports clubs. The issue of neglect was raised by
attendees on several occasions: “Many families have maids/nannies/drivers that are left unattended for long periods of time with no references or security checks.”

The finding is that educators greatly focus on bullying, parental abuse, lack of government support and other external factors, raises the question of whether there is denial or projection with regards to maltreatment which occurs in some schools. All school leaders visited didn’t seem concerned with teacher misconduct and it has not directly come up in any of the sessions, except in the very first, when one educator complained that there are different schools of thought within schools and that many don’t believe in positive discipline. In one reflection sheet, a respondent mentions that they face some challenges “by hall monitors and supervisors as well as some teachers”. On a similar note, another respondent wrote that the “discipline department tends to be quite harsh and we constantly remind them to adhere to the safeguarding police when disciplining children”, hence addressing structural problems and sub-cultures among educators.

One vice-principal at a school visit raised the concern that child sex abusers from Western countries tend to seek work at schools in development countries, which are glad to hire them and where background checks and supervision are not as rigorous. Despite the lack of focus on internal maltreatment by most attendees, there was no objection when I presented statistics on abuse at Egyptian public as well as private schools. Participants also showed great interest in the ‘spotlight on anger and aggression’ and in solutions to overcome their own anger, evident from the great demand expressed in the positive discipline training which greatly exceeded the available sign-up slots. When asked not to give ‘model answers’ educators gave realistic teacher responses in stress situations, such as yelling, leaving the room, punishing a scapegoat, etc. Thus, it seems that there is no denial in that maltreatment occurs in schools, but educators tend to deflect from that subject, probably because of discomfort. Interestingly, one of the sessions had
two participants who went to the same school as children but in different generations and they reported that physical punishment was non-existent in earlier times. This would be in line with Makar’s (2011) investigation of an Egyptian teacher-training manual used in the early 20th century, which demonstrates that student’s agency and freedom of expression were promoted during that time. But whether corporal punishment in Egyptian schools has decreased or increased over time needs to be examined, bearing in mind that a decline in the schools’ quality and reputation could affect a change in the socio-economic demography of the schools’ students and staff.

Cultural Aspects. The central cultural issues are concerned with the relationship between adult and child. One distinct example is the question of physical contact. In Egyptian culture, physical contact is much more common and accepted between children and adults outside their nuclear family than in other cultures. One respondent writes this issue of “kissing every aunt, uncle, cousin etc. in greeting [and] forcing children to do so”. One participant mentioned that a bus driver at the school takes children on his lap while playing with him. Similarly, one (Egyptian) school leader himself mentioned to us that he took a five-year-old female student on his lap while investing a case of abuse, in order to listen to her story. Another (male) school principal also mentioned that “sometimes all the child needs from us is a hug”. This issue caused heated reactions in one of the working group sessions, as some schools have an absolute no-touching rule and some practitioners strongly believe in that rule. The discussion was spurred by a role-play activity, in which one educator asked a distressed child if she may touch her shoulder. During the discussion, a participant mentioned a friendly and well-liked teacher who made a few teenage girls uncomfortable with his physically casual way, but that he would be devastated if he learned about their complaint. This yielded a reaction by a (British) participant who said “I
honestly don’t care, if he will be devastated [...] The rule is ‘no touching’!”. But as the literature shows, these rules are ignored by a large number of people in Egypt. For the touching or hitting to stop, educators need to be convinced. If one does not want to attempt to force them of a rather Western concept, one needs to be open to other points of views. Two main concerns were mentioned regarding physical contact. On one hand, children may not be able to understand and enforce boundaries or even recognize that they have that right to protect their personal space on one hand, and on the other hand staff render themselves susceptible to allegations of sexual abuse when they touch children. It is important, however, not to assume that one cultural belief holds more truth than the other. A discussion can be opened within schools as to what kind of circumstances could make touching acceptable, e.g. situation, age, gender, presence of others, body parts which are acceptable to touch. Children too, need to be involved in this discussion and be made aware in an age-appropriate manner, that they are the judges as to which touch or look makes them uncomfortable and that they can and should set boundaries and seek help.

Conversely, physical contact between children of the opposite sex is traditionally frowned upon in Egypt. A few schools mentioned that they have a strict no-touching rule among all children as well, regardless of gender. One believer of that rule was appalled upon watching a video which reports that some research indicates that playfighting among young children is good for the children’s motoric skills, as well as their socio-emotional skills, such as the ability to read and respond to social cues (Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development, 2014). Supporters of such rules are motivated to avoid aggression, but for the most part, educators want to avoid physical interaction that is of a sexual nature. On that note, it has become evident that there are blurred lines between child disciplining and child protection, visible especially in some educators’ need to ‘protect’ youth from engaging in any sexual activity. It can be argued that this
way you are protecting them from harmful social consequences they may face. This raises the question of how much freedom can or should be granted to children and adolescents and how much we allow ourselves to intervene in the name of child protection. More importantly, however, are the means by which educators involve themselves with the sexual choices of teenagers: Is it through coercion and harsh punishment or through respectful reasoning?

