

EGYPT

A Future without Child Labor

Pioneering a Comprehensive Approach to Child Development

Despite progress made in recent years, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region still faces a number of challenges related to the development of human capital, long-term productivity, and social and economic development.

One area of particular concern is child labor. Many children in the region actively participate in the labor market, sacrificing education, health, and social integration.

Some projections suggest that the situation is deteriorating and the number of children under 18 years old in the region, is estimated to increase from 130 million to around 143 million by 2020.

The costs and benefits of investments addressing child poverty and child development have long been established, but are frequently forgotten during the rush to achieve economic returns and global economic integration. The costs associated with child labor include an estimated 10-12% loss of lifetime

earnings and productivity due to school dropout and malnutrition. As well as the loss of income, these statistics reflect the many thousands of individuals who may not achieve their human potential or contribute fully to the social and economic development of their communities and countries.

Development Fund (JSDF), and initiated in 2005, developed a successful approach towards the elimination of child labor. The Project was able to build on the momentum provided by two earlier presidential documents which outlined the objectives of Egypt's Two Decades for the Protection of Children (1989-2010).



In 2005, The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) led by the First Lady, H.E. Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, launched a national strategy to combat child labor. The strategy is rights-based and was drafted using a participatory process that involved civil society, close to sixty community development associations, various government agencies and 19 different NGOs. NCCM set up a model to prevent new child entrants to the labor market by minimizing the rate of school drop-outs, and improved the conditions of working children.

The project team, with the cooperation of the various stakeholders and beneficiaries involved, had to address a number of challenging questions. How important is it to raise awareness of the socio-economic cost of child labor? Who are the main target groups - families of working children as well as decision makers? What is the cost of withdrawing a working child from the labor market and returning it to school? What is the most efficient way to raise family income? What kind of education needs to be set up for children wanting to go to school? What kind of health and legal systems need to be in place? How can

"...simply talking about the elimination of child labor itself is not a solution ...we should be able to contribute to the nation's development by securing the basic needs for children such as love, food, health and education."

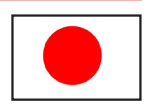
- Ambassador Kaoru Ishikawa
Cairo, 25th June, 2008

A Comprehensive Approach

A pilot project financed by the Japan Social



The Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) was established in June 2000 by the Government of Japan and the World Bank as a united mechanism for providing direct assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable groups in eligible World Bank group member countries.



different stakeholders, such as employers, workshop owners, be integrated most effectively into the overall strategy?

and local education and health authorities was increased to allow mainstreaming of improved practices.

The Four Goals

The project had four goals:

- 1. To mobilize communities and build capacity.** Support was given to efforts that improved the existing community-based child protection committees, formed in 1999 by UNICEF.
- 2. To protect children working under extremely hazardous conditions** and to reintegrate them into mainstream society a number of basic services, were provided, including occupational safety measures, health and education - all aimed at improving working conditions.
- 3. To target the prevention of child labor.** This was achieved by identifying under age children who were not yet working but who were at risk of joining the labor markets and helping them and their families to cope with, and mitigate, these risks. The process of prevention was comprehensive; multi-faceted and multi-sectoral. It included interventions at three levels - with communities, families and children. Through this tripartite structure, families were provided support to allow them to redirect their under age children to school rather than send them to work.
- 4. The broad dissemination of the rights of the child to education; health care and protection from violence.** Dissemination of lessons learned in the course of the implementation of the project proved to be of particular importance. The pilot was meant as an important stepping stone for mainstreaming on a national, as well as a regional level.

Project Data

Implementing Agency: *The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)*

Grant (TF052886) Amount: *US\$1,848,883*

Implementation Period: *06/06/2004 to 06/30/2008*

Developing the Model

The project team, operating under the leadership of the NCCM, studied data available on the status of child labor in each of the five Governorates selected for the project. Surveys were conducted to determine the size and nature of the problem and focus groups were carried out to better understand the community's needs. These groups were composed of the families of working children, the families of children who were close to dropping out of school, the workshop owners, and the children themselves. The

information gathered was used to define activity plans for each governorate and to design technical training programs tailored to each target group.

