Child labor in Egypt

Rawia Al Shater

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POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

CHILD LABOR IN EGYPT

RAWIA AL SHATER

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE

JANUARY 2000
Child Labor in Egypt

A Thesis Submitted by

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to the Department of Political Science

(June 1999)

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

The degree of Master of Arts

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................. v
LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................... vi

Chapter

1.  INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1

2.  CHILD LABOR AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY .................. 6

3.  DEFINING THE DIMENSIONS OF CHILD LABOR .............. 16

4.  THE FACTS ON CHILD LABOR IN EGYPT ......................... 28
   The Legal Framework

   Child Labor: Facts and Figures

5.  ISSUES IMPACTING CHILD LABOR IN EGYPT ................... 47
   Institutional Failures

   Policy Issues

6.  A RECOMMENDED FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY ................ 77

7.  NATIONAL EFFORTS AND DONOR ASSISTANCE ............... 86

8.  A PROBLEM AREA IN OLD CAIRO AND A PROPOSED PROJECT 95

9.  PROJECT DOCUMENT ......................................................... 99

Appendix

1.  UNITED NATIONS PROGRAM PROJECT APPROVAL FORM .... 128

2.  PROJECT BUDGET ............................................................ 129

WORKS CITED ................................................................. 130

iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Individuals:

Dr. Adel Azer, UNICEF, Cairo Consultant on Child Labor

Dr. Betsy Bishop, American University in Cairo

Dr. Reed, American University in Cairo

Dr. Thomas Kring, ILO. Cairo, Labor Associate

Dr. Tim Sullivan, American University in Cairo

Dr. Trevor Parfitt, American University in Cairo

Ms. Dina Younis, Environment Quality International

Ms. Hind Wassef, Population Council

My entire family for their continuos support

Organizations:

Environment Quality International

International Labor Organization

Population Council

Save the Children

UNICEF

USAID
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Minimum Ages for Admittance to Employment by Occupation</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Summary of Legal System on Employment and Education</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Poverty Groups 1995/1996 (%)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Distribution of Poor Households by income levels</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Distribution in Percentage of Working Children by Occupation</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Labor Force under the Age of 15 in 1984</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Reasons for Working by Gender</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Number and Proportions of Educational Loss at the Primary Level</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in 1989/90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Children’s Motives for not enrolling in Primary Education</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Reasons for dropping out as given by Dropouts</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Distribution of Population (10 years and above) by educational level</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Government Spending on Education</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Community Schools Development</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

University Name: American University in Cairo, School of Humanities & Social Science
Thesis Title: Child Labor in Egypt
Project Proposal: Child Support & Training Center in Masr El Qadimma
Presented by: Rawia Mustafa Al Shater
Advisors: Dr. Trevor Parfitt & Dr. Betsy Bishop

The proposed topic of the thesis is to thoroughly study the growing phenomena of child labor in Egypt, specifically Cairo. Child labor has become a norm in the Egyptian labor market. It is a reflection of the several policy failures coupled with the cultural and traditional misconception of the role of such children in the context of their families. Child labor, in the context of this thesis, is defined as any type of work that affects the child’s mental, physical, and psychological upbringing. Children are denied their right to education as they are forced to work to financially help their families. However, these children have no choices nor do they have any alternatives as to improve themselves. Even though elimination of child labor is not possible in the near future, alleviating the dangers of child labor is by offering alternatives to working children that do not necessarily remove them from the workplace immediately.

This thesis presents how child labor is a direct result of poverty coupled with the failure of the educational institution to provide affordable and relevant education.

The main areas of study will be:
- Investigation of international and national policy on child labor;
- Analysis of the situation of child labor in Egypt through quantitative and qualitative methods;
- Explanation of the institutional failures and how these have contributed directly and indirectly to the situation of working children, and finally,
- Suggestions on how to tackle the problem.
Project Description:

The proposed project will be a child support center that will be set up for working children at the potteries industry of Old Cairo. It aims to provide literacy classes to children below the age of 12, whom have never attended school or dropped out of school. The center will also provide vocational training to children ages 12 and above (to stay in conformity with Egyptian law). All enrolled children will be provided a monthly salary as an incentive to attend. In addition, a clinic will be set up to monitor the children’s health. The center will also have a playground that admits any child who wants to come and play, whether enrolled in the center or not.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

As the world approaches the twenty-first century, many scholars and policy makers progressed on the social and economic development front and analyzed the theories and experiences undergone by the developed countries. Developing nations have been applying some of these experiences and have been provided with aid and know-how as to move forward. Various development theories have been debated, and a consensus seems to be drawn on the idea that at the core of any successful and self-sustainable development is the human, being the most valuable resource.

The whole notion of human development stresses female empowerment and child development, since they are the most vulnerable groups in society, and yet the most crucial and influential in reaching the goal of a civil and developed society. Female and children have been marginalized in the past. However, the role of the female has become important because of her impact on the family upbringing and the moral foundation of the society. On the other hand, the importance of the children in development stems from the essence that they are the future of the country, hence investing in their development is consequential. Specific stress has recently been on child development, from an educational dimension and a social dimension. However, his/her vulnerable status in a society that is still developing, hence undergoing the stress of restructuring, diverts the attention of policy makers towards the tangible challenges and realities of everyday life, i.e. macro economic or political issues, rather than on the future and planning that future for these children.
Children, by nature of their being, should be provided special care and attention. The years of childhood are the building blocks of entry into adulthood and becoming a contributing member to the community. If these building blocks are not set on strong moral foundations, then the rest collapses. Most societies, especially developing countries, have many ills that impact negatively on the development of their children.

One of the most common and most unacceptable forms of child exploitation and abuse is child labor. It is of a worst ill when viewed with apathy and passivity that it is the norm. “The great injury, even deliberate cruelty, which predatory adults inflict on many working children, and the all too frequent fact that they get away with it, is a cruel mockery of the concern for humanity and an affront to the sincerity, political will, and collective undertaking of both developing and rich societies alike which profess giving a first call to children, putting people at the center of development, and upholding respect for human rights as a unifying, though sometimes contentious, principle among all nations in the world” (ILO 1996b, 113). Child labor can obstruct the future of millions of families and children and can itself form an unwanted enemy to any nation that aims to develop itself. If the human is to be at the center of development, then the existence of child labor defies that whole concept.

This thesis will study the phenomena of child labor with its different aspects and dimensions, with a specific focus on the existence of child labor in Egypt, specifically Cairo, being urban. The thesis will mainly present the triangular relationship between

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1 The International Labor Organization and its publications on child labor are some of the main sources to be used in this thesis. Targeting the In intolerable is a book which draws on the ILO’s extensive experience in this field, reports the exploitation and abuse of working children, and includes the experience if the ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor and other initiatives.
poverty, education and child labor. Egypt, being a developing country will be a perfect example on which to highlight this relationship, and it will allow for the study of the different other factors that contribute to the problem from a developing nation’s point of view. The thesis will also explain the magnitude of the problem and the various challenges that are to be faced when attempting to solve the problem. It will also summarize the many solutions that have been discussed by scholars in that field, analyzing the probabilities of success of such solutions. It will also explore the situations that the children face and the lack of alternatives in their environments.

Given the cultural dimension of the problem and the economic reality of the situation, immediate elimination of all forms of child labor is not possible. But what is possible, is the elimination of the 'hazardous' forms of child labor, i.e. work that impacts negatively on the child’s health and his/her mental, social and psychological development. What is also possible, through project interventions, is alleviating the current dangers that these working children are exposed to. Finally, the thesis will present a problem area in Cairo, which is Old Cairo, and aim to implement most of the solutions through a project for the working children in that area.

This thesis is divided into nine chapters (this being the first). Chapters 2 and 3 will present the issue generally. The first will define the concept of child labor and will shed light on the international efforts, mainly of the United Nations and the International Labor Organization (a UN affiliate agency), to combat and eliminate child labor, and the limitations of such efforts. The latter chapter will introduce the seriousness of the problem on the child and on society. It will present the root causes of child labor, poverty being at the forefront. It will also present the results of child labor on these
children and how that defies all the preaching on development. This chapter will be supported with some case studies of working children illustrating the situation further.

Chapter 4 will introduce the phenomena of child labor in Egypt. This chapter will present all the available facts and figures on the labor market, the involvement of children in the labor market, and the participation of children in education, drawing correlation between work and school. It will also present the country’s policy towards the issue through its the legal framework. The chapter will serve as the entry point and the foundation for the following chapters.

The fifth chapter will analyze how the issues and factors discussed in the second chapter manifest themselves in Egypt, and Cairo specifically. These issues will be divided under institutional failures and policy failures, conveying the limitations of some proposed solutions and presenting the local setting of the country that impacts indirectly on the growing problem. Under the umbrella of the institutional weaknesses, concentration will mainly be on the effect of poverty and the failure of the educational system and how these factors contributed in the existence and increase of the child labor phenomenon. However other dimensions such as culture, the family, and the society which play a role in this set-up, will also be analyzed clearly establish the depth of the problem.

Chapter 6 will then serve in presenting the solutions to the problem on the national level and on the society level. On the national level, provided will be a framework for policy, that will directly aim to combat the phenomenon of child labor. Some of these policies are to be incorporated in the national plan for long term outcomes, and these address the root causes of the problem. On the society level, a framework for
action will be proposed. These actions might all be short-term, not solving the root causes, but they are contributing to the improvement of the situation by providing working children with alternatives to build the blocks for an opportunistic future for them.

Chapter seven will provide a brief summary of the efforts that have been done in Egypt in the field. It will highlight the aims of some of the projects/programmes that have been implemented and the lessons learnt from these experiences.

Finally, the eighth chapter will present the situation in Old Cairo, where the potteries industry is located. This chapter will discuss the situation of the working children in this area and the deplorable conditions in which they work. Chapter 9 will then be the project document proposing a solution for this area through project intervention, and how that will aim to help those working children.
CHAPTER 2

CHILD LABOR AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY

International concern on the issue of child labor was triggered during the industrial era in Europe, where child labor was enormously used. The issue was first addressed from a moral perspective. However, that was sidelined by the hard realities of life, these being that employers cared more about profit, and the families of the children cared more about income. Morals, values, and ethics hardly replaced survival for those families.

"Until a few years ago, child labor was viewed with a mixture of indifference, apathy and even cynicism. It was so widely practiced that it was accepted by many as a part of the natural order of things. For others, child labor was equated with child work, excused with the argument that work is good for children and a means of helping families" (ILO 1996b, 4). However, that reasoning is starting to evolve, and more people are starting to realize the negatives of child labor as the notions of economic and social development are gaining more importance. International conventions and all the noise and media effort made about how a child is the future of any country hence should be nurtured, forced people to look differently at what they have been so used to seeing.

\textit{Defining Child Labor}

Before getting into what constitutes child labor as being a problem and the reason it has gained such international concern, a definition of what is to be discussed as child labor in this paper should be presented. The child selling the newspaper after school for
several hours, whether to help out his family or earn pocket money, is not the concern of this paper, as this is considered child work. However, the child who is selling newspapers daily from dawn until midnight, and not attending school to perform this job is the matter of concern, as this falls under child abuse. According to the ILO, “child labor, then, is a denial of the right to education and of the opportunity to reach full physical and psychological development” (ILO 1996b, 8). Hence, the child working in the chemical or construction industry performing strenuous tasks and prone to accidents and bad health and hygiene conditions is the matter of concern. The same goes for the female child domestic servant whom happens to perform tasks that are above her physical capabilities and is exposed to sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. This is the type of child labor that is being discussed on the national and international levels as being unjustifiable and ‘hazardous’. In short, child labor is any labor that denies the child his/her basic right to education and hinders his/her moral, mental, physical, and psychological development, insulting the child’s morality, dignity and self worth. Child labor is also about the exploitation of poverty, social exclusion, inequality and injustice (UNICEF 1997e, 1). It is to be noted and remembered at all times, that the condition of the child working in a hazardous condition, putting his life at a risk and endangering his morals, is quite different than that of a child who works to earn pocket money to buy himself fancy sports shoes. In short, it is about the available alternatives for these children. When a child has no choice but to work, and thus no choice in getting an education, then this child’s life is being directed towards a path that might hinder future development.

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2 UNICEF will be another valuable source of information in this document since UNICEF is an institution that is specialized in this field directing efforts in assisting children, and has experience with child labor through its Program Division, Section for Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances.
options and development. Unlike a child who has the option to attend schooling and work, given that work is what will build his pride and self-confidence. The working child who brought the issue of child labor into recognition and triggered international and national concern and who is the main topic in all books and papers on this issue is the child in a harmful and hazardous condition, despite his needs and wants.

Below are some of the international policy instruments that have been aimed at mobilizing support from member states as to work against child labor and eliminate the hazardous forms of child labor. These instruments belong to the ILO and the United Nations, being the institutions that represent the majority of the world's countries and are working directly in the field of child labor. The ILO is concerned more with protecting the rights of the laborers, whether adults or children, and securing the proper environment for the laborers in their field of work. The United Nations, on the other hand, deals with the issue in a rather humanitarian attitude aiming to secure human rights especially of children, since they are the most vulnerable groups in society. However both institutions share the same philosophy and policy on child labor, even though one represents labor in specific and the latter represents children in general.

*International Law on Child Labor*

Even though the international legal instruments developed for the purpose of eradicating child labor are not applied in many countries, it is worth understanding how this issue has evolved internationally and where it is at now. Some of these instruments are too rigid to be applied in the different countries, and that helps in explaining why many of these conventions have not been ratified by a vast number of states. These instruments have been developed with the purpose to eliminate child labor without
lending weight to the reasons of why children work and what alternatives they may have. However, they provide a useful framework of policy that can be followed in designing national legislation.

One of the most active organizations that have addressed child labor coherently is the International Labor Organization (ILO). According to Charles Dumont, Chief of the ILO’s Conditions of Work and Welfare Facilities Branch in Geneva, the ILO is “opposed to work carried out by children, either paid or unpaid, when this work has become a daily necessity which inevitably deprives the child at the educational and social level” (Dumont 1993, 6). This view is shared across in all international agreements and treaties as will be seen.

Some of these international legal instruments that directly address the situation of child labor are the following ILO Conventions:

No. 5  Minimum Age (Industry), 1919
No. 59 Minimum Age (Industry), (Revised), 1937
No. 7  Minimum Age (Sea), 1920
No. 58 Minimum Age (Sea), (Revised), 1936
No. 10 Minimum Age (Agriculture), 1921
No. 15 Minimum Age (Trimmers and Stokers), 1921
No. 33 Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment), 1932
No. 60 Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment), (Revised) 1937
No. 112 Minimum Age (Fishermen), 1959
No. 123 Minimum Age (Underground Work), 1965
No. 138 Minimum Age, 1973
& Minimum Age Recommendation (No. 146), 1973

The first of these to be adopted was Convention No. 5, which sets the minimum age for children to be employed in industry at 14 years old. Subsequently, nine other sectoral Conventions were adopted as seen from the above listing. Each of these conventions stipulated a minimum age for the given industry. However, No. 5 has gained
the most ratification from states, than any of the rest, ratified by 72 countries, since
industry was the most applicable.

The most recent and comprehensive of all of the above ILO instruments is
Convention No. 138, the Minimum Age Convention, and its Recommendation (No. 146).
The Convention obliges ratifying states to fix a minimum age for admission into
employment, to be 15 years old. However exceptions are made if the work is labeled as
hard work or light work. Employment for light work is allowed at age 13, and hard work
is prohibited if below 18 years of age.

Convention No. 138, basically states in summary the following:

"Article 1: Each member for which this Convention is in force undertakes to
pursue a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labor
and to raise progressively the minimum age for admission to employment or work
to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young
persons
Article 2: ...Each member which ratifies this Convention shall specify...a
minimum age for admission to employment or work...The minimum age shall not
be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall
not be less than 15 years.
Article 3: ...The minimum age for admission to any type of employment or work
which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to
jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons shall not be less than 18
years old.
Article 5: ...A member whose economy and administrative facilities are
insufficiently developed may...initially limit the scope of application of this
convention.
Article 7: ...National laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of
persons 13 to 15 years of age on light work which is
(a) not likely to be harmful to their health and development, and
(b) not such as to prejudice their attendance at school...or their capacity to
benefit from the instruction received."

However, countries still interpret light and hard work in different ways.

"Difficulties relating to the type of work classified as ‘light’ for the purpose of minimum
age regulation or to the conditions under which such work is permitted constitutes, in the
view of many governments, a major obstacle to the ratification of Convention No. 138” (ILO 1996b, 35). In addition, Article 5 of the Convention allows many countries to claim that they are unable adhere to the various articles of the Convention given their ‘insufficiently developed economic and administrative facilities’.

Minimum Age Recommendation No. 146 is a supplementary to Convention No. 138 and provides a framework and essential policy measures to help states in setting up their legal framework to abolish and eliminate child labor. Both the Convention and its Recommendation include a framework for enforcement and provision of penalties. There is also a requirement for the employers to keep registers and other documents showing the names and ages of the persons employed who are 18 years of age and younger.

However, given that some states have not ratified the Convention seeing that it is rigid, a new convention is now being formulated by the ILO to allow for the participation of more countries. It will give priority to the immediate elimination of the extreme forms of child labor.

In addition to the ILO, the United Nations has also been very active in mobilizing concern for children in difficult circumstances, especially all forms of child abuse. Their main fight is one that puts forward the rights of the child, especially in being granted access to education. Below are some of the treaties that have been ratified by member states regarding the rights of the child, irrespective whether the situation is child labor, child abuse, child prostitution, etc. The main treaties that will be discussed are:

- The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (UN General Assembly, 1959)


All the above treaties share the same viewpoint when addressing the issue of child labor.

Principle 9 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child states that “the child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be subject to traffic in any form.

‘The child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; he shall not in any case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental, or moral development’.

Similarly, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 32, states that

“1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. 2. States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular
(a) Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;
(b) Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;
(c) Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.”

The World Declaration and Plan of Action on the Survival, Protection, and Development of Children further asserts these points claiming “We will work for special protection of the working children and for the abolition of illegal child labor... More than 100 million children are engaged in employment, often heavy and hazardous and in
contravention of international conventions which provide for their protection from economic exploitation and from performing work that interferes with their education and is harmful to their health and full development. With this in mind, all States should work to end such child labor practices and see how the conditions and circumstances of children in legitimate employment can be protected to provide adequate opportunity for their healthy upbringing and development”.