Approaches to childcare are undoubtedly rooted in educators’ general perceptions of their own role. Differences in the language use of Egyptian educators show what may be perceived as a lack of ‘professionalism’. In emphasizing the importance of trust between educators and children, one participant described himself as a “friend” and a “big brother” to his students. Other participants rolled their eyes at this notion. Besides the fact that his speech sounded clichéd, one team member commented that teachers should not view themselves as such, as this removes professional distance and allows educators to view children as extensions of themselves. But such notions go back to historical roots. The role assigned to the teacher by Al Farabi and especially Al Ghazali as a respected father-like authority and a moral educator explains the disciplining role the educator’s role has today, and the more personal relationship they have with the student, which would not be acceptable in Western societies today (Gunther, 2010). In a similar fashion, one feedback note reads: “The statement that ‘Our role as educators is not to love kids’ - I don't believe in this at all”. This disagreement can be better understood by the fact that there is no differentiation between ‘love’ and ‘like’ in the common use of the Arabic language. The word has different connotations in both languages, which may cause the statement to be perceived as cold and harsh by an Egyptian. But putting aside different concepts of ‘love’, education professionals have different concepts of what their relationship with children should be like and what is considered good or bad for them.
Gender issues could also be observed in the sessions. A participant recommended that a teacher talk ‘man to man’ to manage an adolescent’s sexual misbehavior and said that it would be impossible for him to talk to an adolescent girl about such issues. I and other female participants replied that our most meaningful teacher-student connections during childhood were with male teachers and that one should not make assumptions as to the students’ preferences. Another issue raised, was gender-based bullying between siblings and the need to sensitize children to the problem of societal perpetuation of gender-based violence and persecution based on sexual orientation. Among the mentioned concerns was the behavior of gay students and others’ discrimination against them.

A seemingly more pressing and frequently reappearing issue within participants was sexual behavior and sex education. From my school visits it soon became clear that sex education is limited in most of the schools, which several educators deemed unfortunate. “People come from different backgrounds with regards to sex and sexual identity. [...] It seems that as a county we are lacking in the department of sex education outside of the Science classes. [...] This is the main issue that I feel is difficult to deal with here in Egypt”. Educators themselves feel at a loss when confronted with situations and may themselves lack knowledge in this field. One school leader said that years ago, a 14-year old student masturbated frequently during her class and that the same situation occurred in her colleague’s class today. She then said that she was “not an expert” on such matters and hence did not take action. Another school leader mentioned that they “tip-toed around this issue [sex]”, as parents would not accept discussing it beyond its biological function.

As for children’s rights to self-expression, the issue of non-tolerated emotions came up. In reminiscing on our childhoods, we observed that we didn’t feel entitled to certain emotions, such
as being ‘sad’, ‘depressed’, ‘jealous’ or ‘in love’, either because these feelings were generally
taboo, or because parents thought children could or should not experience these feelings at such
an early stage. From a child protection perspective, this could be dangerous, as it may inhibit
children from seeking help or keep parents from taking notice of warning signals with regards to
their children’s well-being.

These issues will need to be further discussed and investigated in relation to the implications
they might have on child protection. However, despite those differences I agree with a respondent
in that “I think we all agree about child protection and we all stand against abuse and violence”.

**Professional Development Needs**

The attached schools’ professional development needs were assessed based on two measures.
Firstly, needs can be deduced from the negative responses of the baseline questionnaire, i.e. the
missing child protection elements according to the 60 school professionals’ responses, and
secondly via a ranking of suggested topics conducted by 24 participants of the working group via
an anonymous voting system.

Figure 12 shows the school-based child protection needs. Of the 44 surveyed schools, 63%
report that not all their teachers are trained in abuse detection and 56% don’t offer child
protection training for their staff. Furthermore, 63% don’t have any data on the respect of
children’s rights and the use of violence at their schools and around 40% have no routine
awareness sessions for students or feedback from students. Around 40% of schools lack a child
protection policy and the schools lacking a designated person for child safeguarding are at 55%.


These numbers show that there are two major school needs. Firstly, child protection needs to be developed as a system of accountability that is formalized, communicated, monitored and evaluated on a routinely basis. Secondly, students’ involvement in the process is low and should be reflected. Schools need to be guided in their development of a child protection policy and discuss the notion of having designated child protection focal points. A training simulation can
be developed to show and discuss the differences of having clearly outlined rules and procedures and focal points versus informal rules and lack of accountability.

Based on the survey feedback and discussions at the first two working group sessions, we identified ten topics for professional development and asked participants to prioritize them based on their need. Table 4 shows the ranked results. Due to the fact that 60% of schools already have child protection policies in place, ‘Developing a Child Protection Policy Sample’ is on rank 7, though it is a basic need. This suggests offering a training on the contents and forms of child protection policies and procedures specifically for schools which don’t have a formal system in place. Furthermore, examples of child protection policies can be presented and collaboratively critiqued in working group sessions, so that there is a discussion around the quality standards of child protection policies, against which schools with existing policies can measure themselves.

Table 4 Training Topics Ranked by 24 Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Priority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Disciplining Children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Peer-aggression and Bullying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Investigating suspected or alleged abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Issues around sexual behavior and abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Developing a CP induction training for staff</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Raising child participation and awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Partnership with parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Develop a sample CP policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>E-Safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Developing a CP school auditing (assessment) tool</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, e-safety and developing assessment tools are at the lowest ranks, although, as mentioned above, many schools don’t routinely raise students’ awareness on e-safety and have a lack in monitoring systems. One explanation could be lack of awareness of the importance of these issues. Six participants did not provide a response on e-safety at all, which suggests that the concept is foreign to them. Another possible explanation could be that information on e-safety and templates of assessment tools are more easily attainable on the internet or other means of self-learning compared to behavioral and psychological issues.
It does become evident in the ranking of topics that educators mostly express interest for guidance and exchange in dealing with more complex issues and crises, seeing as four top-ranked topics are all related to dealing with children’s behaviors and with potential cases of abuse. Aspects on the systems level are all ranked lower, possibly because education professionals want to first develop their knowledge base and learn to deal with urgent cases, then develop overall systems at a later stage. Furthermore, only school principals are required to think on the systems level, hence a questionnaire among school leaders alone may yield different results. It is also noteworthy to mention that only three participants ranked a topic as ‘not needed’, which shows that the vast majority of participants consider all topics relevant and needed to some extent.