The team subsequently developed a model that identified the root causes of child labor, while emphasizing the complexity of the phenomenon. Broader issues addressed included insuring children's right to broader development, and the formation of human capital.

The model was built on 3 main pillars: Observation, Protection, and Prevention.

Observation - This pillar introduced five key measures necessary to establish a thorough needs assessment. First, a database was assembled at the governorate level to allow study of the magnitude and characteristics of the phenomenon. Second, survey tools were introduced to study the needs of the children and their families. Third, a field survey was used to identify target categories based on criteria such as geographic distribution and type of work. Fourth, a leadership team was formed at the community level to monitor the children and their families periodically. Finally, criteria were devised to guide the selection of the partner NGOs.

Protection - The second pillar of the model focused on five strategies to protect children currently active in the labor market.

- **Alternative Education** - adopting participatory and highly interactive approaches to teaching and learning increased the effectiveness and attractiveness of school attendance. The children liked going to school - and they saw the results of their learning early on.
- **Vocational training programs** delivered learning that was career-oriented and hands-on. The working children could immediately apply what they learned in class. This was an important argument to convince workshop owners and

Who were the Beneficiaries?

In keeping with the comprehensive approach, it was important that the project simultaneously target the relevant beneficiary groups:

- **Current and potential child workers** received increased access to education and health services; and children who were "at risk" of joining the work force before reaching the minimum age were targeted.
- **The employers of child workers** were provided with adequate knowledge on safety measurements and requirements in the work place and the potential harm caused by child labor.
- **Families** received better access to existing micro-finance or safety net schemes, conditional on their children's school enrollment.
- The capacity and knowledge of **local NGOs**

other employers of children, that they stood to benefit from the project.

- **The improvement of working conditions and occupational safety.** Simple measures such as the installation of fire extinguishers, panels with safety regulations, and the distribution of filter masks had immediate effects on the health and safety of the working children.
- **Basic health care** including medical exams and check-ups for mothers and children.
- **Child and Family access to legal assistance** used digital national ID cards, birth certificates for children and working children entering the school.

Prevention – the third pillar identified key elements that could prevent children from entering the labor market:

- Effectively increasing family income through **micro-credits and social loans.**
- Establishing a **pension scheme**, which also served as a means for families to increase their overall income.
- **Raising the awareness of the community** - community understanding and cooperation were vital to the success and sustainability of the model.

From the outset, it was evident to the project team that communities and community actions alone cannot resolve the spectrum of complexities associated with child labor. The role of the government, and policy integration are both critical to prevention. Without this focus the vicious cycle of poverty, school dropouts, child labor, and illiteracy would continue and have an on-going impact on human capital formation and economic growth.

Monitoring & Evaluation

In order to successfully execute the initiatives aimed at protecting working children, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) designed a monitoring and evaluation framework and formed several committees to administer and manage implementation. These relied on the commitment and combined efforts of the ministries, NGOs, and the private sector.

The primary role of the *Ad hoc Committee to Combat Child Labor* included reviewing all proposed legislation and national policies concerning child labor. The Committee, chaired by a representative from the NCCM, is comprised of representatives from the primary associations, related ministries, governors and the President of the General Authority for Adult Learning.

In order to guarantee a continuous monitoring and evaluation process, a database was designed to monitor implementation in the governorates and to measure social impact. This database includes all the required information on the working children that take part in the program and their families. The

system was also used to measure program progress and generate reports on related costs.

Results

The JSDF project advanced Egypt's pioneering efforts in tackling child labor issues by explicitly addressing the policy dimension, while challenging the role of formal education and social safety nets. It established a comprehensive development model for reintegrating working children in the education system and developed measures for preventing school drop outs. The results were underscored by a solid partnership between government and non government organizations, and the setting up of a monitoring and evaluation system to track the progress of returnees to school and capture the situation of child labor nationwide. The project implementing agency, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), effectively brought together 19 NGOs amongst other local and regional partners. The project was considered a regional best practice on effective prevention of child labor.