All of the above mentioned agreements reiterate the same point. They all bear witness to a three-fold conviction: “childhood is a period of life which should be devoted not to work but to education and training; child labor...often compromises children’s potential to become productive and useful adults; and finally, that child labor is not inevitable, and progress towards its elimination is possible whenever there is political will to oppose it with determination” (Hansen 1993, 3). They are all agreed upon by ratifying states, but the problem seems to persist, and even though national legislation of most countries includes these principles, enforcement does not seem to be present. Another problem with abiding to these treaties is also that they stress on policy which may already exist yet does not necessarily connote action.

It has, however, been acknowledged that no country can abolish all forms of child labor at once. “Not all countries are institutionally or financially equipped to attack all forms of child labor at once. Choices must be made about where to concentrate available human and material resources. The most logical and humane strategy must therefore be to focus scarce resources first on the most intolerable forms of child labor... This approach has the additional advantage that policies designed to reach the children in the most need are likely to benefit other working children, and that focusing on the most
socially repugnant examples can help maintain the necessary social commitment and consensus” (ILO 1996b, 20). However, all countries are obliged by the above agreements to eliminate the most hazardous of conditions. National legislation is the basis of departure for any country to move forward on this issue, however it is important to understand that it is not the only base, since the problem of child labor is not one that is legal.

*International Action against Child Labor*

Apart from treaties, there has been various attempts at controlling child labor through business and economic interests. More recently, consumer boycotts to products that were made by child labor forced many factories to comply with laws regulating child labor. Worldwide movements have actually taken action towards the abolition of child labor. One of the consumer boycott examples is the world’s football governing body. “The International Federation of Associated Football (FIFA) has agreed upon the content of a code of labor practice for production of goods licensed by FIFA with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers’ Federation, and the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional, and Technical Employees. The Code contains a specific provision prohibiting the use of child labor in producing FIFA-licensed goods; only workers above the age of 15 are allowed, according to ILO Convention No. 138” (ILO 1996b, 6). This fact illustrates the consumer pressures being placed on those who hire child workers.

Even in the social clause of the GATT, child labor is mentioned as intolerable and unacceptable, and has to be eliminated in order to participate in free trade. The European Union and the United States have a Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) that
requires a ban on imports produced by child labor. Hence, developing countries have to show proof of compliance, which requires strict and fast action against child labor (Azer 1998, interview).

The movement against child labor has only been able to gain momentum when those economic threats of not being allowed to participate in free trade were imposed. In short, child labor was not given attention when it was fought against from a human rights approach, but now countries cannot afford to ignore it.

In summary, international concern and forced action, as in the case of consumer boycotts, have had the positive impact of drawing the attention to this topic, since it addresses economic interests. On the other hand, developing nations claim that they are forced to adhere to commitments that are beyond their institutional capabilities. Pressure put on them by developed nations, when there is no real understanding to their situations, is causing them more internal problems than they are able to resolve.

Egypt will be the case study in this paper, with specific emphasis on Cairo. Egypt has ratified ILO Conventions No. 105 and No. 29, and was the one of the first states to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Accordingly, it also has its own set of legislation concerning this issue, and has its own framework and provisions for enforcement and monitoring. However, there are many loopholes in implementation and enforcement. There are also many deterring factors that do not allow for total prohibition of child labor in Egypt, regardless of its national opinion towards the issue.
CHAPTER 3
DEFINING THE DIMENSIONS OF CHILD LABOR

Child labor, rather than being a problem on its own, is actually a result of various developmental problems. It is a multi-faceted problem with many dimensions – it is a consequence of various socio-economic factors, and yet it is a cause of other problems directly affecting these children and their surrounding. It is a complex of problems, whose roots are deeply embedded in cultural, social and economic structures and traditions. Child labor cannot be attacked as a component on its own without first addressing the root causes. To address child labor on its own by eradicating it would actually exacerbate the whole situation of these children to the worst. One of the main difficulties in solving this problem is that actually the solution of eliminating child labor is inconvenient to those who practice it. Elimination, without an environment that provides alternatives and solutions to the actual problems of these children and their families can make the situation worst for those children, and many may end up on the streets.

To further clarify the situation, one needs to define the dimensions of the situation and understand it thoroughly before attempting to provide suggestions of eradicating child labor. Defining the dimensions of this phenomenon requires analyzing both sides of the situation: what causes child labor and what are the results of child labor that makes it such a problem. This will help illustrate the complexity of the situation, and how all the problems are intertwined.
The Causes of Child Labor

The main factors and root causes that make the use of child labor so widespread are discussed below:

A) Poverty: This is the most important reason why children work. All working children either work to support themselves or contribute to the family income. Their contribution equals almost 1/3 of the total income, which is spent on the family’s survival (Nasser 1995, 6). The impact of poverty on this issue should never be undermined. Even though, poverty is not the only reason leading to child labor, it is the strongest drive and the core of the problem. Most of the working children, if not all, especially those working in hazardous conditions, need the money that they earn for survival. Some scholars use the example of the State of Kerala in India and its efforts to eliminate child labor (to be discussed at a later stage in this paper), as a counter argument to the poverty argument. However, efforts such as those of Kerala are long term efforts. The State of Kerala, as will be seen, started its efforts and policies in the late nineteenth century and the fruits of these efforts are apparent today.

Poverty, however, is not the sole factor directly resulting in child labor. Other factors affecting the children’s environment play an important role.

B) Lack of adequate, accessible, or affordable education: This is the second reason of importance after poverty that leads to children either dropping out of school to work, or not enrolling in the first place. Universal primary education is every child’s right. However, when it is made impossible to achieve or its quality is deteriorating, then the child will simply not attend, as it is more beneficial for the
family to send him off to work. The opportunity cost of spending on an education that is inadequate and irrelevant to the child, compared to sending him off to work, earn money and learn a skill, is obvious when judging from the mentalities of the people that live in the lower end of the scale (UNICEF 1997c, 8). This brings us to the third reason why children are sent to work.

C) Family tradition, culture, occupation, and ignorance: The decision of sending the child to work is, almost in all cases, made by the family. In most cases the parents are themselves illiterate, and hence do not see the importance of education. In other cases, the children take after the father's occupation, especially if it is a skill or handicraft. On the other hand, there are situations where the children themselves want to work as it gives them a sense of pride and makes them feel that they have become adults. As will be seen later, the case of Egypt has an added aspect, which is the culture accepts for children to work and help their families, especially in times of hardship.

D) Enforcement of laws that protect children from work place hazards: In almost all countries, there is a set minimum age of employment. However, it has been witnessed in countries that have child labor that these laws are almost never enforced, and inspection is never efficient. That allows for the growing acceptance of the phenomenon of child labor, as it is done publicly, even though it is illegal (Bequele and Myers 1995, 99).

E) Migration and Overpopulation: Demography has an indirect relationship to the phenomenon of child labor, and it links with the issue of poverty (Korayem 1995, 79). However, migration from rural to urban in hope for a better life, has caused
many families to send their children to work when their hopes for a better life were devastated.

Children are in demand by employers. Another challenge to this problem is that the supply of child labor is abundant and demand from the employers is also present. Children's lack of authority and physical power, combined with the lack of protection afforded to them by law, means that they have the lowest status of all workers and are the most vulnerable. They do not know their rights, are not aware of the mere existence of those rights, and hence do not cause trouble (International Federation Terre Des Hommes 1998, 2). They listen to what they are being told, many times out of fear. They are less troublesome than adults, and take orders and do monotonous work without complaining. On top of all that, they are the cheapest form of labor.

All the above mentioned situations function in a vicious circle resulting in child labor. For example, poverty leads to illiteracy if school is unaffordable; an increase in illiteracy leads to yet more poverty; poverty is also the cause of vulnerability and the reason for migration, but so is ignorance that stems out of illiteracy and lack of information; etc. Hence, analyzing the above factors, one can conclude that if poverty and education problems were alleviated, the rest of the problems would not on their own lead to sending a child to work. In other words, the phenomenon would decrease rapidly. Even though child labor could remain intact, harmful occupations that children are currently in will cease to exist. If one would take a single case study of the few conducted of any working child who is working in a hazardous and deplorable condition, one would find that there are problems in this child's life that are taking place.
simultaneously (Farrag 1995, 239-249). He/she probably comes from a family that suffer severe poverty, can not afford an education, and his/her family is ignorant and illiterate and would prefer that this child learn a skill. If it is so practical for this given situation that a child is sent off to work, then why has child labor been viewed as a problem for the past decades and a concern for the future?

The Result of Child Labor

The results of child labor ripple down in two directions. The first direction is towards the child and his well being. The second is towards society and what the society has to suffer because of the existence of such phenomenon. However, given that the individual danger on the child is more quantifiable than that suffered by society, many tend to ignore the dangers suffered by society, as there is no proof that this is a direct result of child labor alone. Hence, there is an underlying assumption that the dangers afflicted on the individual will in turn affect the society.

The dangers of child labor on the individual child are various. First of all, because of long work hours, working children are denied their basic right to education. Children who work often do not have time to attend school, and if they do, then their concentration and participation in school is minimal and most often they end up dropping out (UNICEF 1997c, 9). Work as a priority starts taking over the importance of education. Universal primary education is a right granted to every child. This right is documented in most human rights conventions targeting children. Some of these are the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO conventions regarding child labor and various others that will be discussed in the following chapter. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “Everyone
has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory”. Education is the pillar for the development of any nation, and history has proven that an educated national and a civil society were the main driving forces for the development of any country (Korayem 1995, 75). When education is denied to the many who cannot afford it and the rest whom are working instead of attending school, the impact of that will be paid by the society as a whole. A child working is, therefore, a future denied to the child and to the community in which he strives to be a contributing member in.

Second, working children are denied their full health. “Working children suffer significant growth deficits compared with children in school: they grow up shorter and lighter and their body and size continue to be smaller even in adulthood (ILO 1996b, 3). The majority of working children are exposed to serious chemical and biological hazards in their work places. Children working at leather tanneries, mining, asbestos, etc. are all under such threats. Many experience serious illnesses and injuries, and the majority suffer from anemia and lack of hygiene. Also, some are exposed to fatal chemicals such as asbestos, which increase the risk of lung cancer at a young age. These health hazards are just to mention a few of the actual hazards of the situation. Working children also suffer from malnutrition and lack of rest. In addition, their height and weights are less than cohort averages (Azer 1986, 21). To add to the situation, it has been observed through the various researches conducted, these children are rarely taken for health check-ups, and wounds are almost always ignored.

Third, a working child is denied his childhood and deprived of normal psychological development. His innocence is dissipated, and leisure has no part in his
life. In addition his dignity, self worth, and moral development are hampered. Hence, it is safe to rightfully assume that the psychological upbringing of the working child is unlike and less healthy than that of a child who led a normal life attending school and experiencing a proper childhood.

Fourth, many working children are given tasks that are monotonous in nature, like cutting off plastic or collecting nails, and so they are not learning a skill. The same goes for the "nimble fingers" argument. This argument claims that a child can sometimes perform tasks that an adult is incapable of doing because of the smaller size of his hands, as in the rug weaving profession. However, the child can only work in this profession up to a certain age at which he can no more do it because his hands have grown in size. The result is that he never really learned a skill. Hence, they grow up as useless adults, who never attended school, or learned a skill. The worst part is that the society contributed fully to this child's upbringing at a time when this child could not make his own decisions.

Fifth and most importantly, is the treatment given to the child at his/her workplace, which in many cases defies all principles of human rights. Verbal and physical abuse is a norm for a working child. In the worst cases, child domestic workers are under the threat of sexual abuse as well. These abuses are among the most serious and frightening hazards facing children at work. "It is almost inevitable that children growing up in such an environment will be permanently damaged both psychologically and emotionally" (ILO 1996b, 14).

"Important dimensions of child development that can be imperiled over the long term by child labor abuses are:
- Physical development, including overall health, coordination, strength, vision, hearing, etc. needed to survive and contribute to adulthood;
- Cognitive development, including literacy, numeracy, basic cultural knowledge, vocational skills, and other knowledge required to live a reasonably successful life;
- Emotional development, including adequate self esteem, family attachment, feelings of love and acceptance, etc. necessary to establish and maintain family ties as an adult;
- Social and moral development, including a sense of group identity, ability to cooperate with others, distinction of right from wrong, respect for laws, respect for the property and person of others, and other capacities needed to live successfully within a social context “(Bequele and Myers 1995, 6-7).

The child labor phenomenon is, however, not only harmful to the child, but it is also an ill to society as mentioned beforehand. This waste of valuable human potential is a continuous tragedy for all concerned, and specifically the communities. Moreover, in most cases, a working child replaces an unemployed adult whom is in need of a job, and is more able to deal with strenuous workloads than a child, whether male or female.

Part of the problem is that the people who are involved in child labor, be it the families, the children, or the employers, cannot see the essence of the problem. A working child is a normal situation that is a given and not an exception. Those people do not view child labor as a problem and defend it by merely stating that a child at work, learning a skill, is better than a child on the street. The employer may treat them bad with the excuse that they are being taught manhood. On the other hand, the children get a source of pride that they are working, for them work translates having turned into adulthood and having responsibilities like their parents.

The argument that claims that child labor can be beneficial given the socio-economic situation of these people is surprisingly a legitimate argument, and is the biggest problem when addressing child labor. Families of many children cannot afford to
send them to school, and cannot afford to provide all the basic needs of the household, namely food and drink, and many times shelter. A child then becomes a major source of income, hence children take pride in becoming the breadwinners for their families. Therefore, before attacking the problem, and before forcing its elimination, one must address the latter situation. The fact that there are no alternatives for these families weakens the argument that children and the societies they are living in are in danger. Danger will be greater for the families and the children's direct and immediate welfare if those children leave their jobs. These aspects will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter four, and prerequisites to solving the situation will be presented.

However, in all cases, given what has been discussed so far, one can hardly dismiss the seriousness of the child labor problem, especially on the children. The factors affecting it are beyond the control of the children and their families, yet they impact negatively on them and hamper society's development. When interviewed, the children were not proud of who they are becoming, even though they are proud of what they are doing for their families. This in itself can form the essence of the problem at hand.

Below is a short synopsis on the point of view of children, just to provide a brief idea of how they think and how society has impacted on their future. So far various issues have been mentioned, and different points of views will be covered across the thesis, namely that of the government, the family and the society. These points of views all are afflicted towards the child and affect the child. Reading various case studies and conducting a few personal interviews, all in Egypt, with children working under their legal age, one comes through very interesting findings.
Most of the children, whom have been denied schooling, dream and aspire of
getting educated (Farrag 1995, 248). Some even ask their employers to teach them how
to read and write, and practice writing in their spare time. They like listening to other
kids talk about their school experience, since they are unable to take a part of it.
However, they are accepting of the situation that they are in and most are pleased to be
able to help their families. Most boys like the fact that they are actually learning a skill
and earning money in a legitimate way, rather than stealing. It does indeed gives them a
sense of responsibility and adulthood. Most of these children are proud of whom they are
and know the value of the compromise they are doing. Being mistreated by their
employers are the worst moments for these children. However they give in to the fact
and believe that this is the normal nature of their situation.

One child was proud that he is able to give his family a hand, however, he would
go to sleep every night reflecting on what his friends in the street say about school, and
how it would be like for him (Farrag 1995, 245). Another girl, who works as a domestic
servant, teaches herself writing by copying sentences from magazines in hope to learn
how to write.

These aspirations and dreams should not be the case, since education is the right
of those children. Even though three of the children interviewed were happy to leave
school, since they hated it and preferred work to it. On the other hand, others want an
education hoping to improve their life. It is only fair that these children should have
alternatives. Only then, will the problems of child labor subside. Those who want an
education should have it, and others who want to work should have an option to study
while working.
Worsening the situation is that all these children do not know that they have rights granted to them by the legal system. When questioned about some of the legal rights and whether or not their employer provides them with it, their faces had question marks signifying their non-comprehension of the question. Even if there did exists laws, then they are only on paper as laws will not help them, since even their parents will not utilize them in fear of the child losing the job.

Given all the circumstances, it is safe to assume that some of these children may grow up with a lot of hatred towards society, and envy towards those who lead a better life. This hatred and envy could possibly reflect in uncivil actions and attitudes that manifest during adulthood. This is one of the results of the child labor situation, a situation that was in turn the direct result of poverty.

Needless to say, existing phenomena such as child labor carry with them many ills for both the individual and the society. For example, illiteracy increases with the increase of child labor. Hence, the whole idea of civil society and a developed nation is hampered. And given the complexity of the problem, action against child labor is not of a simple nature, since the solution is to cure the root causes simultaneously. More importantly, "action against child labor should not be taken as a technocratic or bureaucratic exercise. Childhood touches on the livelihood and survival of many millions of families and communities as well as the comfort and prosperity of others. It inspires conflicting feelings and reactions and these are best resolved if regulatory action is complemented by dialogue, education, and information-sharing among all concerned" (ILO 1996b, 103).
Egypt is one of the developing countries where child labor is practiced in various industries, hazardous and non-hazardous. Children also constitute a large part of the informal economy. Even though it is against the country’s policy, child labor continues to exist. Poverty is one of the main drives behind this phenomenon. However, given the institutional weaknesses at play, poverty is not the sole reason. The following chapters will present a thorough analysis of the child labor situation in Egypt with the previous chapters forming the background material and setting the stream of thought on the subject, its causes, its results, and its overall dimensions.
CHAPTER 4

THE FACTS ON CHILD LABOR IN EGYPT

This chapter will present the facts on the situation of child labor in Egypt. On one hand, it will present the legal instruments and the law that governs and regulates child work and education. Child labor and education are interrelated, hence facts regarding both issues supplement one another.

On the other hand, it will present available statistics on the labor market in general, the situation of poverty existing in Egypt, child participation in the market and reasons for their participation, and child participation in the educational system and reasons for their lack of participation. Ironically, the legal aspect is totally undermined with the existence of the problem with the inaccuracy of some of the numbers and statistics. In all cases, these facts that will be mentioned will provide the empirical foundation on which this thesis will analyze and capitalize on the dimensions of child labor in Egypt and the extent that it constitutes a problem in society.

The Legal Framework on Child Labor in Egypt

The Government of Egypt has various legal efforts in the field of child labor, dating back to 1909 when tuberculosis spread among children in the cotton ginning industry, and a law was passed to ban the work of children in this industry. In 1948, Law 48 was passed which forbade the work of children under age 12 to work in all industrial sectors. Later in 1959, Law 91 included stipulations about employing children under the age of 15 and the nature of their work (Koura and Hamed, 125).