As for my own observations of learning needs, there are certain attitudes and skills which require the facilitators’ attention. For several participants, discipline, respect and control still appeared to have higher priority over children’s well-being. This became evident in the discussion of specific child behaviors and ways to respond to them. To present one example, I showed a video of caregivers’ responses to children’s behaviors, among which a boy throws a paper plane in the direction of his teacher (Save the Children ARM, 2011). After being hit lightly by the paper plane, the teacher smiles and asks the student to come to the board and make a calculation of the paper planes flying curve, thus turning the situation into a learning moment without resorting to violence. One participant commented that the teacher’s smile is unrealistic, as throwing a paper plane in the direction of the teacher is a clear sign of disrespect. This ignited a discussion between participants on whether the child intends to provoke the teacher and whether or not the teacher’s smile is a sign of weakness. The situation showed a need to discuss parenting/caregiver styles and differentiate between authoritarian versus authoritative behaviors. Furthermore, the
situation requires increasing some educators’ awareness of the disadvantages and potential harm of violent and punitive behavior – whether by commission or omission – through deeper reflection and further discussion, perhaps using several hypothetical situations.

Another attitude mentioned earlier is the somewhat ostentatious and perhaps competitive behavior of some participants, which resulted in little sharing of weaknesses and in using a patronizing tone when giving advice in some instances. It is natural that several international private schools consider each other competitors and that participants want to demonstrate their best picture, but by emphasizing the well-being of children as a common goal besides academic achievement and other aspects of school quality, by allowing for individual reflections and asking educators to share the challenges they face during the sessions, a more collaborative and open atmosphere can be created.

Furthermore, the facilitator needs to model and set expectations for listening skills, metacognition and intercultural competencies, in which some deficiencies could be observed. This can be done by incorporating tasks which require these skills, such as filling out a table that summarizes different views and responses, answering reflective questions and asking participants to role-play and defend different cultures. It is also important to give feedback on these skills and positively reinforce good examples and positive moments.
Chapter V: Implications

It is evident from the available literature and the data presented in this paper that violence against children is a grave issue in Egypt and there is a considerable lack in comprehensive child-centered protection policies and practices on the state government level, as well as on the school level. From findings on the current status and needs as well as the capacity building efforts conducted with British Council’s attached schools, some implications can be derived for policy making and implementation.

Implications for National Policies and Services

Re-definition and Integration of Standards. Child protection needs to be reflected in educational policies and in quality standards and indicators that are set by the state in a manner that clearly emphasizes children’s well-being and socio-emotional development as paramount and unconditional. Establishing child protection committees at schools is a positive step, but the confusion of child protection with child disciplining evident in ministerial decree No.287 of 2016 needs to be resolved by developing a policy with a primary focus on and prioritization of children’s best interests. Policy approaches need not only be rights-based, but must also connect children’s rights with their health and the health of society, hence viewing child protection not only as a way of dealing with individual concerns, but as a general societal concern. With a school system that focusses on academic achievement and workforce preparation as the first and foremost goal of education, the neglect of health and social skills is structurally predetermined. Therefore, a fundamental re-definition of the purpose of education is required and its integrated into current systems. Higher priority to health in education can be achieved through introducing
it as a new subject, but also by infusing societal issues, health issues and the development of socio-emotional skills and values into the curricula of all subjects. A good practice identified in the current study is the allocation of time slots within the school week for the discussion of such issues, which also helps educators identify, report and reflect on common issues and individual cases which require attention. But first and foremost, the development of child protection mechanisms needs to be made a condition for school licensing and accreditation.

**Empowerment of Children.** The fact that corporal punishment is still wide-spread in public and private schools is an indicator of the lack of child empowerment. For child protection efforts to be effective, children need to be empowered. Raising children’s awareness of their rights and training them to speak up against violations enhances their self-esteem and their self-protection skills, as well as helps assuring better treatment by school staff. For skills development, occasional stand-alone sessions would not suffice, therefore the infusion of child awareness and empowerment into curricula and various school activities is recommended. Child empowerment furthermore includes meaningful participation in school life, such as in student unions, with the ability to take initiatives and share decision-making power from a young age, beyond tokenistic and superficial involvement. Hence, we arrive at an intersection of child protection with democratic thought and comprehensive social equity and welfare.

**Equipment of Educators.** Child protection and child rights need to be integrated in professional preparation and development programs, as findings from previous as well as the current study show that there is a lack of awareness of child rights and protection among most educators who received their education in Egypt. Including child health and protection as a core subject in pedagogical university departments would help establish basic know-how at a pre-service stage. The Ministry of Education also needs to make it easier for education professionals to access
information on child protection, such as by providing a child protection handbook with all relevant laws, policies, sample forms and practical guidelines. A training toolkit for schools would help in the dissemination and practical application of child protection policies and guidelines. A unified mandatory induction training and test for all school staff, such as the online induction at the British Council, would help achieve minimum standards for dealing with children and cases of suspected abuse. For a more fundamental effect, training of educators needs to tap into assumptions and beliefs regarding the education and disciplining of children and change some perceptions on the role and authority of educators. Furthermore, educators need to be equipped with alternative solutions for the disciplining of children through training and ongoing discussion. Therefore, establishing communities of practice in online and offline forums is recommendable.