Some of the specific project outcomes and outputs include:

Observation

- The project successfully trained field researchers from the partner associations to collect data.
- A survey on Working Children Conditions was provided to 4,211 children throughout the five pilot governorates. This provided a wealth of health and educational data and allowed the calculation of drop-out percentages.

Protection

- Over 8,500 children received support through the literacy and alternative education programs.
- Some 11,525 families were granted access to credit schemes and/or National IDs and attended education, health awareness and/or training sessions.
- 120 NGO members participated in both training and refresher courses designed to enhance their ability to participate in the future development of institutional guidelines.
- To reduce drop-out rate, the roles of 82 social specialists and 66 teachers were reinforced within the schools, and three meetings were held between the Council Team and related NGO's leading to a new training manual.

Prevention

- 554 children were enrolled in technical training programs.
- 21 training courses, covering topics on the utilization of professional and industrial safety tools, were conducted for 961 agricultural engineers, farmers, workshops owners, labor force staff, and working children.
- Professional safety kits were distributed to over 400 workshops and
- 30 quarry owners signed a Code of Honor

- Concerning healthcare, medical exams were given to over 400 working mothers and over 4,200 children received comprehensive medical exams and screenings. Six emergency medical campaigns were carried out in needy villages, where over 1,300 people benefited from their care.
- In the area of education, 69 alternative education programs were opened, benefiting 947 working children and an additional 74 classes were organized and scheduled to open and will support a total of 1,416 children.
- Over 50 teachers from partner schools were trained in active learning, and a training manual for practitioners was developed. This included standards of care and the delivery of services that address the rehabilitation and mainstreaming of child labor. The manual will be adopted across the nation and be used by all agencies involved in addressing child labor.
- Policy proposals were prepared to influence school and class based reforms to prevent early school dropout, increase welfare support for families, prevent wage discrimination and, increase legal implications for employers employing children below the age of 14.

Finally, a national workshop was organized to share the project results and launch the digital knowledge sourcebook (A “Digital Knowledge Sourcebook”) (see Box below). The sourcebook includes project lessons, videos of project sites with first hand accounts of the achievement and challenges faced by the beneficiaries and

stakeholders, monitoring and evaluation tools, training manuals for practitioners, and emerging policy recommendations for the line ministries.

Lessons Learned

The success of the strategy in Egypt owes much to the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood in its capacity as the highest national authority concerned with monitoring and coordinating child rights enforcement. The Council coordinates between the government authorities and NGOs. Having the First Lady as the Head of the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Prime Minister as the head of its board, ensured government commitment and the inclusion of child labor on the cabinet agenda as well as the availability of financial and human resources for implementation.

Key Resources

To learn more visit:
Digital Knowledge Sourcebook on the Project
<http://info.worldbank.org/etools/jsdfegypt>

National Council on Childhood and Women
<http://www.nccm.org.eg/>

To mark the project’s achievements, Egypt hosted a workshop titled **“A Future without Child Labor: Policy Options and Economic Costs.”** The workshop aimed at: (i) presenting outputs, outcomes and lessons of the child labor prevention program in Egypt; and (ii) drawing on Egypt’s experience, discuss education and social assistance policy and program options that Egypt and other Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries could consider in addressing child labor.

The workshop provided a strategic opportunity to deliver a message to the nation, especially the policy makers, on the costs of child labor. Egypt’s First Lady HE Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak reiterated in her inaugural speech: *“child labor is not the way to fight poverty and improve living conditions for the working children’s families but rather it depletes our human capital, one of our most valuable national resources”.*



The Japan Social Development Fund -- JSDF Good Practice Notes seek to share achievements, knowledge and lessons learned from the implementation of JSDF projects over the past decade. The JSDF is a partnership between the Government of Japan and the World Bank to support innovative social programs that directly meet the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable groups in developing countries. JSDF projects meet four basic requirements: Innovative, introducing new approaches to development; Responsive to the needy, by directly meeting the needs of vulnerable, marginalized, and disadvantaged groups; Rapid response activities that deliver short-term results and benefits to targeted beneficiaries; and Community capacity building activities that empower local governments, NGOs, and disenfranchised groups, while promoting stakeholders participation and ownership.