The Labor Law of 1981, No. 137 set the minimum age at 12 for entering into employment, and 15 years for working in factories. However, the Child Act in 1996,
Law No. 12 amended the above and set the minimum age at 14 for entry into employment to be able to allow for the completion of basic education. However, children, specifically school dropouts, are admitted to vocational training at age 12. For hazardous occupations, the lowest age limit is 17 years old (Farah 1997a, 5). Decrees issued by the Ministry of Manpower and Migration prohibit the employment of children between 14-17 in specific occupations. (Table 1 categorizes employment by minimum age of admittance). It is noteworthy to mention that the agricultural sector is not covered in these laws. This shortcoming will be discussed in the following chapter.

Table 1. Minimum ages for admittance to employment by occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Prohibitions in Egypt of Environment and Specific Agents or Products</th>
<th>Minimum Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thermal Stress (heat and/or cold)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol production and or sale</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals, general provisions for exposure to</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compressed air/gas</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explosives</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead, zinc metallurgy, white lead, lead in pain</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tar, asphalt, bitumen</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abattoirs and meat rendering</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal and or glass manufacture</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment (night clubs, bars, casinos, circuses, gambling halls)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery in motion (operation, cleaning, repairs, etc.)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining, queries, underground work</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil prospecting, work with petroleum</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanneries</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile industry (specific tasks)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, operating vehicles</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weights and loads</td>
<td>14-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welding and smelting of metals, metal working</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regulating Child Labor

It is important to mention that child work is also regulated by Egyptian legislation under the Labor Law, Act No. 137 of 1981. Working children under 17 years old, by law, are protected from working long hours. Employers are not allowed to work them beyond six hours a day (not more than 4 consecutive) with a one-hour lunch break. Moreover, children should not be performing their work or employed between 7 p.m. to 6 am. The violation of these regulations, and those of the age limit limitations, is a crime punishable by the payment of a LE 20 fine per violation (Azer 1986, 7).

In addition to the above, each employer is obliged to send every employed child to a medical check-up annually, and to keep records of such check-ups. Moreover, each child should be given one glass of milk daily amounting to 200ml.

There are also legal instruments for inspection provided by the Egyptian law. All employers must keep records of all the young workers employed in their establishment. “In Egypt, employers must (a) notify the competent authority of the name of each young person employed; and (b) display at the entrance of the establishment a list of young persons employed and their occupation” and (c) information concerning the working conditions of the young workers (ILO 1996b, 82).

However, most of these laws are not being enforced nor is a majority aware of their existence. Even the punishment, in case of violation, is not applied. In addition, people are unaware of the regulations that the laws have put, hence they are not practiced. Minimum ages are known however, but employers seem to find ways around them and around labor inspectors. This issue will be discussed more extensively in chapter four under the legal institution.
Laws Governing Education

As part of the Child Act, compulsory education is set at 14 years of age. Basic compulsory education is provided to the child for the first eight years, starting at the age of six, of which 5 years are primary and three are preparatory. A further three years to graduation from school is not compulsory. Public education at all levels is guaranteed free to all citizens by the Egyptian constitution. However, recently, minimal annual fees have been imposed by the government for education, conflicting with the rights granted to those children by the constitution.

Table 2 summarizes the legal system in Egypt regarding child labor, education and minimum age stipulations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal system</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age limit for compulsory education</td>
<td>6-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum age for admittance to training</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum age for employment</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum age for hazardous work</td>
<td>15-17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child Labor in Egypt: Facts & Figures

This section will explain the magnitude of the child labor problem of Egypt. In spite of all the above-mentioned legal instruments governing and regulating the work of children, the phenomena is widespread and on the increase. Provided in this section are published statistics on working children and school enrollment levels.

The sole purpose of these statistics is to provide empirical evidence to support the analysis of this thesis. These statistics represent only a rough guide to the magnitude of
the problem, as there are questions as to their accuracy. The listed figures are at disparity and do not flow logically together. The result of this disparity can be traced back to several reasons. Data collection techniques are not developed enough. In addition, different bodies define child labor differently. Some define child labor as any form of child work, while others define child labor as the children employed in hazardous industries only, i.e. illegal employment. Hence each body is counting something different and basing their analysis accordingly. Moreover, the nature of child labor makes it very difficult to quantify accurately given that working children are dispersed across many industries and many of them are invisible. More will be presented on the shortcomings of data gathering, data analysis, and information availability in the following chapter, however it is important at this point to highlight the fact that some of the data provided might be inaccurate.

In addition, the data offered here excludes three important sectors of the child laborers, namely, those in the informal economies, the street children, and those in the agricultural sector. They also exclude the children who have not been registered at birth. In any case, the official statistics give one a starting point to prove the wide existence of the phenomena and help sketch a picture of the reality, with the background knowledge that many have been excluded from the count.

Statistical information that is provided in this section is the following:

1. A brief synopsis of the poverty situation in Egypt
2. An overview of the labor market in terms of economic activities
3. How children under the age of 15 are distributed across the labor market
4. Reasons for working
5. Education statistics: enrollment, non-enrollment, drop-outs, and reasons for dropping out

There are two important aspects to mention before revealing the facts on working children and enrollment in education: poverty and the general division of the labor market.

The Poverty Situation

On the poverty issue, the majority of the population is categorized as being ‘poor’. Poverty is the number one factor behind the phenomenon of child labor. If poverty did not exist, child labor would take a different form all together, and may not be so complicated to work around. A child’s monthly income ranges on average between 23-30% of the family’s total income (Nasser 1995, 6). Hence, their contribution translates into the family’s survival.

According to the Egypt Human Development Report, 1996, the poverty map revealed that around 13.7 million Egyptian live below the poverty line, which is set at LE 814 (lower expenditure poverty line), and at least 7.7 million are ultra poor (spending below LE 594 on food). In addition at least one quarter of the population is moderately poor, spending between LE 814 and less than LE 1098.

The following table signifies the poverty situation of urban, rural, and total Egypt as calculated from the poverty lines of 1995/96. The poverty prevalence is slightly higher in rural areas vs. urban areas.

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3 The poverty line is set according to three criterion: (a) consumption expenditure rather than disposable income is the most reliable indicator of a household’s standard of living; (b) the individual is preferably used as a measure of welfare, rather than the household, and (c) the best indicator’s of a household’s standard of living is household consumption expenditure per capita. (EHDR, 1996)
Table 3. Poverty Groups 1995/96 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Egypt</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor, of which:</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultra poor</td>
<td>(7.4)</td>
<td>(7.1)</td>
<td>(7.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately poor</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-poor</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Another indicator of poverty is the level of income. “According to the income data collected from the Poverty Assessment Survey, nearly one quarter of the poor subsisted on an annual income less than LE 2000 per household” (Institute of National Planning 1996, 26). Taking the size of the household in consideration, this means that some people live on less than one Egyptian pound per day for subsistence. The other three-quarters of the poor live on LE 2-3 per capita per day, depending on their income bracket ranging from LE 2000-6000. Table 4 presents the income distribution figures.

Table 4. Distribution of poor households by income levels 1995/96 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income class (LE)</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Egypt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2000</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 – 4000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4000 – 6000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6000 &amp; over</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As can be seen from the above data, the poor in Egypt live on subsistence levels. Their basic needs are sometimes unattainable. This situation consequently leads to prioritizing what the family will do with the money. Sending their children to school is
not the first option, and is not as viable as sending him to work, since the money is desperately needed.

The number of vulnerable families in Egypt is also quite high. “According to research on poverty in Egypt based on the estimation of income in 1990-91, the number of vulnerable families totaled 6,620,900 on the national level, representing 57.2% of the total number of families; of which 2,667,600 in urban areas, representing 49%, and 3,953,300 families in rural areas, or 64.5%” (Abdullah 1995, 32).

According to the Cairo Center for Development Studies, “nearly 70% of poor families send at least one child out to work” (Farah 1997b, 2). Given the above figures on vulnerable families, one can conclude that approximately 4,500,000 children work. However, Egyptian statistics, or published data, claim that there are 1.4 million children working. According to the Institute of National Planning 1996, there were 2,361,800 children not enrolled in basic or secondary school in 1994, with 1.7 million children above the age of 10. If the official published number is subtracted from the total of children not enrolled in school, the result would leave almost one million children whom are not registered as laborers or as students, which proves the inaccuracy of all statistics in relation to this field.

The Labor Division in the Market

The final point that should be mentioned before presenting the situation of the working child, is the labor market in Egypt. “Agriculture remains the main economic activity nationwide and the principle occupation of working children” (Farah 1997b, 1). Agriculture in general predominates over other industries. (See Tables 5 & 6)
Table 5. Employment by sector of economic activity, 1976 and 1986 (total and percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>1986</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Fishing, Hunting</td>
<td>4,881,009</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>4,566,945</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>33,831</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>52,769</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>1,369,482</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>1,475,608</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>61,761</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>91,077</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>425,084</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>817,644</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade, Hotel Restaurants</td>
<td>861,286</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>852,124</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation,</td>
<td>482,253</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>640,827</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication, Storage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>88,392</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>224,061</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social services</td>
<td>1,868,289</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2,614,477</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>186,438</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>811,089</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,257,825</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12,146,621</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>186,438</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>811,089</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10,257,825</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12,146,621</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The following table presents the division of the working children by occupation.

Agriculture seems to be the main occupation with a total of 77% of working children. It seems the dominant industry in rural areas with 86.6% of the children working in the fields. The production industry seems to rule in the urban areas with 46.3% of the working children are involved in this industry.

Table 6. Distribution in Percentage of Working Children by Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children in the Labor Market

Having established the general background on poverty, statistics available on the existence of child labor will be presented followed by information on child involvement with education. As mentioned before, these three factors – poverty, education, and child labor - are closely related, forming a triangular relationship with each one affecting the other.

Given all the different statistics on child labor and how inaccurate and misleading they may be, the one number most widely used is the one published by CAPMAS, stating that 1.4 million children work, constituting almost 11% of all children, and 10% of the labor force (Table 7). The table below gives a brief summary of the labor situation in 1984, with the total number of workers under the age of 15, and the total number of workers above the age of six, to derive at the those ages 6-15 and what percentage they constitute. Males predominate over females in general, however, the percentage of females working under the age of 15 is relatively higher than the male percentage. This means that the incidence of female child labor amongst the female labor market is relatively higher than the male when compared to the total labor market.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>(1) No. of workers under 15 years (in hundreds)</th>
<th>(2) Total no. of workers over 6 years (in hundreds)</th>
<th>% of (1)/(2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2536</td>
<td>50,177</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1487</td>
<td>13,203</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4023</td>
<td>63,380</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>6577</td>
<td>63,453</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4126</td>
<td>16,780</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10,703</td>
<td>80,233</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9113</td>
<td>113,630</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5613</td>
<td>39,983</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>14,726</td>
<td>143,613</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


With regards to the division of labor between the males and females ages 6-15, males do dominate in statistics. Table 8, although it is outdated, illustrates the labor market of this age bracket across twenty-six years, which proves that more male children participate than do females. However, given that this fact is true to this day, school enrollment figures totally contradict such a presumption. According to the Egypt Demographic and Health Report, published by the National Population Council in 1996, 80% of females ages 6-15 are enrolled at school as opposed to 87% males in the same age group (totals of rural and urban). Therefore, another important dimension of child labor is that most females are not registered as part of the labor force. This is because most females work in homes, either their own or they work as domestic servants in other homes, and are invisible in such counts.

Table 8. Labor force participation rates of ages 6-19, 1960-1986 in percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-14</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A more detailed picture was provided by CAPMAS in 1988, which was a result of a Labor Force Sample Survey. It revealed that child labor incidence had actually decreased to being 7.6% of the total labor force (1,309,000 out of 17,268,000), and 12% of the total of the country’s children ages 6-14. (See Table 9) On the other hand, the Egypt Demographic and Health Report, published by the National Population Council in 1992, stated that 20.3% of this age bracket, 6-14, are part of the work force. Such disparities make it difficult to access the situation of working children, given that the numbers, hence the analysis, are extremely inaccurate.

Table 9 also reveals that still more males than females are part of the labor force, which still contradicts with the school enrollment figures. Such inaccuracy is further exaggerated given that even the enrollment figures are themselves overestimated.

| Table 9. Characteristics of Labor Force under the Age of 15 (%-age distribution in 1988) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Age                              | Urban | Rural | Total          |
| 6-11 years                       | 26.7  | 38.9  | 25.1           |
| 12-14 years                      | 73.3  | 61.1  | 74.9           |
| Gender                           |       |       |               |
| Male                             | 69.5  | 52.1  | 53.8           |
| Female                           | 30.5  | 47.9  | 46.2           |
| Education                        |       |       |               |
| Under 10 years (unclassified)    | 12.2  | 19.7  | 18.4           |
| Illiterate                       | 53.4  | 49.5  | 49.7           |
| Read and Write                   | 20.6  | 18.3  | 19.3           |
| Below half educated              | 13.8  | 12.5  | 12.5           |
| Economic Activity                |       |       |               |
| Agriculture                      | 26.3  | 86.5  | 77.8           |
| Industry                         | 25.3  | 6.2   | 8.9            |
| Construction                     | 2.6   | 1.4   | 1.6            |
| Commerce                         | 23.2  | 4.2   | 7              |
| Services                         | 22.6  | 1.7   | 4.7            |
Table 9 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>22.1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vendors</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Workers</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Workers</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Workers</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number</strong></td>
<td>189,000</td>
<td>1,120,000</td>
<td>1,309,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Reasons Children Work

Children work for various reasons. According to a study conducted by the NCSCR (National Center for Social and Criminological Research) in 1991, males and females have stated different reasons for working. However, contributing to the family seems to be equally important for both genders. Table 10 summarizes the result of the study conducted by NCSCR in 1991:

Table 10. Reasons for Working by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Males %</th>
<th>Females %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational failure</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn a profession</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to family income</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earn own money</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table highlights a very important aspect on the impact of gender difference in the child labor market. As economy seems to be a main drive for both groups, it seems to the main factor for the female child laborer. In other words, if the female and her family do not need the money, most female laborers would not exist. On the other hand, male child laborers seek the labor market for other reasons that rank
higher than the need for money, which is educational failure or the belief that learning a profession is more useful (hence preferred than education).

It is very important to know the reasons why children work, otherwise all efforts to combat child labor will fail, since these efforts will not be targeted.

*Educational Involvement of Children*

The overall picture of education in Egypt on a qualitative level proves that the educational sector is faced with many problems:

- Only 30% of pupils in primary school attend full school days
- About 48% of primary schools have two shifts
- Classes have on average 45 pupils with some urban schools reaching 100 pupils per class
- Dropout and repetition rates are estimated to be 25%-35%
- Existing school buildings are insufficient with an estimated shortage of 5,911 classrooms. They are also in very bad condition. According to the Human Development Report of 1996, 40% of the school buildings are categorized as unfit.
- Teachers are not qualified enough, they are poorly trained and their numbers fall short of the required number for primary education by at least 5,000 teachers overall.
- Acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills is low, particularly in arithmetic. More importantly, competency in basic literary skills is estimated to have been declining since the late 1980’s.
- Teachers, in the majority of classrooms, rely on role and teacher centered methods.

(Zaalook 1995, 10 – except with mention of the EHDR)

As many as 37% of Egyptian children do not complete their basic education. The majority of these children are probably girls from the poorest groups in Egyptian society (Grimsrud and Stokke 1997, 29). The numbers of dropouts and failures have increased from 19.4% in 1986 to 22.5% in 1987 (Abdullah 1995, 50). The following table, Table 11, explains such waste of valuable human resources at the primary level of education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Proportions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failures</td>
<td>670,098</td>
<td>10.9% of total children enrolled (6,155,100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-outs</td>
<td>87,910</td>
<td>1.4% of total children enrolled (6,155,100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-enrollment</td>
<td>17,062</td>
<td>1.2% of total children age 6 (1,370,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>775,670</td>
<td>12.6% of the supposedly enrolled (6,155,100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Various reasons lead to non-enrollment or dropping out. Among the two most important reasons are poverty and family disinterest. The latter reason could also be a result of poor economic situation. The following two tables (12 &13), a result of surveys carried out in three urban governorates roughly present the reasons.

Family disinterest has higher rates than does poverty, specifically paternal disinterest. However it is important to bare in mind that disinterest and poverty are interrelated and there may be many incidents of double count. And even though, the exact year of these surveys is not provided, the tables provide a legitimate guideline for analysis.
Table 12. Children’s Motives for not enrolling in Primary Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motives</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Disinterest</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternal disinterest</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>Approx. 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child assisting family economically</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child refusing to enroll</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting family in household (girls)</td>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As obvious from the above table, family disinterest does seem to be the main reason behind the children’s non-enrollment. This is a result of three reasons, the parents are either illiterates, or they can not afford to send their children to school, or they do not believe in the educational system and prefer to teach their children a skill. Even though poverty is mentioned third on the above list, poverty constitutes the core of family or paternal disinterest, hence poverty is not merely at 25%, but rather at a much higher leverage. However, poverty and educational failure - whether it is the students’ failure or the teachers’ poor conduct - both present almost equal proportions. Hence, one can presume that a failure in the educational system is what leads to dropout.

Table 13. Reasons for dropping out as given by Dropouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Dropping Out</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examination Failure and Poor learning</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike of school and training</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor economic situation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor conduct of teachers</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aiding family economic situation</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to work</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following tables provide an outlook on the educational scene as a whole and on the literacy levels. Apparently, according to Table 14, enrollment rates have actually risen from 1970 to 1990 by almost the double for primary education. However, in comparing primary school enrollment to secondary, one can conclude that many students dropout after primary school. Again, one can conclude that the reason could be the failure of the educational system to prove its relevancy in these students’ lives.

Table 14. Gross Enrollment Rates by different educational Levels, 1950-1990, in %-age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary: 6-11 years</th>
<th>Preparatory/secondary: 12-17 years</th>
<th>Intermediate/University: 18-21 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989/90</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Accordingly, with the increasing rate of school enrollment, the published facts on illiteracy seem to be decreasing. Illustrated in the table below, the illiteracy rate has been declining from 56.5% in 1976 to 50% in 1986.

Table 15. Distribution of Population (10 years and above) by educational level, in % -age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>1986</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read and write</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Certificate</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or high education</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the rate of illiteracy has increased to 61.4% in 1996, 48.5% are females (Institute of National Planning 1996, 132). This indicates that school enrollment is actually decreasing, contrary to Table 14. One possibility for this contradiction of numbers is that the quality of education may not qualify those children for being literate (more on this will be discussed in the following chapter). Another possibility is the inaccuracy of the published data. The number of illiterates in the early nineties, according to available data of another source has reached 3.2 million children in the age group of 6-15, representing 25% of that age group (Abdullah 1995, 53). Whatever the actual number is, the fact remains that many children are not at school, hence they are either working or on the street.