**Quality of Child Protective Services.** Besides the need to reassess national policies and legislations, there is a general lack in enforcement and monitoring. Currently, there is no child protection unit which proposes policies and facilitates and monitors their implementation within the ministry of education. A general complaint voiced by educators is the lack of access to services which are in the best interest of the child, such as those providing appropriate legal or psychological support. The risk of children being stigmatized due to lack of information protection, as well as the risk of children being exposed to further harm due to subpar protective services are perceived to be very high. Thus, there is a strong need for capacity building within governmental child protective services with regards to both investigation of abuse allegations as well as for consequent interventions. Solutions for home abuse need to be developed and implemented, so that educators have a dependable entity to report suspected cases to. For school-based abuse, a barring system (i.e. a ‘black list’) for substantiated staff misconduct would
provide a useful reference to preventive school hiring practices. Furthermore, quality services are needed for children suffering severe psychological disorders who may pose a threat to themselves and to other children. So far, schools either opt to expel the student or keep the child at the school with lack of expert treatment at the risk of further harm occurring.

Implications for School Capacity Building

In working with schools to develop and integrate child protection policies and practices, it became evident that change needs to be made on a systemic school-management level, but that this also requires changing the perceptions of educational leaders and staff. Analogous to development on the state level, development on the school level requires the integration of child protection issues into staff-training programs and trainings of trainers, by infusing them into and relating them to other educational and school-administrative issues.

Starting with definitions. It has proven important to reflect and reach some agreement on definitions of goals and roles while attempting to reach systemic change. The concept of education seems to be detached from the concept of care, with the facilitation of academic progress perceived as the educator’s primary role. Attending to children’s other needs appears to have secondary importance, and child disruptive behavior is perceived as a distraction, an obstacle, a waste of valuable time rather than a call for help and a core task of educators. By collaboratively defining and reframing the role of education and educators, issues arise that are crucial to child protection, such as child empowerment, social development and the aspect of control. Child protection requires many educators to widen their role definition and reorganize their priorities in dealing with children. Moreover, the current study has established that the definition of child protection in and of itself helps develop an understanding on what needs to
and what can potentially be done. This opens the door to the inclusion of preventive measures of violence within and outside the school to address potential intentional as well as unintentional harm and not limit child protection to merely responding to cases of abuse.

**Positive Approach.** Criticism and prohibitive rules and regulations are disempowering and unconstructive. It is imperative to provide educators with alternative strategies in order to reduce child rights violations. Educators responded well to activities that help them deepen and reflect on their knowledge of social-emotional and psychological aspects and methods of child development. For instance, educational standards need to focus on the importance of providing warmth to children and developing resilience and self-esteem instead of stopping at banning corporal punishment. Furthermore, using a strength-based approach by identifying and showcasing good practices of child protection demonstrated that there is a basis to build on and that child protection is indeed applied and feasible at schools in the Egyptian context.

**Inclusive and Differentiated Approach.** In order to reach existing educators, material and tools for dissemination need to be provided to schools, such as booklets and online training modules, templates and platforms. Not only school teachers and administrators, but all stakeholders, including children, support staff and parents need to be involved. Therefore, capacity building efforts need to aim at increasing awareness and capacities on all levels, which means that in international private schools, material and training need to be available in more than one language. Different ways of schools’ partnership with and involvement of parents as well as the importance of including the student’s voice need to be included in development efforts. Material needs to be praxis-oriented and different levels of school professionals’ capacities need to be taken into consideration.
Quality Assurance and Continuous Development. There seems to be a lack of awareness regarding the importance of connecting child protection with accountability, feedback and monitoring. In order to assure the quality of child protection practices, it is recommended that schools have designated safeguarding officers who are responsible for the development and implementation of child protection policies. Furthermore, student feedback on school staff will help ensure the quality of care and inform school management of strengths and needs. School leadership must make use of student feedback and other monitoring activities in their appraisal of all school personnel, in order to bridge the gap between policy and implementation. Furthermore, institutions need to facilitate continuous development in child safeguarding by establishing platforms for a community of practice.

Trust and Conviction. As efforts to enhance child protection in Egypt mean tapping into controversial issues and creating social change, it is highly important to create an atmosphere of openness within and among schools. The findings show that there is general openness and acceptance with regards to child protection, but also some level of denial and lack of prioritization. In order for educators to show readiness for self-critical reflection, facilitators need to model empathy and show understanding for educators’ needs and the challenges they face. They need to establish rapport by demonstrating similarities and understanding of cultural sensitivities and other contextual limitations, as well as be equipped with evidence and profound knowledge to establish credibility. This also applies to the material presented.

Furthermore, facilitators need to ensure participatory learning processes which give sufficient room for participants’ questions and suggestions. Means to modulate competition between schools and school employees and instead enhance a collaborative learning environment through the sharing of experiences, information and tools need to be considered. Efforts need to be made
to render principles and concepts of good practice convincing by providing arguments, examples and relevant case studies, for instance to demonstrate the benefits of child participation or the risks involved in breaking confidentiality.

**Reflection and Motivation.** As previously presented, it has proven essential to examine Egyptian educators’ beliefs in comparison to western ideas and values regarding child protection and to entertain culture-specific solutions to reduce the gap between beliefs and regulations. Therefore, reflective practices and self-critiquing are vital for examining assumptions and fundamental principles, regarding issues such as privacy and confidentiality, taking children’s emotions seriously, professional limits and physical contact, sex and sexuality. While systems and procedures can be disseminated to larger crowds, controversial and tabooed issues need to be discussed in smaller groups in order to affect implementation and to increase educators’ agency and efficacy in child protection.