Conclusion

Apparently, the phenomenon of child labor is increasing. The main reasons are poverty and non-continuation of education, with both reasons being themselves interrelated. This increase leads to the future of millions of children to be devastated. First, they go back to illiteracy. Second, they are faced by exploitation in the labor market.

The presented facts in this chapter point out the main weaknesses inherent in the Egyptian society to set the grounds for the existence of the child labor phenomenon. First of all, laws are being marginalized and not implemented. Second of all, many people are suffering from severe poverty, and are not able to afford their basic needs. Third of all, education and the importance attached to earning it seem to be deteriorating and schools are unable to attract the children and their families, making child labor being best of the two options. Fourth of all, the family interests and beliefs seem to also contribute to this
phenomenon, by prioritizing work over school. Fifth of all, gender differences affect the reasons why children work, being girls work mostly for money, and boys work to learn a skill. Sixth of all, one of the main challenges in addressing the problem of child labor is the inaccuracy of the data available. The following chapter will present thoroughly all of these weaknesses and how the various institutional failures and weak constituencies in Egyptian society have actually paved the way for this practice to be widespread.
CHAPTER 5
ISSUES IMPACTING CHILD LABOR IN EGYPT

Various issues have been explained so far on the causes of child labor. Most literature written on the subject of child labor introduces the issue of poverty at the forefront. However, poverty is a given situation that exists everywhere in the world which can not be eradicated overnight. “If the existence of child labor can be explained by the economy of the household only, then child labor becomes a measure of the general level of poverty with poverty eradication the only remedy” (Grimsrud and Stokke 1997, 37). It is true that poor households are over-represented in households with the occurrence of child labor, and that poverty is the strongest drive to child labor. However, poverty could be marginalized as a cause of child labor if institutional capabilities were stronger and policies were more targeted.

The aim of this chapter is not to simply list the causes and prove their impact, as this has already been established. ‘Poverty leads to child labor’ is not a new dimension to this thesis, even though it is the main dimension to this issue. However, the aim of this thesis is to present the root causes that have impacted the problem further, with poverty as the underlying factor. The problem of child labor, is therefore, not impossible to tackle within the context of poverty. Although not all child labor will be eliminated, the incentive to send children to hazardous work can be diminished and alternatives could be provided to those who work as to provide other opportunities for these children when they grow up.
This chapter will aim to scratch the surface of the issue and arrive at the essence of the problem, i.e. trace back the failure of given institutions and how these failures have led to an exacerbation of the problem. These failures are grouped in two categories: institutional failures and policy failures. The former includes all forms of institutions, the formal such as governmental, and the informal social institutions at the family level. The latter will discuss the national policy failures and the impact on the given development situation. Finally, there are some causes that are simply a result of the natural setting and situation of the country, and these will be mentioned as the limitations, since the direct solution is not within the power of institutions.

Institutional Failures

An institutional failure in the context of this chapter has a two-fold meaning. First of all, it implies that a specific institution has failed to deliver what was expected and what it had promised, and hence this failure impacted negatively on a wider scope, one beyond this institution. The second meaning connotes that a specific theory or culture within this institution fails to provide a constructive approach towards society. Rather, it is operating in such a way as to exacerbate the situation. The five institutions that are the main topic of discussion are the educational system, the legal system, the institutional capabilities regarding the data gathering process, the society regarding its perception on the role of the child, and the family unit.

The Educational Institution

The educational system is the major human development institution in any country. “Education should be extended to reach all class categories, but there are obstacles in the way of this objective, some relating to poverty and an unequal
distribution of wealth, and others related to the education system itself” (Abdullah 1995, 38). The relationship between education and child labour is complex and action regarding this in a problem situation is not simple, because education can either reduce the incidence of child labour, or actually contribute to its increase, exacerbating the situation.

At the beginning of this thesis, it was mentioned that child labour, poverty, and education form a triangular relationship, each affecting the other. They work together in a vicious circle, i.e. education is often compromised because of poverty which results in children working; illiterate children, being marginalized by not getting an education, will actually end up poorer in the future, and the cycle repeats itself. The proposition here is that poverty leads to children being out of the educational institution by financial need for money. However, as was apparent in statistics financial burden was not the only reason for non-enrollment or dropping out. Some of the other factors were educational failure, family disinterest, or the child’s disinterest in continuing education. In addition, “the NCSCR study on child labor in 1991 found that 80% of working children had enrolled in school before dropping out” (Azer 1998, 8). This proves there are other reasons that are predominant in making these children leave school and turn to work. One reason is poverty, in this situation the inability to afford the costs of education. However, another reason lies in the actual educational system and its failure in attracting children to become part of it.

A strong educational institution could be the way to penetrate the child labor-poverty cycle and decrease the incidence of child labour (UNICEF 1997c, 3). The main problem facing Egypt today, and the main cause behind the child labor phenomenon is
the failure of the educational institution to deliver what it has promised and what is expected of it. Even though it is not a proven fact that a competent education system will eradicate child labor, at least such an might discourage child labor, and will provide an alternative to the many who drop out because they do not believe in the importance of what they are getting (this will be made clearer after the experience of the State of Kerala will be presented). Even if education does not discourage child labor, a strong educational system will help alleviate the worst effects of this labor. It will be a protective method against the abuse of these children, as education is the base for strong constituencies in a given society.

The role of a school in any society is to raise mentally healthy children who read, write, are analytical, creative, intellectual, etc. These individuals are taught how to be beneficial members of society and their degree of intellect helps in the development cycle and in sustaining it. Schools should eliminate illiteracy and the retardation of society. If the schools fail to do so, then a whole generation is likely to fail in being competent members of society. “The development of intellectual skills is the most substantial investment that modern societies make in their young, and to deny this investment to children by virtue of them having to work is to marginalize them for life and to impoverish the future of the country” (ILO 1996b, 119). The importance of education, for both the individual and the society, should never be undermined, and this is the reason that education, especially universal primary education, has been stressed in almost every single convention, international treaty and national constitutions.

It is at this point worth arguing that if education is not a priority to the government then this is reflected on the upbringing of the whole society, as it is education
that builds the people, in turn people build the nation. "The children who are not in school constitute a continuous inflow of illiteracy on one hand, and a source of many social problems such as delinquency, street children, and child labor on the other" (Grimsurd and Stokke 1997, 29). Official reports in Egypt have called attention to the seriousness of school dropouts. The Shura Council estimated that 150,000 children annually drop out of school and return to illiteracy (Azer 1998, 7).

Three aspects contribute to the success or failure of this institution: government commitment and spending on education, the success of the actual education system in what it delivers, and finally people's participation and their trust in such education.

The Egyptian public education system has many deficiencies and falls short in meeting what it is meant to deliver. Therefore it is wrong to assume that poverty is the main reason behind not sending those children to school. The above three aspects will be investigated thoroughly to present this argument, and a case study on the State of Kerala will be presented to further support that poverty is not always a deterrent to education.

A) Government's Lack of Commitment

As mentioned beforehand, compulsory education laws do exist in the Egyptian constitution. However, these laws become meaningless if adequate schools are not available or if they are inaccessible to the poor because of cost and other practical difficulties. Public schools are the most important schools in Egypt given that 85.6% of enrolled students are in government schools, with the rest being equally divided between private schools and Al Azhar schools (Institute of national Planning 1996, 132). However, public schools are in bad shape. "The limited educational infrastructure is unable to provide even rudimentary education to all children. The children of the poor
are disproportionately excluded or discouraged, and flow into the labor market” (Boyd and Myer 1995, 3). This could be due to either financial difficulties or disinterest in education. The government’s role is to provide a strong educational network with all necessary infrastructures. Education must be available to every citizen.

According to the Institute of National Planning (1996), government spending on education as a percent of the GDP was 5.3% in 1994 (14.7% of total public expenditure). Half of this amount is spent on pre-university education (52%), and the rest is spent on higher education (48%). Besides the fact that the total education expenditure is not sufficient given that 40% of the population are under the age of 15 years old, the actual public spending between school education and university education is allocated inefficiently. Primary school is of utmost importance when compared at all levels, and hence spending should be concentrated in a regressive manner, i.e. more on primary levels and very little at the university level. Instead of imposing fees on public school students, these should be lifted and imposed on university students. A society can better afford university dropouts, than primary school dropouts.

It has been proved in the history of Egypt that when political commitment to educate the people exist, school enrollment levels rise. This was witnessed after the 1952 Revolution and the Five-Year Plan (1960-65), when more money was allocated on education and school infrastructure. Public education was granted free to every Egyptian citizen. The result was the “number of students having passed their primary certificate in Egypt increased from 42.5% in 1951/52 to 90% in urban areas and 67.75% in rural areas in 1963/64” (Abdullah 1995, 40). Nowadays the educational expenditure amounts to
14.7% of the total public expenditure, 5.35% of the GDP, which is insufficient given the growing number of students (Institute of National Planning 1996, 133).

Below is a table (Table 16) that shows government spending on education from the 1920's up to date. In 1959-60, 48% of the spending was allocated for the primary stage of education, proving the importance of this stage of education (Boktor 1963, 6). However, as apparent spending has gone down dramatically in the 70's, since school infrastructure has already been established. And even though spending has increased then, it was not enough in proportion to the population. The population kept on growing, yet spending maintained the same percentage of the GNP.

Table 16. Government Spending on Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Education Expenditure (LE)</th>
<th>% of GNP</th>
<th>% of total expenditure</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1925-26</td>
<td>2,300,000</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>13,813,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>25,000,000</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>21,747,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>42,000,000</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>25,051,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>58,000,000</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>145,030</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>33,330,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>208,910</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>918,679</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>42,289,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,877,850</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>48,503,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>3,737,000</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>56,312,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>5,839,000</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Ironically, the government spending on education is not increasing relative to the population, given that the population in Egypt has a broad base with a high dependency ratio. A large number of children under the age of 15 as compared to the overall population, according to CAPMAS, they total 40% of the Egyptian population (1995).
Hence, it is important to keep it in mind that in twenty years these 40% will be the future of the country and should be fully prepared and educated as to move the country forward.

Government commitment on stressing the importance of education and enforcing the law has also been proven weak in other aspects. There are several faults in the laws judging the education system. Some of these laws prove that complete political commitment is lacking in upgrading the schooling in Egypt. That lack of will and commitment causes the whole institution to fail. The following are the legal faults of the education system:

a) Dropouts are not admitted back to school if a whole year has passed since they left. If they want to re-enroll, they first have to go through a one year literacy program, and then pass a specific test before their re-admittance. However, this process requires a lot of time and the paper work is massive, and hence many families are reluctant and lack the determination in actually re-enrolling their children.

b) In some years, the school year in the rural areas was scheduled around the cotton harvest, since child labor is crucial in cotton picking. This fact on its own shows the acknowledgement and contribution of the system in encouraging such labor. Even though child work in the farms is important to these families, it will be later discovered in the following section that children working in agriculture are exempted from child labor laws. This provides a legitimate excuse for the families not to send their children to school, since laws in their areas do not constitute a strain. The result is an increased reluctance about sending children to get an education.
Law No. 68, Article 46, 1968 exempts obligatory schooling for children living in areas where no school is provided within their geographic proximity, (many areas in the desert and near the borders have no schools, plus many villages have schools that are very far away). And although Article 36 of the law stipulates penalties, they are not enforced. The fact that penalties are even imposed does not make sense since it is not the families’ faults that a school does not exist for their children.

Moreover, according to Thomas Kring, ILO Associate Labor Expert in Egypt, some of the incentives that used to be present in public schools, like meals are not done anymore. Even sports have been practiced less. This impacts on the child’s interest in the school. However, the schools are not to be blamed, since they are probably under financial constrains that limits their ability to perform and offer what they used to offer. This can be traced back to limited spending on school infrastructure and training of teachers.

All the above does not imply the education institution’s incapability to strengthen itself. Nor does it represent a weakness of the State’s potential in obtaining 100% enrollment of quality education that is affordable, accessible and relevant if the political and legal desire existed. “The proof is that the state is able to enforce military service on all youth arriving at the age of enlistment, even if they are illiterate” (Abdullah 1995, 47).

B) The Quality of Education

Besides being affordable and accessible, equally important, the education should be relevant. The measure of success of any educational system and its quality education would be decided upon through three variables of efficiency: the school, the teachers, and
the curriculum. If one of these variables fails to accomplish its designated role, the other two are affected, and hence the failure to deliver.

The picture of public schooling in Egypt is extremely appalling. As mentioned before, schools in Egypt suffer poor infrastructure, lack competent teachers, and do not keep the children interested in education. The Population Council in collaboration with the Social Research Center, the High Institute for Public Health, and the Department of Public Health, Assuit University, carried out a survey on Egyptian adolescents that revealed the following facts on the public schools.\(^4\)

First, the infrastructure and the available facilities are not up to standard, especially to the number of students enrolled in the schools. “One quarter of the respondents reported that the water supply is frequently cut and a similar proportion report unclear blackboards and bad lighting in class. Unclean toilets are reported by 40%, while more than one third report broken windows and crowding on desks. Broken desks are reported by 56%’’ (Population Council et. al 1999, 84). The schools serving the children of the poor lack the organization and competence that attracts the children or merits their participation or attendance. In addition, the overcrowding in a classroom does not provide for the best education. Fifty percent of the respondents are in low-density classes, leaving the other half in overcrowded classrooms. Ironically low-density classes are classes with almost 43 students, which is a lot of students in one classroom.

Second, teachers mistreat students, are themselves not interested since their pay is low, and their incidence of absence is very high. Only one third of the respondents had

\(^4\) The Population Council is a non-profit, non-governmental research organization that seeks to improve the well-being of the future generations. In an attempt to study the situation of Egyptian adolescents, this survey has been conducted on a sample of 9,000 adolescents across Egypt all ages 10-19.
positive responses on the interaction with teachers and the support they get from them. On the other hand, almost 68% reported that teachers always answered their questions in class (Population Council et. al 1999, 85).

Third of all, the teaching technique applied in school is not healthy in preparing the mentality of these children. The nature is that of memorization, and “repeat after me education”, which kill any analytical skills that this person should learn to develop.

Finally this survey revealed that only 47% of the correspondents have a positive attitude towards the school. This in turn reflects negatively on their scholastic achievements and their interest in continuing education decreases.

C) People’s Belief and Participation in the Educational System

This section analyzes the attitudes of the families and children towards the education system and their willingness to participate. Even though enrollment levels in the schools are as high as 92% in primary education, dropout rates are growing in number. “Taking into account the enrollment rates and dropout rates, it was estimated that during the scholastic year 1992/93, the percentage of children in the primary stage of basic education represented 77.5% of the total number of children in that age category. The parallel figure of children in preparatory stage represented 89.2% of the total number of children in that age category. Thus, the total percentage of children attending basic education was estimated at 81%” (Azer 1988, 7).

Boredom or discouragement with schools is one of the most frequent reasons given by children for dropping out (Report of the Interministerial Committee 1989, 14). As was referenced in Chapter 3, almost 30% of school dropouts in Egypt either dislike school or have failed their exams. Other reasons were that either school in unaffordable
or the family needed more income for survival. However, in almost all cases it was apparent that families do not feel the need to send their children to school.

More importantly, the obligations of families to send their children to school must be preceded by the obligations of the state to make school attendance possible, i.e. at economically and geographically accessible and credible schools. “A family’s decision to educate its children depends on the facilities available, such as the proximity of the school, free education, and a sufficient income to allow the family to do without the children’s employment. The decision also depends on the family’s awareness of the benefits to accrue from educating the children” (Abdullah 1995, 39). Accessibility and affordability of the schools are not always present. Basic education is granted for free by the Egyptian constitution, however minimal fees have recently been imposed. Even though the fees are minimal it still creates a lack of incentive and allows for further dismissal of the idea of education. Even before these fees were imposed, the cost of sending children to school was approximately LE 300 per year, on books, uniform, and transportation. That does not include the private lessons, which range according to the amount of lessons, the number of students in one lesson, and how many subjects require private lessons. Hence, non-involvement in education becomes due to the economic situation, rather than anything else. In this situation, the opportunity cost of sending children to school vs. sending them to work sets the priority. Not only are the family saving the cost of education, they are also adding to their income.

In addition, many of the people in Egypt have lost faith in the Egyptian public schooling system for various reasons. “If there is a commonly held view that education does not maintain high standards and is not applicable, this will affect children coming
from poor households whether their families find it worthwhile sending their children to school or not" (Grimsrud and Stokke 1997,28). If families believe and are aware of the eventual benefits of education, then they will opt for sending their children to school. This was proved after the 1952 Revolution when more families sent their children to schools after education had been granted free. The key was not only free education, but there was a guarantee of finding suitable and stable employment during the fifties and the sixties, and hence families were impelled to send their children to be educated in hope of an improved future.

Nowadays, education translates into a lost source of income that is badly needed. Therefore, if this education is not credible, the children will not be sent to school. In addition, given that the white collar job market is overcrowded and jobs are not readily guaranteed, the families will prefer to teach the children a skill rather than how to read and write (Azer 1998, 9). Certificates became worthless, whilst a skill is more likely to remain in demand. Given that most public schools lack the necessary resources to perform their duties, many children themselves have lost interest in participation.

In short, most of the working children under the legal age of employment are in the job market, at least partly, because of the failure of the educational system, and not only because they are poor. Firstly, as mentioned, they perceive the education as irrelevant or less relevant than work, and is unaffordable, so not getting it is actually not a loss. Secondly, many of those children hate the school, because a sense of belonging is nonexistent and corporal punishment by teachers is practiced normally. Third, there is a perception that child entry into the labor force is more valuable than education and that work is a form of apprenticeship. This view has become stronger now that many college
graduates are unemployed. The rate of unemployment in Egypt is at 11.3%, which is what has been published (Institute of National Planning 1996, 151). This has led to a growing perception that education did not benefit them, it actually backfired. All this is a result of the failure of the educational system itself, and not people’s ignorance. People lost faith on legitimate grounds, and political commitment is not present to revive people’s trust in education and its benefits.

It is very important for children to complete basic primary education. They can later join the job market and help their families when they turn 14 years old (the legal age to be employed). Hence the stress should be on the first years of education and government commitment should be concentrated on these years. Even if it is only primary education that this child will be receiving, it will develop his/her mentality, teaching him/her how to read and write. It will also help in informing the children of their legal rights and the protection granted to them in the labor market. On a national level, the literacy rates will increase tremendously, helping the country as a whole, given that the quality of education improves.