**Recommendations for further Research**

There is a large body of literature on the international prevalence of child abuse and the health and social factors associated with it, though mostly conducted in high-income countries. More differentiated research is required on the effects of specific types of abuse, especially emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation, sexual harassment and the frequent use of less grave forms of abuse, which is more common than severe child abuse.

There is very little literature on the current reality of and developments in child protection in Egypt. Internationally comparative data is needed on the prevalence, demography and causes of violence against children, e.g. the peak ages at which non-fatal abuse occurs in Egypt across social classes. Educator’s perceptions with regards to child protection in Egypt also requires
further exploration. Examples would be to explore educators’ attitudes towards violence against children, their definitions of their role, and their relations to other stakeholders. Most importantly, the students’ voices on perceived threats, perceived empowerment and ideas for development need to be heard. Furthermore, policy development and macro-level development efforts in children’s rights and child protection need to be mapped and discussed, as well as their integration into educational curricula and evaluation standards. More implementation and good practice research in school-based violence prevention and child protection is required, especially in public schools and in rural areas. Assessment tools need to be developed on the quality of policies and practices at schools and adapted to different contexts, drawing on data from different stakeholders within schools, followed by the study of longer-term interventions via longitudinal studies.
Appendix 1

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
Institutional Review Board

Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: Participatory Action Research for Developing and Integrating Child Protection Policies and Practices at Private Schools in Egypt

Principal Investigator: Hana Abdelsalam
e  hana.abdelsalam@gmail.com  m  01004406643

*You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is to explore ways to assess and develop Child Protection policies and procedures, and the findings may be presented and/or published. The expected duration of your participation in the reflective practice related to our sessions is half an hour to one hour.

The procedures of the research will be as follows: I will take notes on our sessions and I will ask you to answer a few questions to reflect on your participation (orally or in writing as per your preference).

*There are no risks or discomforts associated with this research.

*There will be benefits to you from this research. Reflecting on your opinions, attitudes and your learning process will increase your self-awareness and help you organize your thoughts and formulate your stance. This may influence the way you go about your day-to-day work. Furthermore, your input will inform future CPAS activities.

*The information you provide for purposes of this research is confidential. Your written reflection will be anonymous. If you choose to give an interview instead, your participation will be kept confidential. The interview will only be audio-recorded upon your permission and the files will be kept in a password-protected folder.

*Questions about the research, about your rights, or research-related harms should be directed to Hana Abdelsalam at 01004406643

*Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature ________________________________________________
Printed Name ______________________________________________
Date ________________________________________________________
Appendix 2

School-based Child Protection Questionnaire

Dear fellow Education Professional,

If you work at a private school, please take 10 Minutes to complete this survey - all identities and names of schools will remain 100% confidential.

This survey is intended for a study entitled "Action Research for Developing and Integrating Child Protection Policies and Practices at private Schools in Egypt", conducted at the American University in Cairo. I, Hana Abdelsalam, Child Protection Consultant, would like to use the data of this survey in my study for the purpose of exploring ways to enhance child protection in Egypt based on a project with the British Council.

This checklist also gives you a chance to learn about what schools can do to protect their children and can serve as a springboard for discussion with staff and stakeholders. I recommend you also print out a copy for your own reference.

PLEASE NOTE: Please try to provide responses which reflect the realities of your school environment. This will help reflect an accurate picture of Child Protection & Safeguarding through valid and reliable data and hence develop a suitable action plan and recommendations based on the schools' needs.

If you have any questions, please contact me at hana.abdelsalam@gmail.com.

Many thanks

Hana Abdelsalam

* Required

1. Do you work at a private school in Egypt? *
   
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No
2. Which educational curricula does your school offer? * Check all that apply.
   - American
   - British
   - French
   - German
   - National
   - Other:

3. Your School: *
   This is only to account for responses from the same school. For the purpose of confidentiality, the school names will be deleted and replaced with codes as soon as the survey is closed (Nov 30th).

4. Your position/title: *

5. Do you agree that your response is used in my research study on child protection? *
   - I consent

Does your school have....

Please select the most fitting response

6. ...a written Code of Conduct for all staff? *
   - Yes
   - No
   - Other:
7. How important do you find that point?
* Mark only one oval.

- I find it essential.
- Desirable, but not essential.
- Not desirable.
- Other: ____________________________

8. ...a written Child Protection Policy? *

- Yes
- No
- Other: ____________________________

9. How important do you find that point?
* Mark only one oval.

- I find it essential.
- Desirable, but not essential.
- Not desirable.
- Other: ____________________________

10. ...a Student Support Counselor? *

- Yes
- No
- Other: ____________________________

11. How important do you find that point?
* Mark only one oval.

- I find it essential.
- Desirable, but not essential.
- Not desirable.
- Other:

12. ...a designated person responsible for the development and/or implementation of child protection activities/policies and procedures? (CP focal point/officer)

- Yes
- No
- Other:

13. How important do you find that point?

* Mark only one oval.

- I find it essential.
- Desirable, but not essential.
- Not desirable.
- Other:

14. ...a system that ensures students are safely collected from school? *

- Yes
- No
- Other:
15. How important do you find that point?  
* Mark only one oval.

- I find it essential.
- Desirable, but not essential.
- Not desirable.
- Other:__________________________

16. ...a Criminal Record Check system for all staff? *

- Yes
- No
- Other:__________________________

17. How important do you find that point?  
* Mark only one oval.

- I find it essential.
- Desirable, but not essential.
- Not desirable.
- Other:__________________________

18. ...a Child Protection Training programme for all staff? *

- Yes
- No
- Other:__________________________

19. How important do you find that point?  
* Mark only one oval.
20. ...a standardised response mechanism for dealing with allegations of abuse *

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Other:

21. How important do you find that point?

* Mark only one oval.