D) Education & Child Labor Experience of the State of Kerala

The State of Kerala is located in India. India has the highest incidence of child labor in the world after China. Estimates of how many are extremely inaccurate, ranging between 13.6 million to 100 million working children (Boyden and Myers 1995, 4). Many efforts to combat child labor in India have been government initiatives, combing child labor laws and associated interventions, with specific weight given to education. In 1986, the Indian government issued the Child Act, which was an ambitious program to eventually remove all children from hazardous work situations. And essential part of the
program was directed towards education. “Funds were made available to open nearly 500,000 new non-formal education centers throughout the country...These centers were to provide targeted education programmes to enable working children to study even though they continued working. Education in this case was conceived as a protective measure to guard against the worst effects of children’s work rather than a means to discourage it” (Boyden and Myers 1995, 6). Even though the Indian government fell short of reaching its goals, the belief that education is important in resolving child labor and the problems associated with it stems from the State of Kerala experience. Even though there is no data available to support the impact of education on child labor in Kerala, and even though children work despite their school attendance, education in Kerala has prevented the worst forms of child labor found elsewhere in India.

“The government of Kerala, long committed to providing a universally accessible education system, certainly did not wait for poverty to be eradicated before introducing educational measures. Despite being tenth among Indian States in per capita income, Kerala has consistently spent more on education and targeted more expenditure at primary education than other States in India. Whereas 36-38 percent of the budget in Kerala goes to education, the state average for India is only 25 percent...

Kerala is the one state in India that has experienced spectacular successes on the education front, in addition it would seem to have a comparatively low incidence of child labor. With a school retention rate through grade five of almost 100 percent of pupils entering grade one, Kerala has essentially achieved universal primary education. Moreover the State has twice the national percentage of literate people – reaching more that 90 percent in 1992 – as well as having India’s lowest school drop-out rate” (Boyden and Myers 1995, 8-9).

Efforts in the State of Kerala started in the 19th century in the pre-colonial times. The idea of mass education to all people started in 1860 when church schools were opened to all children, including the poor. In 1904 primary education was made for free, and scholarships were granted to the poor communities to continue education. Demand
for education started to grow, and more schools were being built across the State, making education not only affordable, but accessible as well.

Until this day, the people in the State of Kerala believe in the importance of education. It has become an inherent fact in society. There are laws about compulsory education, however they are not actively enforced, since educational demand is very high that all families want to educate their children.

The experience of the State of Kerala proves two arguments. First, it proves that political will by the government to prioritize education is needed. The excuse that poverty needs to be eradicated is an excuse for inaction. Poverty does not need to be eradicated for families to believe in the importance of education. On the contrary, as has been proved with the Kerala experience, education is inherent in society with the existence of severe poverty.

Second, the experience proves that education is the best possible intervention that protects children against most abuses that they face at work. Even though child labor will not disappear because of education, it will be discouraged and its worst forms will eventually be non-existent.

However, if Egypt were to apply the experience of the State of Kerala, results of mass education made affordable would accrue after decades of spending heavily on education and regaining people’s trust in the system, hence it should start as of today. Education is a long-term plan that would resolve many of the problems facing children and the Egyptian society today. Child labor might not be over, but it will definitely be of a lesser burden on society.
Besides government commitment and political will, short-term interventions can be applied side-by-side to solve the current realities and help improve the situation of the children already suffering from hazardous labor. Besides those short-term interventions, other institutions in the society will also need strengthening as will be seen.

The Legal Institution

Child labor is difficult to control because of the dispersion and the invisibility of most forms of child labor. Despite the laws governing child labor, the existence of the phenomenon remains widespread. In addition, these laws are not enforced. On the contrary, child labor is treated as a norm rather than a breach of the laws.

Existing in Egypt are many loopholes in the laws governing child labor. Many of the most hazardous forms of child labor, like agriculture, are either excluded of coverage by the laws; i.e. laws of minimum age requirement are not applicable to children working in agriculture (Koura and Hamed, 126).

A weak legal institution that lacks coverage, enforcement, and inspection can be one of the contributing factors to the existence and practice of illegal child labor, since fear and respect of the law are not present. “Legislative commitments often lie dormant, sometimes due to lack of resources for effective monitoring and enforcement, sometimes due to lack of political will, but often simply because the authorities do not know how to tackle the problem of eliminating child labor given the invisibility of so many child workers and the fact that the poverty, discrimination and attitudes that foster it are deeply entrenched in society” (ILO 1996b, 33).

Three main items should fall under any legal institution that governs and regulates child work: comprehensive coverage of all hazardous occupations, enforcement of the
laws, and continuous inspection of the employers businesses. The first is almost unachievable because of the hidden nature of some child work, which causes a limitation. However, if laws apply on all children and awareness of these laws become inherent in the society, then naturally the hidden forms of labor are also reached by the awareness element.

Many limitations exist in the traditional legal approach that the laws embody. At the forefront of these limitations are the laws regulating minimum age. Many children are excluded in the laws regulating child labor, specifically those working in agriculture and the females working in homes as domestic servants. The former is a hazardous occupation by the nature of its work. Some of the agricultural hazards are use of unsafe machinery, accidents, chemical poisoning, arduous work, dangerous animals, insects, and reptiles in the field. However, agriculture remains the main activity nationwide, very important for the local economy, and the principle occupation of working children. Cotton picking in Egypt relies on child labor. Because of this, the law explicitly exempts children working in agriculture from coverage of the labor laws and minimum age legislation.

Domestic service employs mostly females. These females are in the most hazardous conditions of all forms of labor. Their work hours are extremely long, including strenuous household chores and babysitting children their own age. They are often subject to physical, emotional and sexual abuse. They suffer malnutrition, get insufficient rest, and live in isolation since they are separated from their families. Worst of all, is that their exploitation is being done in the open, since no one seems to care about this activity, and the law does not consider it in its labor provisions.
Besides agriculture and domestic service, small businesses and family enterprises are also excluded from child labor provisions. These shortcomings in the laws reflect on how other laws are being perceived, in the sense that they mislead about the seriousness of the other provisions.

Enforcement of the laws is also important. Existence is useless in the absence of enforcement. The role of the government is very important in enforcement. “It is so central that the mere absence of national policy, or even a sign of ambivalence towards protection of children who work, tend to be read as tacit consent of their exploitation” (Bequele and Myers 1995, 73). Enforcement problems are, however, acute. Political commitment in Egypt and enforcement mechanisms are lacking. In addition, there is little demand and pressure for their implementation. Monitoring of child work is also extremely difficult. In the formal economy, employers do not keep registers of the children they employ, and hence when a labor inspector is on the site, either he is bribed, or the children are sent away for the day. Bribery is a natural phenomenon in this field, since inspectors are paid very little and not trained. Hence, employers seldom pay the fine for employing children or for failing to grant these children their labor rights. On the other hand, in the informal economy, enforcement and inspection is almost impossible because of the dispersion and invisibility of the children working.

The above mentioned failures are reported by all developing countries. In Egypt, the situation is no different. “There exists a three-dimensional legal picture of child labor in Egypt: allowed by law in agriculture, forbidden by law under the age of 14 in other industries, and the law being evaded anyway mainly by private sector” (Abdullah 1995, 61). The decrees that regulate minimum age in different industries are nonexistent in
practice, and other laws regulating child work and protecting working children are never followed and are unheard of. "Some employers are either unaware of legal provisions or reluctant to observe them strictly. Parents, often themselves illiterate, attach greater economic value to child work than to schooling. And labor inspectors often hesitate to enforce the law and impose sanctions because they know that the families depend on the earnings of their children" (ILO 1996b, 90). The view of the labor inspectors is often a hidden view of most government officials, who know that if they are incapable of offering alternative solutions to child labor for survival of these families then the result will be social unrest and upheaval. Hence, they leave the laws dormant and idle.

Such fallbacks in the legal institution allow for the practice of child labor to remain uncondemned and embedded in culture. In addition, those practicing child labor are unaware of the existence of such laws that govern labor and protect children. Parents, on the other hand, are often unaware of the hazards their children face at work. As a result, complaints are never made; hence necessary actions are never taken.

As for the situation currently prevailing, the role of the legal institution is to start enforcing existing laws. A prerequisite to such enforcement is educating those responsible of formulating the law, enforcing it, and assuring that it is being practiced. However, strengthening and improving the legal institution alone is not the only solution to counterattacking child labor nor is it the solution that will ease the problem currently. However, it is the tool that can deter further growth. The legal institution is a support to the situation, as associated interventions are needed to combat child labor.
Information Availability & Data Gathering

Information is the starting point if any action or programme is to be designed to combat child labor. It helps set the priorities and facilitates situation analysis to design targeted policies and programmes. Information must be inclusive of statistics, data on working children, reasons why children work, prior efforts in elimination of child labor and results of these efforts, etc.

"Collecting official statistics and other quantitative data are important in determining trends and patterns, and revealing the magnitude of child labor. But this must be accompanied by in-depth analysis of the situation of working children. On the national level, for example, many official statistics already exist about the number of children working, where they are working, family income and educational level. But if information is to be the basis for effective intervention, it must be specific. For example, data that merely enumerates children who are economically active without distinguishing between benign and harmful work make it difficult to identify children who need prior attention. Data must also distinguish between work that is remunerated and work that is not, occupations that combine work with learning and those that rob children of education, work that engages children below the age for completion of basic education and work that engages adolescents above the age established in the legal system" (UNICEF 1997f, 5).

Information availability in Egypt about child labor is insufficient and inaccurate. This is due to several factors. First, many children’s work is invisible by nature, as was mentioned before. They are either working in homes, in agriculture, or are part of the informal economy. Hence, getting information on these children is quite difficult. Exactly how many children work is also unanswerable because of that and also because many combine school with work. In addition, there is a difference of perceptions as to what exactly constitutes child labor and child work. Hence, an agreement on the definition of child labor and the scope of hazardous work should be agreed on before investing into research. Second, not all children are registered at birth and hence they are
not referred to in any official statistics. Third, not all the working children are registered employees. Fourth, it is extremely difficult to assess whether the children who are out of school are laborers or street children. In the former the fields and industries at which they work are not enumerated accurately, so all figures are approximate.

Besides accurate data, analysis of such data needs to be done. There are many difficulties involved in the implementation and design of child labor surveys, and often many points are not covered. The situation is worsened when these surveys are not taken seriously. For example, the Labor Force Sample Survey in 1984 and 1988 had a special form to fill out for Child Labor. This form was later dropped and incorporated in the general form, thus leading to an unbelievable disparity, since all laborers of all age groups were treated on an equal basis (Abdullah 1995, 57).

However, more attention nowadays is being given to the situation of the child in Egypt, and that should lead to an improvement in information gathering methods and techniques. The first major effort to study and analyze child labor in Egypt was in 1985, when an inter-ministerial committee was chosen to analyze the phenomenon. The result of this committee was the “Report of the Interministerial Committee on Child Labor in Egypt”, issued in 1989 by NCSCR and UNICEF. In the following fifteen years scholars and various research centers and institutions in the field have been able to gather more information and analyze the situation more closely. Much data, however, is based on poverty calculations and school enrollments, which tell the approximate number of child laborers, but not enough to know more. All the published facts so far have been generalizations that are legitimately based, but are only approximate. Most research is done on urban areas and Upper Egypt. However, most rural areas and villages have not
been investigated at all. According to the Egypt offices of UNICEF and ILO, urban areas are more convenient and structured than rural areas, and hence studies are conducted at ease.

Lack of information on how many children actually work, and where they work in one of the main obstacles to tackling the problem. Sufficient data and analysis is needed in order to design an efficient framework of action.

Apart from data gathering, another weakness regarding information, is the flow of relevant information to those concerned. The families and employers need to be provided with a different set of information, which applies directly on their behalf. These people need to be informed on the legislation that provides rights for the working children. Without such information sharing, the result is ignorance that does not grant for the protection of working children. This ignorance manifests itself further into a culture that does not condemn child labor as will be now seen.

The Society

Culture and beliefs within a given society shape behavior and attitudes of people towards a particular issue. It influences decisions regarding education; it influences laws and policies; and it influences perception of rights and wrongs. Culture in Egypt plays a strong role in influencing child labor. One of the main ideologies that dominate Egyptian culture is Islam. In Islam, family and relatives are encouraged to take care of each other in times of difficulty, and poverty is an example of such difficulty. Hence, a child working to help support his family is perceived to be consistent with such belief and becomes part of the norm. It is accepted that children have to support their families. Second, culture within the society has shaped the role of the male and female in the labor
market. There is nothing amiss about keeping girls out of school to stay home performing household chores (Tadros 1995, 235).

Culture also has an impact on the legal institution. "The lack of respect for existing laws demonstrates the deep-rooted social and cultural values implicated in the persistence, even acceptance of child labor as an unavoidable reality for the poor" (UNICEF 1997c, 2). One of the factors affecting such culture is lack of awareness of the benefits of education or awareness of the legal protection provided for working children. Hence rights are never claimed and it is accepted that the poor, since unfortunate and vulnerable, have to sacrifice their dignity and pride.

Another generally shared belief is that child work helps develop working skills and makes positive use of the child's time, as well as improves his financial situation. Although this is a strong argument often used by those who prefer the status quo, it justifies the problem rather than condemning it. Culture should be molded to condemn child labor, especially its hazardous forms, and encourage education. The belief should be turned around to dismiss the idea of that child being anywhere else but school, at least until a certain age or upon completion of primary education.

However, poverty plays a role in the cultural perceptions of the families of working children and the society in general. "Child labor is hard to eliminate because of poverty, including a culture of poverty that is often passed on from generation to generation and may lead families to value work more than schooling" (Boyden and Myers 1995, 1). The attitude towards schooling is that the road ahead is very long before benefits actually accrue, while work's benefit in the form of money is tangible.
The Family Unit

The family has a lot of influence in the shaping of the child’s life. It was seen in the previous chapter that many children never attended school because of the family disinterest. One first has to understand the dimensions of the Egyptian family unit, especially the traditional family, to be able to analyze how that links itself to child labor. There are three elements that will be analyzed in the traditional family that affects sending children to work or school: family cohesion, family background, and family income. The first of these, family cohesion is most important. As mentioned, each member of the family is obliged to help in times of difficulty, even if that means dropping schooling and taking up an occupation. “Work is a means to integrate children into a family and kinship network. Helping the family is paramount in a child’s development, is not seen as hazardous, and may even be viewed as serving her/his best interests” (UNICEF 1997c, 6).

The second element is family background. “Among the families of working children, educational status and occupational level are important determents of whether children dropout of school; the higher the educational and occupational index of the parents, the more likely the children will stay at school” (Farah 1997b, 3). If the family is deprived, whether of education or their livelihood, then this will contribute to the degree of child labor. In this case, work is believed to be a form of apprenticeship, and if the child is learning the father’s skill, then it becomes a family heritage. In the latter case it is believed that early entry to skilled labor and handicraft makes the skills more readily acquired than if education has delayed that entry. In addition the family unit in Egypt is extremely authoritarian. The father is the main decision-maker, and most often is the
reason why a child is sent to work without consent. "Strongly held views that adults know best, that their right to authority must be respected, that their judgement must not be questioned are sometimes justifications for exploitation" (UNICEF 1997c, 5).

The final element is the family income. It has been estimated education of one child costs 9%-10% of household expenditures (Moreland 1996, 54). This estimate is based on a research done by the National Population Council in 1996. The father is the main decision-maker regarding expenditure. According to research, it was reported by some families that the father is the decision maker in 49% of the families, 17% of the families was the mother being the main decision maker, and 19% where it is a joint decision, and 15% other sources of decision (Moreland 1996, 52). These figures are extremely rough, given that the research was conducted across only 99 households. However, they provide a guideline on how influential the father is with regards to deciding whether or not children will go to school.

In conclusion, if education is unaffordable and the family background is one where illiteracy and ignorance preside, or if the family own a business where skill is required, then most likely the child will not be sent to school. In this case, work is perceived to be more beneficial for that child. The family, in this case, is equally a "partner in crime", since it is their decision that victimizes the child. Even though this decision is often ruled by their financial capabilities, many families employ their children in hazardous occupations or in occupations that do not teach those children a skill, not comprehending the stakes in either.
Presented so far on the failure of the different formal and informal institutions, one can safely argue that if strengthened, these institutions can counterattack the child labor phenomenon, at least discouraging a majority of children from entry to the labor market and protecting the others against its abuse. "Child labor as a phenomenon can only exist because either the negative effects are not seen or understood by the family or society, or there exists institutional limitations for change. Development theory offers several explanations for the existence of such settings. It can, for example, be due to a lack of full information about the consequences of different policies or market failures. It might also be the present state of affairs serves particular interests or groups who have the power to maintain the status quo. A development towards more efficient institutions to replace less efficient ones might not take place is this is inconsistent with the interests of those in power" (Grimsrud and Stokke 1997, 43).

The following section will present another set of obstacles that are on the national policy level.

Policy Failures

Policy failures in the context of this thesis infer to the failure of policy makers to directly address the situation of ‘unfortunate’ children in Egypt. This is not a direct blame on those who formulate policy, on the contrary, it is the national agenda and the priorities that does not allow for the dedication of the time and the effort. In addition, problems of funding hinder the government’s ability to instigate the proper measures to address the issue of child labor, as it is given less importance than other issues. Resource allocation is directed at what the government sees as priority, which are basically security issues and economic issues, and then social issues.
The political situation and the economic situation of the country take first priority. This is by no means an inappropriate rating of priorities. However, it becomes a drawback when it undermines the importance of dedicating time and effort to develop the people.

Economic policies have contributed to the growth of the overall economy in the macro sense, however it has marginalized the majority of the population, since they are poor, and are now poorer due to many economic decisions and the ESAP policies. “In general the ESAP affects the welfare of the people through its impact on:

- ‘their incomes, which are affected by changes in employment, wages, and privatization policies, as well as agricultural policies;
- ‘the prices of goods, especially the prices of food, which are affected by the removal of subsidies as a result of government expenditure reducing policies;
- ‘the availability of basic social services that were provided by the state, such as health and educational services” (Nassar 1995,16).

Difficulties such as the increase in prices of food, low income, poor health facilities, high cost of living, etc. “limit the poor’s opportunities to increase their income in the short and the long run, and will end with a vicious circle of poverty that will lead to vulnerability” (Nassar 1995, 21). With all these economic changes, a welfare system catering to the basic needs of the vulnerable families should be present.