- [ ] I find it essential.
- [ ] Desirable, but not essential.
- [ ] Not desirable.
- [ ] Other:

22. ...teachers who are all trained in detecting abuse? *

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Other:

23. How important do you find that point?

* Mark only one oval.

- [ ] I find it essential.
- [ ] Desirable, but not essential.
- [ ] Not desirable.
24. ...a Risk-assessment system for event planning/trips? *
   - Yes
   - No
   - Other:

25. How important do you find that point?
   * Mark only one oval.
   - I find it essential.
   - Desirable, but not essential.
   - Not desirable.
   - Other:

26. ...an anonymous channel for students/staff to report potential cases of abuse? *
   - Yes
   - No
   - Other:

27. How important do you find that point?
   * Mark only one oval.
   - I find it essential.
   - Desirable, but not essential.
   - Not desirable.
   - Other:
28. ...a secure and detailed filing system for documenting child protection cases (allegations and concerns) and for following up? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other: ________________________________

29. How important do you find that point?
   * Mark only one oval.

☐ I find it essential.
☐ Desirable, but not essential.
☐ Not desirable.
☐ Other: ________________________________

30. ...the permission of every child/guardian whose image you use for publicity (informed consent)? *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other: ________________________________

31. How important do you find that point?
   * Mark only one oval.

☐ I find it essential.
☐ Desirable, but not essential.
☐ Not desirable.
☐ Other: ________________________________

Does your school have...

Almost done. Please continue these optional questions, if you have the time, or press next.
32. ...an anti-bullying policy known to all students?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other: 

33. ...routine awareness activities for the students’ online safety?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other: 

34. ...contact information visibly displayed at your school for complaints or concerns?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other: 

35. ...an external communication strategy for handling allegations of abuse?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other: 

36. ...student feedback surveys on staff or teachers?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other: 

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37. ...a strict and well-respected confidentiality code (discussing children with only people who need to know)?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other: ____________________________

38. ...survey data about the use of violence or respect for child rights at your school?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other: ____________________________

39. ...a staff appraisal system which takes into consideration respectful treatment of children and involvement in child safeguarding?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Other: ____________________________

Further Development

40. What is it you would like to develop at your school to minimize risk and improve child safeguarding? *

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

13. How could an external entity (governmental or non-governmental organization) help enhance Child Protection practices at your schools?

(It would be useful, if you would mention specific topics/issues/questions)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Appendix 3
Child Protection Reflection Sheet
* Required

1. Where did you go to school? (City and type of curriculum) *
   
   Check all that apply.
   
   - In the UK
   - In Greater Cairo
   - In Alexandria
   - In Ismailia
   - In Tanta
   - In Mansoura
   - Gouna/Sharm el Sheikh
   - Egyptian Curriculum
   - American Curriculum
   - British Curriculum
   - Other: ________________________________

2. What is your understanding of child protection and has it been altered or developed since you first started learning more about it through training/reading? If yes, in what way? Think of lessons learned and insights gained. *
   
   Please reply in full sentences/preferably in paragraph-form.

   ____________________________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________________________

3. Which of these protection-related British Council Sessions did you attend? *
   
   Check all that apply.
   
   - Principal's Forum 2016 - Responding to Allegations of Abuse in the Media
   - Principal's Forum 2017 - Positive Practices in Child Protection - simple steps towards a comprehensive policy
   - CPAS Working Group session 1 (August) - Setting the Agenda, Spotlight on identified good practices
CPAS Working Group session 2 (October) - Planning for Action, Spotlight on Anger and Aggression
CPAS Working Group session 3 (November) - Developing our Child Protection Systems, Partners’ Practice: EBIS, Spotlight on Violence against Children
Positive Discipline Training
Other: __________________________________________________________________________

4. Did you receive training in child protection/safeguarding prior to attending our working group sessions? *
Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes, it was part of my professional preparation training (university, diploma or other degree)

☐ Yes

☐ No  Skip to question 6.

5. Where and by what organization was the training delivered?
______________________________________________________________________________

6. How useful did you find our sessions so far? What were the key ideas/learning points you got? What did you not like about (any of) the sessions?
Please reply in full sentences.
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

7. Which gaps (in knowledge/skills) did you identify - regarding your own capacity or that of other school professionals who attended the CPAS sessions?...What do you (participants/schools) still need to learn and develop? *
Please reply in full sentences/preferably in paragraph-form.
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

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8. Did you observe any resistance at your school or other schools regarding efforts in violence prevention, child safeguarding, empowerment or promoting respect for child rights? *  
For example, are there certain rights and freedoms that are controversial or principles/procedures that your school leadership/colleagues are reluctant to enforce/abide by?  
Mark only one oval.

☐ Yes, a great deal of resistance.  
☐ There is some/a little resistance.  
☐ There used to be, but not any more.  
☐ I can't say. I am still new at the school.  
☐ We haven't really done much yet in that respect.  
☐ No, our safeguarding and child empowerment efforts are well accepted and going smoothly.  
☐ Other: ________________________________________________________________  

9. Resistance by whom?  
Check all that apply.

☐ school leadership  
☐ colleagues  
☐ Other: ________________________________________________________________  

Please reply in full sentences/preferably in paragraph-form.  
________________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________________  

11. Which challenges do you face or expect to face in implementing CP policies and practices at your school? *  
Think of all stakeholders: Leaders, teachers, admin, support staff, parents, students...  
________________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________________
12. Which strengths and opportunities can you build on?
   Think of all stakeholders: Leaders, teachers, admin, support staff, parents, students...