However, in Egypt the welfare system is weak and cannot provide high standard services. According to the HDR report of 1996, the government currently spends around 20% of its total expenditure on education (14.7%), health (4.4%), and social services
(5.8%). UNICEF Egypt estimates that the government will need to allocate 20% more of its budget to education and social services to strengthen the welfare of poor families.

However, many limitations and obstacles exist at the national level that paralyzes effort towards development. The following situations happening simultaneously puts stress on national policies:

- Population growth
- Migration to the city
- Drop in national income as a result of a few attacks on tourism and drop in oil prices
- Economic policies and obligations such as the GATT & ESAP

In addition to all the above, many politicians have vested interest in the status quo, hence minimal effort is directed towards change. This is further enhanced by the culture of apathy manifested in every Egyptian citizen, a culture that does not seek change.

Given all the mentioned economic hardships, and going back to the fact that poverty is the main cause of child labor, one can easily see how complicated the situation is, and how worst it can get. This provides enough reason for immediate action that aims at working with the situation at hand in a realistic manner requiring reasonable ambition, i.e. not trying and stopping all forms of child labor at once, rather it is providing alternatives for those who work while trying to solve the long term issues.

As is apparent so far in this study, the solution of the child labor problem is not readily available and simple. This problem could slowly resolve itself through the development of institutional capabilities and a change of culture. A framework for policy needs to be adopted and a plan of action developed. However, these are all long-term
solutions. The framework for action to be adopted immediately should be a series of
project interventions that are government supported as to improve the situations of the
children in hazardous occupations and to decrease the incidence of their participation in
the labor market. The following chapter will provide guidelines as to how this issue
could be tackled.
CHAPTER 6
A RECOMMENDED FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

This chapter will present a recommended action plan combating the dangers and ills of child labor through the existence of the phenomenon. The action plan will not aim at eliminating child labor totally, since that is too optimistic for the current situation. However, long-term actions that would lead to total elimination of child labor are also mentioned with the purpose of reverting all the previous mentioned failures in the system to improved situations on all fronts.

Taking action against child labor is not simple, as there are many issues to be confronted. The issue of poverty, the culture and tradition of the people, the institutional incapacities, the dispersion of child work, and the ignorance of the people are all issues that need to be confronted and resolved in order for child labor to be eliminated. Before developing a framework for action, priorities need to be set and an action plan developed accordingly on how to tackle the situation of child labor. A starting point needs to be agreed upon at the policy level. This starting point should be the children who are working and have no other alternatives. These children have no opportunities to expand their potential as human beings. Actions towards helping these children should be on top of the agenda.

However, analyzing the situation in totality, these are the different action levels, or goals, to improving/eliminating the child labor situation:

1. Providing alternatives to working children through offering them part-time education schemes or teaching them vocational skills
2. Protection of those who already work in hazardous environments

3. Elimination of the most hazardous forms of labor, i.e. removal of children in hazardous occupations only

4. Saving potential child laborers from entry into the job market

5. Removal of all children from the work place

The last two goals are long-term processes that cannot be addressed directly. However, by addressing the rest of goals coherently, much progress will be achieved towards the removal of all children from the work place and saving others from joining. Many of the national actions required will address all goals simultaneously, however the separate goals need different institutional capabilities to be strengthened in order for progress to be made.

There are two levels of policy intervention, as seen from the above five goals. One level is to tackle the present situation and the social reality, i.e. the presence of a sizeable number of children already working, many working in hazardous situations. The second level is to tackle the root causes of child labor, such as poverty, ignorance, and a lack of alternatives for many of these children. Discussed below are the two scenarios that are to be implemented to arrive at the desired goal: the non-existence of child labor that harms the child’s mental, psychological, and physical abilities. The first scenario is to be implemented on a national level and is too optimistic. The second scenario is more realistic handling the current situation and reverting the negatives to potential positives.

*Ideal Scenario*

The government has a major role to play in the situation of child labor. However, the government’s responsibilities are the macro issues such as poverty alleviation and
improvement of the educational system, which are already parts of the national goals. The government will not take on the issue of child labor as a whole with all of its elements. The civil society, responsible ministries, and national and international organizations should also be responsible in dealing with this issue. The Government of Egypt’s role will exist in the following aspects – education, welfare programs, poverty alleviation methods, legal instruments, coordinating responsible ministries, and supporting the civil society and the NGOs.

The government needs to “start by making necessary investments against child labor, and concentrate scarce resources on the most urgent and serious cases” (Boyden and Myers 1995, 40). Two basic institutions should be developed and strengthened as the first part of any intervention, the education system and the legal system. In chapter four, the weaknesses of these two institutions were presented, and suggestions were provided for improvement. Regarding the educational system, more government spending needs to be allocated for the infrastructure of the schools and the upgrading of the quality of education. Furthermore, the laws that govern education should be enforced, and all children must complete their primary level of education. Educational fees should be eliminated and private tuition should be abolished. Given that this is a long-term strategy, a solution needs to be sought for the children who are currently in the labor market and have not gained an education. One suggestion is to provide an incentive for the families of these students to enroll them back to school, or to stipulate that the employers have to free time for these children to attend literacy classes.

Regarding the legal system, laws must be enforced and inspection must be taken more seriously and applied. However, enforcement must be done with caution. Given
that enforcement will result in the firing of many children, these children will end up in
the streets; hence the problem is aggravated. Therefore, alternatives should be provided
for these children, whether they become enrolled in training centers, or school enrollment
should be made possible and convenient.

The legal system must also provide for further protection of the working children
within the legal age of employment. According to the law, a child is allowed to enter the
job market at age 14. On the other hand, according to Labor Laws, insurance is not
allowed for those under 18 years old. This discrepancy allows for the exploitation of the
child laborers, between 14-18 years old. Hence, new laws should be passed to address
such discrepancies. Laws must be designed to support each other, and no loopholes
should exist to allow for deviation.

Although, the strengthening of various institutional capabilities within the state is
a long-term process, this should not be an excuse for inaction on the immediate needs of
the situation. Elimination of the most forms of hazardous child labor, which are the ones
that are indicated in the ministerial decrees, should the first priority for the government
and the society alike. Elimination will require interference of the laws and a direct
framework of action.

Apart from the educational and legal systems, the government also needs to
address the different social and economic issues. The issue of poverty causes various
threats to the well being of the nation, hence it cannot be ignored. It is also the main
reason for child labor. Alleviating poverty by providing social security and providing
appropriate welfare services should be the first step in plan of action in combating child
labor. The coverage of social security, social and health insurance should be extended to
poor children for free (poor children pay a health insurance fee as part of the new imposed school fees). Specific actions should be taken to alleviate the poverty of the families of working children. These actions should be well targeted and should reach the families concerned.

With regards to those already employed, protection has to be extended for them. The first step in this direction is to compile research and data on the many children that are working, what they are doing, and in what condition they work. Without this sort of information, action will be inefficient and will be a waste of resources. Generally, information is required on all levels of action to be able to understand trends and patterns. Without such information about the nature of child labor, action could be directed negatively, rather than positively, in a sense that removal from work places could occur, but with no alternatives for these children would be provided, hence as was mentioned before a new problem will arise.

Another action required on the national level is social awareness and social mobilization. The government's role here is two-fold: support the private sector, individuals and NGOs in their actions to combat the phenomenon of child labor, and support the awareness raising campaign. Social mobilization is strongly needed in this situation, since the problem is a social problem that has a cultural dimension to it, hence sensitivity towards this culture is important. On the other hand, an awareness raising campaign will be an eye opener to the people who do not know the illegality of child labor and its negative effects on society.

Coordinating the activities of concerned ministries and other governmental institutions is needed for an efficient plan to work. Concerned ministries in Egypt are the
Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Manpower and Vocational Training. All of the above play a different role on the issue of child labor, and hence the inter-ministerial committee that was set up for child labor included members from all of the above mentioned ministries, with the exception of the Ministry of Education. All of these need to coordinate their efforts and mobilize their full potential to combat child labor.

In addition, creating a broad social alliance includes the efforts of the government, the trade unions, the NGOs, the employers, the families, the children, the mass media, and the civil society. “The magic of social mobilization and one of its key challenges is ensuring that the impact of the effort is greater than the sum of the various separate initiatives and that all levels of society commit to one goal” (UNICEF 1997e, 7).

**Realistic Scenario**

However, as mentioned before, the major root causes of child labor are not readily solvable. The situation is very complex, and the responsibility is huge, and at many times it is almost easier to ignore the situation all together believing that one day everything will just improve. Hence, the situation actually gets worst. This is why the problem needs to be dissected carefully, and the simple tasks should be implemented before the complicated ones, rather than having an overwhelming situation where there is no starting point.

Therefore, given the complexity of the situation, and given the socio-economic situation of the families of working children, child labor is inevitable for the present and current future. However, that does not justify the lack of action towards the problems
that are incurred from this phenomenon. Solutions should be implemented on these two fronts mentioned before:

(a) Provide alternatives for working children that enhance their capabilities and expand their future opportunities.

(b) Improve the situation of children working in hazardous situations relieving them of the psychological, physical, and mental damage that they are exposed to.

The civil society and NGOs should take on the responsibility of the above actions with the support of the government. Efforts of civil society have proven very successful, as those people who are willing to volunteer their efforts for specific causes with no return, are always determined to make a difference. On the other hand, non-governmental organizations are non-profit entities that dedicate their efforts to improving the living situation of people. They often work very closely with the people hence have merged in their culture and gained the people’s trust, hence can easily implement what they intend.

Civil society and private voluntary organizations should have decentralized powers to apply pressure on the government, when needed. On the other hand, NGOs should play the strongest role in this scene, especially in improving the situation of already working children. The main role delegated to NGOs should be raising awareness among the communities. They can inform the employers of their duties towards these children. They can also inform the families on the same rights and explain to them the implications of sending children to work in hazardous occupations. They can also set up projects that provide children with alternatives to improve their situations or projects to protect them from their work conditions.
Action required for the protection of those already in the work place includes many elements: new stipulations in the laws, non-formal education incentives, social awareness, providing necessary safety equipment for the children, proving children with regular medical check-ups, proving nutritional meals for the children in the work place, rehabilitative measures, etc. The latter implies providing certain services intended to protect the children from the hazards they face. Such services could be to remove them to a more protected work environment, correcting the conditions that makes work hazardous, or simple protective and rehabilitative services that improve their morale and self confidence.

NGOs and private voluntary organizations should be provided the power and the funding to offer free grants to poor children for schooling or part-time schooling. They can also try and offer literacy programmes and free health services, and credit schemes to the families of these children.

The core of the problem is that children work to help their families financially. They work for long hours not having time to pursue what they may choose if their socio-economic situation would have been better. Even is work provides them with pride, it rips them away from their full potential. Hence these children need other breathers. These children have the right to be offered the following:

1. Part time education, even if it is only literacy classes
2. Vocational Training so that they can learn a skill
3. Regular Monitoring so that their proper development is insured in their not so proper circumstances.
The job is not easy, and social mobilization and political will is required. However, dealing with the situation at hand is more efficient than planning long-term and risking the situation getting worst in the meanwhile. Especially that the long-term plans are all dependant on each other, and alleviating poverty is on the forefront. No one can ask these children to leave their work place immediately, because if they do there is no where for them to go except on the street. In this situation, a working child is less of an ill than a street child. Yet this working child needs immediate help.
CHAPTER 7
NATIONAL EFFORTS AND DONOR ASSISTANCE

During the last decades many organizations, whether international organizations, NGOs, or government departments started getting involved with the issue of child labor and have implemented projects or programmes to help fight the growth of the phenomenon. Many centers have been set up to take care of children working in hazardous occupations, and many others have been set up for street children. All institutions were able to choose the strategy that best applies in the given situation. Below are a listing of some of the most important projects and organizations that work directly in this field. Although some organizations do not have specific projects with child labor, they work indirectly to address the issue. Some projects are poverty alleviation projects, others are raising awareness, and others are community development in general. Two main projects will be analyzed thoroughly as to study their weaknesses and strengths. These projects have been chosen based on the success that they have achieved so that they can set a precedent to future projects.

The Government of Egypt’s Efforts

The last two decades witnessed accelerated activities in the areas of research, legislation and social services as compared to previous decades. The issue of child labor took on a different course after the interministerial committee was set up in 1985 to discuss the topic thoroughly and provide suggestions. The two most active ministries are the Ministry of Manpower and Training and the Ministry of Social Affairs. The former provides educational and training services to working children in the districts of Shubra
El Kheima, El Zawya El Hamra, and El Sharabiya, through its “Intervention Program”. This program is funded by the ILO and implemented in conjunction with UNICEF and the Social Fund for Development.

The Ministry of Social Affairs has a unit for Motherhood and Childhood, which is establishing a center for the welfare and development of working children in Ramlet Boulaq. In addition, the Ministry of Social Affairs has 80 training centers for children ages 12-17 years, operating since 1967 under an agreement between UNICEF and the Government.

Some of the other government initiatives are poverty alleviation programs that are funded by both the government and the donor community are the:

- Sadat Pension
- Social Security Programme
- Mubarak Programmes for Social Cooperation
- Productive Families Project
- Nasser Bank
- Micro-credit schemes extended by the Ministry of Social Affairs
- Social Fund for Development

**Donor Activities in Egypt**

Many international organizations and NGOs also have projects for child labor and child development. Some of these are UNICEF, ILO, PLAN International, Save the Children, the National Council for Negro Women, CARE, Hope Village, the National Council for Motherhood and the Child, etc. These are a few of the organizations that work directly with children in difficult circumstances. Some of these efforts are mentioned below, with specific detail provided on the UNICEF and ILO projects.

This project is implemented in Alexandria and is part of the Children in Difficult Circumstances Program that started in 1993.

Objective: This project had three main objectives: (1) to improve the self-esteem of the working children, (2) to provide credit schemes for their families and (3) to establish an NGO among the workshop owners.

Objective 1: Enhanced Self-Esteem

Strategy: Working children are to be divided into teams led by scout leaders from the Maritime Scouts in Alexandria. The children are asked to come in every Sunday, which is their day off, and spend a day learning different skills, and getting literacy classes. They are taught about hygiene and its value. A savings plan for the boys is integrated within the project, where he deposits part of his earnings. The project integrates leisure as well, taking the boys on field trips and watching movies. When the boys turn 15, they cease to become beneficiaries of the project, since law allows them to work at this age.

Budget: The budget for the first year (1993) was $26,000. 85% of this cost was spent on the children’s trips, meals, uniforms, training material, etc. The remaining amount was spent on administrative costs.

Main Strengths: This project succeeded in providing alternatives to these boys without taking them away from their work. It teaches them about many things in life in a fun matter on their day off, hence not interfering with any income that they are making. In addition, the loans offered to the families help improve the situation of these boys, hence giving them hope in life.
Project Successes: When the project started in 1993, it started with 7 children, growing in 1998 to have 700 children as beneficiaries of the project. Workshop owners have reported that these boys are now cleaner, more aware of their rights, have a higher self esteem. Workshop owners even removed many boys from hazardous occupations.

Objective 2: Family Development Fund

Strategy: This project complements the Maritime Scouts project. The project extends credit to families of working children. It is designed on the Grameen Bank model and requires group collateral. Each group requires 5 people for the loan and its repayment. Another part of this project, teaches the mothers different skills, whether health related or cooking, or any skill to help her earn a job to increase the families income.

Budget: The estimated loan fund of $50,000, providing an average loan of LE 1000.

Successes & Limitations: The effect of increased family income on working children still needs to be assessed, however the effect on the mother was positive. Yet one of the limitations of the project is that it is not institutionally sustainable.

Objective 3: Workshop Owner’s NGOs

- This activity has not yet been implemented because of lack of necessary funds.

Lessons Learned from this Project:

The main two lessons learned from the project are that it is very important to choose the right people to deal with the beneficiaries directly and it is also very important to set achievable targets. Apparently the most successful effort in this project is the one of the Maritime Scouts and the working children. Hence, it is very important to apply that model in similar projects. This model is enough on its own with complicating the project
with other efforts, such as credit schemes and workshop owners’ NGO set-up, which can be separate projects all together.

**Shoubra El Kheima Project, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC)/ILO**

This project started in October 1997 in Shoubra El Kheima, a home of a sizable number of working children between the ages of 7-14. These children all work in hazardous occupations and have all dropped out of school. There are 300 children who belong to this project, 70% are above the age of 12 years old.

Objective: The objective is to remove children from hazardous industries and to raise awareness in the community about the dangers children are exposed to by working in those industries.

Strategy: The aim of the project is to provide the working children with informal education, vocational training, and health and recreational services.

Budget: This project had a budget of $35,000 for two years.

Main Strengths: Again this project provides alternatives and a way out for working children, teaching them literacy and vocational skills.

Successes & Limitations: The project has been quite successful. It started out in October 1997 with only 20 kids enrolled and that number now is at 300. One of the limitations of the project is the incapability of generating sufficient funds to implement income-generating activities.

**Listing of Other Efforts**

**UNICEF:** The Community School Initiative Project is funded by UNICEF. These are single classroom schools that have been implemented in several Egyptian villages for
children who are working and not attending school. They receive literacy training and learn about relevant information with regards to their environment. The project is very successful, and more single classrooms are being set up in various villages. The success of this project is revealed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>No. of girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993/94</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>2926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/95</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>7833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995/96</td>
<td>1454</td>
<td>15,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/97</td>
<td>1594</td>
<td>24,144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The main aspect of this project is that it recognizes the importance of woman and their right to have a fair chance in education. The project is also “culture sensitive”, as it does not take the girls very far from her home, yet it develops their mental capacity and their horizon. A third aspect of the project is that it teaches the girls relevant information for their environments and circumstances in a fun and engaging way.

*PLAN International Egypt*: PLAN International is an international nonprofit voluntary organization that works with disadvantaged communities. It concentrates on working with children between the ages of 6-18. It addresses the causes of vulnerability through a participatory approach to empower the communities to use their human resources in a way to benefit the communities. It works in 6 districts in Cairo. It functions under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education.
PLAN has an integrated program that is divided into five domains: “Learning, Growing Up Healthy, Habitat, Building Relationships, and Livelihood”. The goals of the program is to educate children who have no education, provide medical care to children and their families, provide income generating projects for the communities, and increase environmental awareness. PLAN, currently, sponsors 22,000 families in Cairo.

1. Raising Awareness about Children’s Rights

PLAN currently is addressing the issue of child labor through two activities. The first is to raise awareness about child’s rights in the communities. The second is a study that will enable PLAN to understand the reasons behind child labor in their intervention area.

2. Other Activities

PLAN also started a vocational training program for school dropouts. More than 500 children benefit from the program. They are given a certain amount of money daily as an incentive and their attendance is monitored.

Save the Children: Save the Children has two projects that indirectly affect the child labor situation through poverty alleviation and the other through community development.

1) Group Guaranteed Lending and Saving Project

This project offers female entrepreneurs to undertake income-generating activities by offering creditor schemes. Credit Schemes and income generation projects are an indirect method to discourage child labor, since they will have a source of income.

2) Building Institutions for Local Development Project (BILD)

This project has two phases and is implemented in Minia. The first phase aimed to improve the quality of women’s life through maternal and child health activities. The
second phase, which is currently being conducted, strengthens the institutional capabilities of the NGOs in Minia to improve the quality of life for women and children.

Main Successes: The projects of Save the Children are concentrating on women, teaching them self-empowerment. Although they do not address child labor directly, these initiatives indirectly give less reason to send children to work.

*National Council for Negro Women*: Implement the project of “Rehabilitation and Custody of Children without Care in Alexandria”. This project is based in Alexandria and its objective is the rehabilitation and custody of street children and child laborers through skills training, health services, and lobbying with concerned NGOs and government organizations.

**Conclusion**

As seen from all the above initiatives, many strategies were used. Some strategies combined literacy and vocational training, others provided economic incentives for the children to leave work, and others were purely for awareness. Finally, some initiatives were purely rehabilitative for children who work.

The lessons learnt from the above projects are the following:

- Identify the needs for the children and their families and provide whatever is feasible
- Provide alternatives for working children without telling them that what they are doing is not right, or else they will feel alienated since what they are doing is providing survival for their families, and in their eyes this is the best thing to do
- Establish trust with the people in the community, like the Scouts program of UNICEF

- Culture should be respected at all times, like the Community School Initiative

- Incorporate females and recognize the dangers inflicted on female child laborers, although the ILO and UNICEF projects are among the most successful, they concentrate on male labor rather than female, although according to research female seem to need more help.

- Ensure commitment and dedicated participation or else the people's trust will not be there anymore

Besides the general lessons learnt, the best strategies that the children and their families benefited from were:

1. Provide an economic incentive, i.e. pay children monthly stipends, to encourage their participation, hence achieve maximum participation in the project

2. Provide literacy and vocational training

3. Provide rehabilitative services

4. Provide health services since these children's health has been neglected, hence they suffer malnutrition and physical weakness

The above four strategies along with bearing in mind the lessons and successes of other projects have been combined in the proposed project, which is designed for the working children in Old Cairo, specifically the pottery children.
CHAPTER 8
A PROBLEM AREA IN OLD CAIRO AND A PROPOSED PROJECT

Right in the middle of Old Cairo, there exists three main industrial sites: the tanneries, the potteries, and the car mechanics. They hide behind three monumental landmarks, being the Mosque of Amre Ibn Al-As, the Church of Mar Girghuis, and the Aquadot. Most of the area’s inhabitants are migrants from Upper Egypt and they have continuously provided the potteries and tanneries with most of the labor force, specifically child laborers. All of the children working in these industries are illiterate and have not completed their basic education, simply because they either can not afford it, or have failed and hence dropped out. Another reason for lack of education is the illiterate backgrounds of the families themselves.

There are 392 tanneries in the area employing approximately 10,000 workers. Children form about 25% of the labor force and almost 98% of the tanneries employ them (Abdullah 1995, 113). Even though there was a decree issued by the Ministry of Manpower and Vocational Training that work at the tanneries is considered to be hazardous, and children under the age of 17 should not be employed in this industry, the incidence of child labor employed is widely practiced.

On the other hand, there also exists the potteries industry, also employing a sizable number of children. Exactly how many are employed is unknown, especially that this profession hardly exists on any official paper. This industry is more reliant on manual labor. The main task given to the children is to burn the rubber furnaces. The burning of the rubber furnaces causes black smoke to rise, which means that these children are
exposed to very heavy environmental pollutants. This industry is a hazard to the environment, and affects everyone working and living in this area. The effect on the children is reflected on their health and psychology. Their immediate removal from this industry is crucial.

The third profession, that is also to be found in every side street in all of Cairo, is the car repair mechanics. This profession is mentioned in this specific problem area because it completes the child labor triangle of Old Cairo. At least every workshop has one child employed there, the Egyptian prototype of “Bilya” (a slang name that the workshop owner calls his child assistant by - when translated literally to English it means ‘marble’, since it moves and runs fast).

The majority of the children working in these three industries are aged between 5-14 years. Some were found to have started work at age 3 or 4, picking up nails or doing tedious jobs. Their family conditions are harsh. The families are large in size and the incomes are very low. Many of the families live in the graveyards, because they have no other shelter. These children contribute a significant source of income to their families, even though the wages of these children are quite low, ranging between 15-60 LE per month, depending on age and nature of work.

Physically, these children are unhealthy. When a sample of them was medically examined 46% of them below average weight and built for the age, 69% of them were anemic and 58% suffered vitamin deficiency. In addition, 43% had dental problems and 31% had errors in vision, which signifies that they do not go for regular check-ups (Abdullah 1995, 138).
The irony of the situation is that when these children were asked if they were happy with their situations, they reported that they were quite content that they are helping their families, earning their own money, and learning a skill.

According to the study conducted by Al Jeel Center, “the pottery boys and girls look clearly the most miserable in terms of apparent working and living conditions and in terms of personal appearance” (Abdullah 1995, 134). When their health and mental horizon were examined, they proved to be the lowest of all employed children in the Old Cairo district. In comparison to the tanneries and the car mechanics, the pottery boys and girls were all below average weight and height (Abdullah 1995, 135). Mentally, their horizons are very narrow, and this was proven through their responses to some of the questions verses the responses of others their age. One of the pottery children dreams of a cake he would bake himself, as opposed to the others who dream of cars or the latest sports shoes (Abdullah 1995, 142). In addition, they are the ones with the most immediate rural background, i.e. the first or second generation of migrants who are mostly poor, illiterate, and alienated from urban life.

The children in this area are in trouble. They are the exact children that this document has been analyzing their situation. These are the children that are not in school. These are the children who hamper their development as a result of the work they perform; physically, mentally, and psychologically. These are also the children who lack any alternative but to work as to assist their families. These are the children who are not aware of their rights, nor are they aware of the dangers they are faced with in their work place. They do not know it, nor do their families know it. Even if their families know it,
the lack of choice on ways of survival does not leave them with any other decision but to send their children to work.

Authorities have been dormant about the hazards that take place in this area. However, these children fit the criteria of children in immediate need of help and assistance. The problem to be addressed here is to help remove those children from hazardous work conditions and give them an opportunity to improve themselves and become better citizens. This can be achieved by providing them with literacy skills and vocational training, combined with an economic incentive to encourage participation.

No major efforts have been directed towards this area. However, currently there is one project underway, still in the stage of negotiation. It is an effort between the World Food Programme and El Jeel Center, to set up an NGO located in the problem area, to implement a project called Partial Care for Working Children. It will aim to improve the working children’s nutrition by providing meals to the working children. It also intends to research the conditions of the working children to further understand their situations.
CHAPTER 9
PROJECT DOCUMENT

Context

Description of the subsector

Child labor is a widespread phenomenon worldwide. Efforts to combat its different forms have been in effect as a result of massive international concern raised over the issue. The phenomenon is widespread in Egypt, more than is admitted by the officials, or is apparent in statistics.

Issues at the subsector level that have a direct impact on the cause of child labor remain extremely complex. Addressing such a multi-faceted problem presents an explicit challenge to society, as it is required to combat many issues simultaneously.

The Egyptian society faces various hardships and challenges that impact directly on the poor of the country, and hence the result is that the child is sent out to work to help the family in survival. These challenges consist of the following:

- The high rate of population growth limits the capacity of the economy to absorb the large number of the workforce into employment;

- A large percentage of the Egyptian population are suffering from extreme poverty and struggle to attain their basic needs of survival, i.e. food and shelter.

- Education has become unaffordable and its importance has been declining. The failure of the educational system to meet expectations, deliver quality education and accommodate the
younger population results in either school dropouts or non-enrollment to start with. All these cases lapse back into illiteracy and hence retard any efforts of the nation's development in the long run.

All the above mentioned factors have an indirect relation to the rise in the number of child laborers. Also on the macro level of this issue lies the social aspect, consisting mainly of the cultural tradition. The idea of family solidarity and helping in times of need allows for the justification of sending the child to work rather than getting an education. Moreover, families are ignorant of the importance of education for the long run, because they are focused on the short run, i.e. their basic survival.

Another major contributing factor to child labor is the failure of the legal institution to enforce the law on the issue. The legal age requirement is almost never met, nor do the children receive the rights granted to them by the labor regulations.

Children who work under very harsh conditions are exploited in various ways. They are almost always underpaid and sometimes unpaid. They work long hours (10-13hrs. a day) doing tiring tasks that are of a difficult nature given their physical ability. They are physically and verbally abused, and are powerless to protect themselves. They are denied their basic rights. In addition, their health and nutritional status is almost always below average of others their age.

A 1988 CAPMAS estimate claims that 1.4 million children work, constituting 10.3% of the labor force. They are concentrated more in rural areas than in urban areas, with the latter having 29% of the share. These estimates however exclude a
large portion of the children who are working as part of the informal economy and whom are behind closed doors. These appear nowhere in the statistics.

A child’s monthly income ranges on average between 23-30% of the family’s total income. This fact on its own poses a greater challenge in addressing the problem of child labor. The contribution that child gives to the family is used for their survival. They cannot afford that child to be sent elsewhere to learn, because then the opportunity cost is too high.

Another main issue that limits addressing the problem in a coherent manner, is the nature of child work and the difficulty in reaching them. The nature of the child labor problem has three main aspects that poses a limitation for intervention: geographical dispersion, diversification of the work amongst the different industries, and the invisibility of the work, i.e. they are not reachable because they either work in homes, in villages, or the informal economy.

Old Cairo, which is the location of the proposed project, is an area fostering many industries that employ children below the legal age. The given situation of these children and their families supports all evidence on reasons children work. The families are unable to support themselves, hence children are sent to work rather than school. They work under deplorable conditions. The nature of their work directly affects their health, psychology, and upbringing. No efforts have been directed towards helping the children working in these areas, although immediate action is needed.

Host Country Strategy

Given the diverse nature of the problem at hand, and the various other development problems it links with, such as poverty, direct efforts undertaken by
the government in each of the areas that need developing will indirectly help eliminate some of the reasons that lead to illegal child labor.

With regards to the Government’s strategy on children and the issue of child labour, the following will clarify the national policy:

The Government of Egypt was one of the first states to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also has separate legal instruments of its own for working children and for education. In Egypt, the minimum legal age for employment according to Child Act (No.12, 1996) is 14 years, which is the age of completion of compulsory education. However, dropouts may be admitted to vocational training at the age of 12.

Decrees issued by the Minister of Manpower and Vocational Training prohibit the employment of children between 12-17 years in hazardous occupations.

The Labor Law (Act. No. 137, 1981) includes regulations for the protection of young workers against exploitation and harmful conditions. The working day should not extend beyond 6 hours with a one-hour break, and it is illegal to employ children between 7pm and 6am. The employer should provide the child laborers with one glass of milk daily, and a medical checkup on a yearly basis.

However, none of the above regulations is being enforced, maybe because of fear that if legislation is enforced these children would end up on the streets, given that they cannot afford education. This situation is hence weakening the country’s strategy in human development, especially child development through education and vocational training.

Prior and Ongoing Assistance

Assistance is granted on two levels:

- Poverty Alleviation Method (Family Plans)
Programmes and projects targeting children specifically

For the former level, various poverty alleviation measures sponsored by the government with donor assistance are:

- Sadat Pension
- Social Security Programme
- Mubarak Programmes for Social Cooperation
- Productive Families Project
- Nasser Bank
- Micro-credit schemes extended by the Ministry of Social Affairs
- Social Fund for Development
- Other NGO’s and donor programmes for micro-credit schemes

For the latter level of assistance, the following projects are currently being funded:

- UN World Food Programme – Partial Care for Working Children Project in collaboration with Al Jeel Center and Ministry of Social Affairs
- IPEC (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour), Shubra El Kheima Project
- PLAN International, Egypt are working in 6 districts on an Integrated Community Development Programme that is based on “Learning, Growing Up Healthy, Building Relationships, and Livelihood”, they are working on Raising Awareness About Children’s Right
- Save the Children – Two projects (a) Group Guaranteed Lending and saving Project and (b) Building Institutions for Local Development Project
- National Council for Negro Women – Rehabilitation and Custody of Children Without Care Project in Alexandria
- Other organizations that have activities and programmes related to child labour are: World Bank, CARITAS, Catholic Relief Services, Near East Foundation, Center for Development and Population activities, Population Council, and other aid giving organizations such as USAID and CIDA

Institutional Framework

The key national institutions involved directly with child labour are the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Manpower and Vocational Training, the Ministry of Industry (for the urban situation of child labour), the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education. All of the above play a different role on the issue of child labor, and hence the inter-ministerial committee that was set up for child labor included members from all of the above mentioned ministries, with the exception of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Social Affairs has 80 training centers for children ages 12-17 years, operating since 1967 under an agreement between UNICEF and the Government.

The Ministry of Labor is currently going to start working with the Partial Care for Working Children Project with the WFP-UN.

The rest of the mentioned ministries are issue specific in their contribution to the child labor situation.
On the international level, the two main institutions that work in this field are the ILO and UNICEF. There are various organizations that are also specific to children, however the ILO and UNICEF are two of the most involved in the issue.
On the international level, the two main institutions that work in this field are the ILO and UNICEF. There are various organizations that are also specific to children, however the ILO and UNICEF are two of the most involved in the issue.
Problem to be addressed: the present situation.

Right in the Middle of the historic district of Old Cairo, there exists a triangle of industrial sites: the tanneries, the potteries, and the car mechanics. All these professions employ child labor heavily.

(A) The Tanneries: By virtue of their nature, the tanneries belong to the chemical industry, the fifth largest industry in Egypt. There are 10,000 workers employed in 392 tanneries at Old Cairo. Children form about 25% of the labor force and almost 98% of the tanneries employ them. It is noteworthy at this point to mention that by the decree issued by the ministry of Manpower and Vocational Training, work at the tanneries is considered to be hazardous, and children under the age of 17 should not be employed in this industry.

(B) The Potteries: This profession hardly exists on any official paper. It is more reliant on manual labor. Children working at the pottery are uncountable, their main task is to burn the rubber furnaces which causes the black smoke rising every morning and naturally they are all inhaling poisonous air at the beginning of each day.

(C) Car Mechanics: Those workshops, although existing everywhere, are mentioned in this project because they complete the child labor triangle of Old Cairo. At least every workshop has one child employed there, the Egyptian prototype of "Bilya". (There are almost 50,000 car repair shops

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1 All information on the present situation in Old Cairo is taken from a study done by Dr. Ahmad Abdallah. 1995. Child Labour in Egypt: An Overview of the Child Labour Triangle of Masr Al Qadeema (Old Cairo). Cairo: Al Jeel Center for Youth and Social Studies.
in Cairo, and hence almost the same number of children working at these workshops).

According to the study conducted by Al Jeel Center, “the pottery boys and girls look clearly the most miserable in terms of apparent working and living conditions and in terms of personal appearance. Their health and mental horizon were proven through examination, the lowest in relation to the children working at the tanneries and car mechanics. Not surprisingly, they are the ones with the most immediate rural background, i.e. the first or second generation of migrants who are mostly poor, illiterate, and alienated in urban life.

“Work at the tanneries or repair workshops is no less hard or hazardous, especially with chemicals and electricity around. But there is a sense of less agony regarding the children working there in comparison with these working at the pottery” (Abdullah 1995, 84).

The majority of the children working whether at the tanneries, potteries, or repair shops are aged between 5-14 years and some even start work at 3 or 4 picking up nails or doing tedious jobs. Their family conditions are harsh. Either they come from single mother families or from families with +8members all living in one room. Many of the families live in the graveyards, because they have no other shelter. The income of these children means their family survival. The wages of these children are quite low ranging between 15-60 LE per month, depending on age and nature of work.

Physically, these children are unhealthy. When a sample of them was medically examined, they were all below average weight and build for the age. All, with no exceptions, were anemic and suffered vitamin A deficiency. They all
had dental problems. Many had urinary tract infections, tonsillitis, and vision problems.

All of the children are illiterate and have not completed their basic education, simply because they either cannot afford it, or have failed and hence dropped out.

The irony of the situation is that when asked the children reported that they are not upset about their situations. They are quite content that they are helping their families, earning their own money, and learning a skill.

Exactly how many children working in those industries remains unknown, but there is enough to justify taking immediate action and earmarking a worthy investment. The problem to be addressed is to help remove those children from hazardous work conditions and give them an opportunity to improve themselves and become better citizens, by providing them with literacy and vocational training.

Currently, working with the youth in this area is a Youth Social Studies Center called Al Jeel Center. It has researched the situation of the children working at the tanneries, potteries, and car mechanics. It has extended its research and fieldwork to cover the three industries, the nature of the child’s work, the child’s family situation, and the emotions of these children. The Center’s expertise with regards to these children and the surrounding society is high. They have already crossed the various boundaries of infiltrating within a society and gaining approval and trust from the people. However, a lack of funding has limited this center’s capabilities to help and assist the working children.

Expected end of project situation

The project proposes expanding the Al Jeel Center and establishing a pilot project for the girls and boys of the pottery industry where they can enroll
themselves for literacy classes and vocational training. The children will be given monthly salaries to encourage them to attend. The project will also provide health care services through its clinic and rehabilitative methods through a psychologist that will be employed.

The objective of the project is to remove the children from the hazardous working conditions they operate in and raise awareness in their communities about such dangers and awareness of the benefits of education. The objective is to also study success and limitations of such an initiative in order to be able to apply it on a larger scale, inclusive of all the working children in the area of Old Cairo.

After 3 years, it is estimated that at least 200-300 students would have undergone and completed literacy training and 100-200 of those would have acquired a skill to earn them a decent job in the market. All of those children would have been oriented on their rights as child workers, and will be contributing to orienting others in their community. All enrolled students would have improved their health situation and have taken certain vaccinations for immunity from certain diseases.