13. International schools have staff, parents and students with different cultural backgrounds. Even among nationals, beliefs and practices vary. Can you think of cultural aspects/differences that are related to protecting children's rights?
   Please reply in full sentences/preferably in paragraph-form.

14. What do you think is the best way to build capacities for establishing child protection policies and practices within schools? What steps do you suggest we take with our 125+ partner schools?
   Please reply in full sentences/preferably in paragraph-form.

15. Any other ideas, requests, suggestions?
Appendix 4

Report on Exploratory School Visits
ON CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICES AND NEEDS

Objective of the visits:

– To identify child protection needs and good practices
– To develop an understanding of contextual factors
– To establish rapport and gauge schools' interest in collaboration

Objective of this report:

To summarize relevant information and insights gained by the visits, and to deduct identified needs and recommended actions.

Conducted Schools Visits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School A</th>
<th>Small School, registered with Ministry of Foreign Affairs,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. B (principle and teacher of Islamic studies);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. E (former PE teachers, now HR, student affairs and student trips);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. J (vice-principle and teacher in humanities);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. X... Teacher for students with special needs, who cannot join mainstream classes, e.g. due to language constraints;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Took a tour through the school and spoke briefly with teenage students (incl. members of the student union), a science teacher, a biology teacher and the school nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30/1/2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School B</th>
<th>Large school, well-established, high-end, high-achieving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mr. I: Assistant principle and Child protection lead officer (younger children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. J: older children, community work initiative in the local area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met with two younger children alone and two older children with Ms. L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. L., a Teacher involved in child protection, who also organizes trips, teaching children relaxation techniques and girls how to be more assertive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6/2/2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School C</th>
<th>Large, new school, small British Section, medium SES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. R., Head of the IGCSE section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. E., social worker from the national branch, primary level and member of the schools' parent council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. H., social worker at the Thanaweya branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13/2/2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School D</th>
<th>Large, old school, girls only, under Christian Orthodox Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. N.W headmistress of the IGCSE classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/3/2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Status of child protection policies and procedures:

- **Security at the Gate**: Schools B, E and F asked for ID at the gate, School A security were informed of our visit.
- **Policies and procedures**: Two schools (B,F) have written CP policies and procedures.
- **No-touching**: E and F have a strict no-touching rule
- **Focal points**: Only two schools have child protection focal points (B,F)
- **Recruitment**: Three of the schools conduct background checks during the recruitment process, others rely on the teacher's reputation. One school (F) has a written induction program in CP.
- **Child safeguarding measures** are mostly related to health and safety (leaving the school site, fire extinguishers, etc.)
- **Surveillance**: Some schools have camera surveillance (in the corridors, or also in classrooms), some schools have a supervisor/guard on every floor
- **Children's rights awareness**: Heard of no curricula, student projects or initiatives related to children's rights
- **Sex education**: is limited in most of the schools
- **Treatment of children**: Some principles professed to shouting at the children, some joked with the children using threatening language in Arabic in front of us.
- **Confidentiality**: was violated in all but two schools (B,F), in two ways:
  a) Mentioning cases to us by name (and later pointing out the children to us)
  b) Promising children that they will keep a secret, then reporting it to the principle behind the child's back
  *(I haven't explored whether they take the children's permission before posting their pictures)*

**Good practices:**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A | o Risk assessments and rigorous security,  
  o highly accessible and approachable school principle  |
| B | o Child Protection Policies and procedures as a work in progress (needs-based), published on the website,  
  o Child Protection Lead Officers: One male for younger students, one female for older students,  
  o Mr. I made a podcast for parents on child protection  |
A dedicated social worker in the National section, conducting Child Protection activities and organizing parent council agenda

"Etiquette" class, in which girls are taught about values, how to protect themselves and receive sex education (Unfortunately neither the teacher nor her curriculum were available)

A policy of unified response to disruptive behavior (punishments) across the school, to be followed by all teachers and principals (It wasn’t presented to me, however)

Very elaborate Safeguarding and E-Safety policies,
- Induction Training Manual
- Computer system on students, access based on need-to-know principle
- Child Protection team, incl. teachers from different stages and counselors
- Child Protection as fixed item on every agenda

Another positive aspect is the perception that children are vocal about their rights, which was mentioned in all but one school.

**Contextual factors:**

- In 3 of the 6 schools, IGCSE teachers work on an hourly basis and rotate between different schools
- School B developed its child protection system, because it was required by the accrediting body (BSME)
- School A is an outlier, being under the auspices of the Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign affairs (no supervision from MoE), is not for profit, has mostly children of African and Asian from diplomat families and where no Egyptian children are allowed
- It is hard to conduct a background check on foreign teachers with work experience in developing countries

**Perception of risk/protection needs:**

- School A is mostly concerned with terrorist threats
- Parental abuse is a major concern associated with powerlessness
- All principles didn’t seem concerned with teacher misconduct
- Confusion of child protection with supervision and discipline, in the sense of ‘protecting’ children from sexual behavior
- In school D, an assumption was made that teachers behave decently, as they have a 'good' socioeconomic background
- Danger around the school walls
- Frictions between students in the national and international programs
- Children are very exposed in clubs, with very little supervision

**Requested assistance/level of interest:**

- Schools seemed very relieved at the idea of tailoring policies to their needs
Most of them showed interest in receiving resources and working by them themselves

Schools A and E expressed interest in in-house training by the British Council

School E showed interest in asking advice on future cases

principle of school D said "nothing, thank you"

Identified needs/Recommended actions:

Making use of good practices, further exploring them and collaboratively developing them

Change of perception: seeing beyond physical and sexual abuse, deconstructing assumptions about class, the need to write down policies, the importance of confidentiality

Child involvement/participation and channels for anonymous feedback from students (closing the circle)

Explore the possibility of making child protection policies and procedures a requirement for accreditation

Cultural differences and controversies need to be considered and discussed, especially with regards to privacy/confidentiality and touching
Appendix 5

Comparison within Schools

ID: 12

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (KS)

If sig value is less than 0.05 so reject null hypothesis so the distribution is not normal

If Sig value (=latin P value) if greater than 0.05 so fail to reject null hypothesis so the distribution is normal

C: The distribution has no variance for this variable. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test cannot be performed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Normal Parametersa,b</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1a: written Code of Conduct for all staff?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2: a written Child Protection Policy?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>1.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3: a Student Support Counselor?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4: a designated person responsible for the development and/or implementation of child protection activities/policies and procedures? (CP focal point/officer)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>1.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5: a system that ensures students are safely collected from school?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>1.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6: a Criminal Record Check system for all staff?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7: a Child Protection Training programme for all staff?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8: a standardised response mechanism for dealing with allegations of abuse</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.707</td>
<td>.671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9: teachers who are all trained in detecting abuse?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.837</td>
<td>.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10: a Risk-assessment system for event planning/trips?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>1.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11: an anonymous channel for students/staff to report potential cases of abuse?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.707</td>
<td>.671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12: a secure and detailed filing system for documenting child protection cases (allegations and concerns) and for following up?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13: the permission of every child/guardian whose image you use for publicity (informed consent)?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14: an anti-bullying policy known to all students?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15: routine awareness activities for the students' online safety?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>1.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16: contact information visibly displayed at your school for complaints or concerns?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17: an external communication strategy for handling allegations of abuse?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18: student feedback surveys on staff or teachers?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.837</td>
<td>.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19: a strict and well-respected confidentiality code (discussing children with only people who need to know)?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>1.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20: survey data about the use of violence or respect for child rights at your school?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.707</td>
<td>.671</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q21: a staff appraisal system which takes into consideration respectful treatment of children and involvement in child safeguarding?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>.447</td>
<td>1.057</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data
c. The distribution has no variance for this variable. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test cannot be performed.

Conclusion: Normal distribution for all questions.

**One-Sample t-Test: with test value of 1**

- The null hypothesis ($H_0$) assumes that the difference between the true mean ($\mu$) and the comparison value ($t$) is equal to zero (no difference exists). $H_0 : \mu = t$
• The alternative hypothesis assumes that some difference exists between the true mean (μ) and the comparison value (1). $H_1: \mu \neq 1$

• If sig value is less than 0.05 so reject null hypothesis so there is a difference between responses with respect to Yes

• If Sig value if greater than 0.05 so fail to reject null hypothesis so there is no difference between responses with respect to Yes

Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q2: a written Child Protection Policy?</td>
<td>.374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4: a designated person responsible for the development and/or implementation of child protection activities/policies and procedures? (CP focal point/officer)</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5: a system that ensures students are safely collected from school?</td>
<td>.374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7: a Child Protection Training programme for all staff?</td>
<td>.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8: a standardised response mechanism for dealing with allegations of abuse</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9: teachers who are all trained in detecting abuse?</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10: a Risk-assessment system for event planning/trips?</td>
<td>.374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11: an anonymous channel for students/staff to report potential cases of abuse?</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12: a secure and detailed filing system for documenting child protection cases (allegations and concerns) and for following up?</td>
<td>.178</td>
</tr>
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<td>Q15: routine awareness activities for the students’ online safety?</td>
<td>.374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16: contact information visibly displayed at your school for complaints or concerns?</td>
<td>.178</td>
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<td>Q17: an external communication strategy for handling allegations of abuse?</td>
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<td>Q18: student feedback surveys on staff or teachers?</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
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<td>Q19: a strict and well-respected confidentiality code (discussing children with only people who need to know)?</td>
<td>.374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20: survey data about the use of violence or respect for child rights at your school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q21: a staff appraisal system which takes into consideration respectful treatment of children and involvement in child safeguarding?</td>
<td>.374</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Significant discrepancies found in 4/21 questions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Normal Parameters</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1a: written Code of Conduct for all staff?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Q2: a written Child Protection Policy?</td>
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<td>.000&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q3: a Student Support Counselor?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.577</td>
<td>.667</td>
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Q16: contact information visibly displayed at your school for complaints or concerns?  
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Q20: survey data about the use of violence or respect for child rights at your school?  
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a. Test distribution is Normal.  
b. Calculated from data  
c. The distribution has no variance for this variable. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test cannot be performed.

Conclusion: Normal distribution for all questions.

One-Sample Test: with test value of 1
Note: Significant discrepancies found in 8/21 questions.

**ID: 13**

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Q21: a staff appraisal system which takes into consideration respectful treatment of children and involvement in child safeguarding? & 2 & 1.50 & .707 \\
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Note: Significant discrepancies found in 17/21 questions.

**ID:16**

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Note: Significant discrepancies found in 6/21 questions.

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### Q14: an anti-bullying policy known to all students?

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### Q15: routine awareness activities for the students’ online safety?

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### Q16: contact information visibly displayed at your school for complaints or concerns?

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### Q19: a strict and well-respected confidentiality code (discussing children with only people who need to know)?

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### Q21: a staff appraisal system which takes into consideration respectful treatment of children and involvement in child safeguarding?

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**Note:** Significant discrepancies found in 14/21 questions.

**ID:34**

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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Significant discrepancies found in 4/21 questions.


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