These are the expected end-of-project situations on the direct recipient/beneficiary. As for the indirect beneficiaries, or the community as a whole, the aspired end of project situation, would be that a majority of the families are aware of their child rights and how to protect them, and are aware of the benefits of education. It is also important that the employers are involved by protecting the child, providing him his rights, and not exploiting them because of their vulnerability, but rather contribute to their development towards healthy citizens. With regards to the employers, there are no direct guarantees of how responsive they will be towards such initiative, or how supportive they will be.
throughout the project and its aftermath. However, efforts will be directed towards changing their attitude towards these children.

The UNDP assistance is envisaged beyond the duration mentioned for the project, to be extended for another five years until the project can sustain itself, then the government or a local organization can take over it. (Its financial sustainability will come through donations, grants, and sale of products that the children work on plus the Government will be allocating a yearly sum to be estimated at the end of the project duration).

**Target beneficiaries**

The target beneficiaries are children working in hazardous conditions who have been denied their basic right to education. The families of these children, are also beneficiaries.

Priority target groups are pottery children (males and females, age 5-15), who have not enrolled in school because they cannot afford it, or have dropped out.

**Project strategy and institutional arrangement**

Project Strategy: The pilot project, which will be located near the Old Cairo district (for accessibility), aims at providing necessary needs and protecting the children working at the potteries in Old Cairo, from the harsh work conditions. The strategy is three-fold: On one hand, it will offer them an opportunity to read and write and learn relevant information about their environment (relevant curriculum). On the other hand it will teach them a skill, and they will be getting paid at the same time. Third of all, rehabilitative measures will be implemented as to alleviate some of the psychological developments that are caused by work in hazardous conditions. These children will not be asked to leave their jobs, but they will be coming in 3 days a week for at least three hours each day. This pilot
project will attempt to approach the situation in a way to set a benchmark of the
way child development projects should be organized. The community members
will be motivated to help out at the center to give them a sense of project
ownership. Community members will be invited to help out with the children,
whether to teach them or play with them. They will also be invited for seminars
and workshops. In addition, if the family is in a difficult situation, they will be
directed on an informal basis on how they can get credit lines to set up their own
projects. The center will aim to assimilate itself with the community, as to
infiltrate within the society and become a part of the people’s lives.

Alternative project strategies to combat child labor taken from other
experiences worldwide and locally were assessed. One strategy was to pay the
students to leave the job and go to school, yet once these children face financial
hardship again, they dropout. Another was pure awareness on the hazards of child
work. A third strategy was to actually make the mothers of the children aware of
the type of hazards the children are afflicted to. Some strategies concentrated on
vocational training solely, however, it was discovered that working at actual
workshops, or on-job training, led to acquisition of better experience, hence
children often go back to their jobs. All these strategies were refuted for the short-
term basis and inapplicability to this specific culture and to the situation on hand.
Instead, the best of all strategies was combined, children can acquire literacy and
vocational training, get paid, and discover different opportunities for themselves.

Implementation Agreements: The executing agencies are Al Jeel Center and
UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs. (This pilot project
will be unlike the training centers owned by the ministry, because of the different
factors involved with this project.) Al Jeel Center will implement the
administration and management of the entire project (financially, administratively, paper work, etc.). Al Jeel Center will be responsible with the daily tasks and working directly with the people. UNICEF is responsible for the consultants, training of teachers and vocational trainers, and identification of the pottery children who are in particular need of urgent assistance. All the center’s management and direct assistants will be UNICEF recruited staff, to assure the standards of recruitment are of high caliber.

The Ministry of Heath will be assist in setting up a small clinic - providing a nurse on duty on a daily basis, and a doctor and a dentist coming in twice a week.

Alternative implementation agreements were not considered, and the Ministry of Social Affairs has been the first choice since the formulation of the project because of its expertise in the field of vocational training.

Reasons for Assistance from UNDP/Executing Agency

Al Jeel Center was chosen because of its expertise with the people living in the area, hence people trust and accept its assimilation with them. Second, experience has proven that international organizations are efficient at the policy level, however, the best implementers at the people level are the NGO’s since they are accepted and trusted by people of the community.

The reason that the UNDP was chosen for the funding of this project was because of the preference of the Government of Egypt to have a grant vs. loan assistance. In addition to UNDP’s support to the approach of human capital development.

UNICEF was particularly chosen because of its expertise in the field and local and international experience in the issue of child labor. It will add a lot of
perspective to various issues crucial to child development, which the Ministry of Social Affairs would need guidance on.

**Special Considerations**

Particular interest will be invested in the children of the pottery, especially females. It is noteworthy to state, that the ratio of females to males working at the potteries is not high, and no exact study has been made to head count how many females work verses the males. However, females are most vulnerable of all groups, and the worst conditions are prevalent at the potteries, so it is worth the effort to start removing the females from such conditions.

Another consideration will be helping the single mothers in this community, either be getting them loan schemes, or by integrating them into the Center.

On the funding side, special consideration should be given to private individuals and organizations that would be asked to donate money or relevant supplies and equipment to the center. One idea to have individuals help is through a monthly donation of a minimal amount to adopt a child through the learning process. This strategy is being applied in many orphanages and has proved its success, since many individuals want to help, yet do not know ways to contribute. Financial contribution is the simplest of these ways.

**Co-ordination arrangements**

The project will seek to establish a committee, consisting of one member from each of the following organizations: Ministries of Education, Health, Labour, Industry, Social Affairs, Manpower and Vocational Training, ILO, and UNICEF. This committee will meet on an annual basis to provide input on the Center, and to discuss potential working relationships that could arise during the course of the project.
Other coordination efforts will be with credit schemes organizations to be able to target the families of this district and appoint several families in desperate needs of assistance as seen by the Project Director of the Center.

Finally, The Ministry of Education’s role in the project is to offer and classroom equipment and supplies to be granted once at the beginning of the project. The committee member from the Ministry will also be assisting in the evaluation of the teachers.

**Counterpart Support Capacity**

The Government of Egypt has shown commitment to helping children in hazardous conditions, and also in reducing rates of illiteracy of these children.

The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible on its part for providing equipment and support needed for three vocational activities, sowing, plumbing, and woodworking. The allocated budget would be LE 80,000.
Development Objective

The development objective of the Government of Egypt in relation to this subsector is to be divided into three aspects: two on the national level, and one on the international level.

First, it is part of the nation’s development objective to provide universal primary education, because the only means to development of the full nation is through the education of its citizens, and hence basic education is compulsory by law. Part of the same development objective is to reduce the illiteracy rate in Egypt as a whole.

Second, another national development objective is to empower the most vulnerable groups in society, namely women and children. Working children have a ripple down effect on the economy in a negative way. To provide these children with the education that they did not get, will impact positively on the overall development.

Third, on the international level, most agreements, whether international trade agreements, or human right agreements, have mentioned that child labor should be eliminated. Trade agreements even have boycotts against goods that were produced through use of child labor. Hence, it is part of the country’s soon-to-be objectives to decrease the phenomenon and offer alternatives that are affordable for these children.
Immediate Objective (1)

Expand Al Jeel Center for children ages 5-15 with an all encompassing program (literacy and vocational training) and sustaining a monthly salary for them. (The underlying objective would be to remove them from hazardous work conditions).

Success Criteria
By the end of the project, 300+ children would have acquired the following skills: read & write, arithmetic, analytical and creative abilities, a skill to acquire them a decent job, self-confidence, and a better health condition. (All information will be documented as each child leaves the center at the age of 15, to be able to measure success).

Output 1
Expand Al Jeel Center with all the needed staff and equipment to get the project on its feet.

Activities for Output 1
1.1 Provide two classrooms and a playhouse needed equipment.
1.2 Build three workshops within the Center.
1.3 Buy necessary equipment
1.4 Recruit teachers, one psychologist, administrators and janitors.
1.5 Recruit skilled labor for the vocational training, two for each of these skills: sowing, woodwork, plumbing.
1.6 Recruit Consultants and project managers.
1.7 Delegate to the Ministry of Health the job of setting up the clinic.
1.8 Recruit a doctor and a nurse

 Responsible Party
Project Implementers
Project Implementers
Project Implementers
Al Jeel Center
UNICEF
UNICEF
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Health

Output 2
Educated children who are aware and productive citizens, aware of their rights, i.e. less vulnerable, and contributing to society.

Success Criteria:
Children will be able to pass an exam to test their reading, writing and arithmetic capabilities.

Activities for Output (2)
2.1 Train teachers on the vulnerable nature of the children, on the teaching methods that entice children’s interest. Training period should range from 2 weeks-One month.

 Responsible Party
Psychologist,
Trainer, and
Consultant
Consultant
Teachers
writing. There will also be creativity, planning, and problem solving.

2.4 Periodic Exams to monitor the child's mental development.

2.5 Monitor teachers' efficiency and evaluate them.

Manager

2.6 Classroom environment should be made appealing to

Manager

the children at all times, by a colorful theme of drawings, paintings, events, etc.

Teachers

Educational Project

Educational Project

Output 3
For the first phase of the project enroll 40-50 students that are most in need of the center's facilities and services.

Success Criteria:
Students who are chosen on specific and targeted criteria would be attending the classes provided on a normal basis, and their attendance would be supported by their decision-maker source, i.e. family.

Activities for Output (3)

3.1 Decide on the criteria for the choice of the working children targeting those in need of immediate assistance

3.2 Start approaching the families of these children

3.3 Start on the enrollment process of the children and orient them on the center's facilities

3.4 Schedule and organize the children's training and classes according to their different needs

Responsible Party

UNICEF/ Al Jeel Center

Al Jeel Center

Center's administration

Center's administration

Output 4
Each child (12 years and above) would have learned a skill and earned money for learning it.

Success Criteria:
After the skill had been taught, the child should pass a practical exam and the Center will give a Certificate of Completion form the named skill.

Activities for Output (4)

1.1 Start vocational training skills in: Sowing, Woodworking, and Plumbing

1.2 Provide painting, drawing, fashion design, etc. classes

1.3 Product Development and Marketing will be taking place, so that the sale of the children's products would be done professionally, and would gain them confidence that what they worked on is being sold.

1.4 Fundraising from different Egyptian private firms

Responsible Party

Trainers

Trainer

Consultant

117
(not the ones located in the Old Cairo district), like those involved in the textile industry and print shops, to provide the Center with the leftovers of the factories to be used in the training workshops.

1.5 After the students complete their time at the Center, direct them on potential opportunities for credit schemes.

1.6 Locate fund to be placed in the bank, and the monthly interest will be divided amongst the children in the form of monthly salaries. Those in Vocational training will be earning more than those only attending literacy.
Immediate Objective (2)
To monitor and improve the health of those children, physically and psychologically.

Success Criteria:
By the end of the project, all anemic and vitamin deficiencies would have decreased, and the children will be aware of health and hygiene methods. In addition, their self-esteem and confidence will be measured to compare with their state of mind at the time they entered the center.

Output 1
Medical reports of the children would be complete and history of checkups show that they have been cured from minor illnesses and weaknesses.

Success Criteria:
The medical files would have recorded all observations and improvements. And anemia and Vitamin deficiency would be cured (since these were the most common).

Activities for Output (1)  
1.1 Doctor will come twice a week to monitor urgent medical cases, and the nurse will monitor anemia and vitamin deficiency, and keep records of all children.

1.2 Dentist will be present for the first year, then will come in twice week.

1.3 Important vaccines to be given to all children.

Output 2
Rehabilitative approaches would have assisted in partial elimination of negative/inferior feelings these kids might have.

Success Criteria:
The psychologist’s report on the history of each case will be the basis to prove success.

Activities for Output (2)  
2.1 Provide protective & rehabilitative services.

2.2 Enhance family protection by informing them about child psychology through organized workshops.

2.3 Have the Center playground/playhouse open seven days a week for the purpose of socialization and leisure.
Immediate Objective (3)
To incrementally change the attitudes of families, employees, community members towards the inhumanity and illegality of hiring children in the conditions prevalent at the tanneries and potteries and repair shops, and enhance their institutional capacity to fight against child labor.

Success Criteria:
Cultural change is incremental, and its success is not noticeable immediately, however, it would be an accomplishment to at least empower the community to enforce children's rights at the workplace, and know that it is illegal, since that fact is not even known. On separate fixed periods, focus groups will be conducted through a research house to monitor the incremental and gradual change.

Output 1
More families would prefer to send their kids to school than to work, and deeply understand the value of education.

Success Criteria
Focus Groups on the families will be conducted at fixed intervals.

Activities for Output (1)
1.1 Monthly seminars and workshops to include family members and teach them about the importance of education and about their child's rights offered to him by the government will be conducted at the Center; incentives for attendance will be provided, such as a free meal

1.2 Students have a one day escapade every month, where they will visit at least 15 –20 of surrounding houses and teach them about the importance of hygiene, education, and any other relevant info which they have learned and feel that their community should know.

Output 2
Employers would grant child laborers their legal right. They would allow for the child to attend the literacy classes provided by the Center.

Success Criteria
Focus groups with employers, employees and child employees.

Activities for Output (2)
2.1 Prior to the launch of the Center, an event will be organized for the employers, to orient them on the Center's activities and to gain their support to divide their child laborers to each attend for three days a week the literacy training. It has to be explained to them that they will not be loosing this labor force more than a few hours a week, and never the full force at one time.

2.2 The center will organize task forces to go and meet the employers in person to orient them on the child's legal rights. On a later stage, this task force will ensure that these rights are being granted, or else the Center will have the right to file legal reports.

2.3 Awareness through the use of traditional media, e.g.: the Friday prayer speech

Responsible Party
To be decided

TBD

UNICEF

TBD
Inputs

Government (Ministry of Social Affairs & Ministry of Health for medical assistance)

One) Classroom and Workshops
LE 15,000

Two) Equipments for Classroom and Workshop
Classroom equipment and Supply
LE 10,000
Workshop Equipment
LE 65,000

Three) Clinic
LE 15,000

UNDP

One) Project Director
$35,000

Two) Training for the teachers
$5,000

Three) Equipment for training
$10,000

UNICEF

One) Personnel
Title

Center Advisor and On-Ground Manager
$20,000
Educational Division Manager
$20,000
Rehabilitative Division Manager
$15,000
Consultants
$10,000
Research Team
$10,000
Teachers
5
$25,000
Accountant
1
$5,000
Workshop Skilled Trainers
3
$25,000
Playground Assistants
1
$3,000
Janitors
1
$3,000
Nurse
1
$5,000
Doctor (part time)
1
$5,000

Note: All salaries are calculated on a three-year basis.
Risks

Potential Risk 1

There would be a risk if at any point the project fails to generate the money/income (for any reason, if unable to sell products, or if capacity of children is larger than the money generated) to pay money for the enrolled children in the form of monthly salaries. If one month goes without paying those children, the community and families will lose faith in the help and assistance that they are receiving.

Estimated Likelihood: Medium

Solution: Place money in the bank and its interest rate will be the fixed salaries for the children.

Potential Risk 2

Employers will be against the situation and might take any action to instigate the failure of the project.

Estimated Likelihood: High

Solution: Organized workshops and gradual convincing methods have to be undertaken. For example, start by first convincing the employees that the children should at least attend the literacy classes, then get back to work. If they have 15 children employed, then they should only have 3 children go at a time, and divide the times among the 15.
Prior Obligations
None

Prerequisites

1. The Government will provide textbooks, set the classroom and workshops, and the clinic.

2. The Community of Old Cairo should be oriented on the project establishment and at least 200 children would have signed up for enrollment. This prerequisite is to guarantee the communities interest.

The project document will be signed by UNDP, and UNDP assistance to the project will be provided, subject to UNDP receiving satisfaction that the prerequisites listed above have been fulfilled or are likely to be fulfilled.

When anticipated fulfillment of one or more prerequisites fails to materialize, UNDP may, at its discretion, either suspend or terminate its assistance.
1. (a) The project will be subject to quarterly review (joint review by representatives of the Government, executing agency and UNDP) at least every 12 months, the first such meeting to be held within the first 12 months of the start of full implementation. The national project coordinator and/or senior project officer of the United Nations executing agency shall prepare and submit to each tripartite review meeting a Project Performance Evaluation Report (PPER). Additional PPERs may be requested, if necessary, during the project.

(b) A project terminal report will be prepared for consideration at the terminal tripartite review meeting. It shall be prepared in draft sufficiently in advance to allow review and technical clearance by the executing agency at least four months prior to the terminal tripartite review.

2. The project shall be subject to evaluation 18 months after the start of full implementation. The organization, terms of reference, and timing will be decided after consultation between the parties to the project document, plus any associated UN agency, in this case, the agency is UNICEF.
Legal Context

This project document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article 1 of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Egypt and the United Nations Development Programme, signed by the parties. The host country-implementing agency shall, for the purpose of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement, refer to the government cooperating agency described in the agreement.

The following types of revisions may be made to this project document with the signature of the UNDP resident representative only, provided he or she is assured that the other signatories of the project document have no objections to the proposed changes:

(a) Revisions in, or addition of, any of the annexes of the project document;
(b) Revisions which do not involve significant changes in the immediate objectives, outputs or activities of a project, but are caused by the rearrangements of inputs already agreed to or by cost increases due to inflation; and
(c) Mandatory annual revisions that re-phase the delivery of agreed project inputs or increased expert or other costs due to inflation or take into account agency expenditure flexibility.
Appendix 1. United Nations Development program Project Approval Form

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
Project of the Government of Egypt
PROJECT DOCUMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and title</th>
<th>EGY/99/027 Child Support &amp; Training Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>3 years (To be extended to five)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Site</td>
<td>Old Cairo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC/UNDP sector &amp; subsector</td>
<td>Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances Programme, UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Implementing Agency</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executing Agency</td>
<td>Al Jeel Center in collaboration with UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Starting date</td>
<td>December 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Inputs in cash</td>
<td>LE 172,500</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNDP and cost sharing finance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Government</td>
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<td>Or third party</td>
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<td>Cost sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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Brief Description: The center aims to create equal opportunities for the working children at the tanneries and potteries at Old Cairo, in which they would develop literacy skills and vocational training. This will result in children leaving their hazardous workplaces and gaining an education that they were not able to get at school. In addition, it will monitor their health and development.

On Behalf of: Signature Date Name/Title
The Government:
Executing Agency:
UNDP:

United Nations Exchange Rate at date of last signature of project document: $1.00=LE 3.45
Appendix 2. Project Budget

Country: Egypt  
Project no.: EGY/99/027  
Project Title: Child Support & Training Center

**Project Budget Covering UNDP Contribution**  
(In US$)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
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**Project Budget Covering Government Contribution**  
(In LE)

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<th>2003</th>
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WORKS CITED


_____. 1998. “Interface between Child Labor and Education”. Cairo: UNICEF.


