UNICEF Egypt Education Thematic Report January – December 2016



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACCD AG-Fund/Arab Council for Childhood and Development

CBE Community Based Education

ECD Early Childhood Development

EU European Union

GDP Gross Domestic Product

KRA Key Result Area

MOE Ministry of Education

MOIIC Ministry of Industrial and International Cooperation

MOSS Ministry of Social Solidarity

NAQAA National Authority for Quality Assurance Agency

NCEEE National Centre for Examinations and Education Evaluation

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

ORE Other Resources-Emergency

ORR Other Regular Resources

PAT Professional Academy for Teachers

PDPS Professional Development Pre-Schools

PIC Performance Improvement Centres

RR Regular Resources

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

UNDAF United Nations Development Assistance Framework

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Egypt's education sector made significant progress over the past years especially in regards to access to education and gender equity. The gender parity in all four levels of education -primary, preparatory, secondary and tertiary - has reached equality. However, quality of teaching and learning is poor where more than half of those in schools do not learn, including foundational skills in mathematics and science. The rapid population growth and rising numbers of school-aged children is adding pressure on the education system, furthermore, increase in multidimensional poverty is hampering the healthy cognitive, physical, and psychological growth of children.

The National Strategic Plan for Pre-university Education Reform (2014-2030) aims at the sustainable development of the pre-university education sector to achieve better quality education and equitable access to schools, as well as skills development toward establishing a knowledge society. In addition, the Constitution prioritizes free compulsory education to all children without discrimination.

In order to contribute to Egypt's National Strategy, UNICEF Egypt Office aligned its work with the National Strategy as well as United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UNICEF global goals to serve children with more access to, and complete, quality basic education. UNICEF's programming has increasingly focused on disadvantaged children, with a focus on poor, rural, and children with disabilities.

In Egypt, UNICEF's implementation strategy was articulated around four Key Result Areas (KRA):

- 1. School-based and community models of quality pre-primary education scaled up
- 2. Out of school girls and boys have improved access to quality community-based primary education in intervention areas
- 3. Girls and boys with disabilities have improved access to quality education in mainstream schools in intervention areas
- 4. Syrian refugee children (3-11 years old) have improved access to quality education in government and community based schools.

In 2016, the Thematic Funding contributed to the first three KRAs, including institutional capacity building for advancing these three result areas.

Under KRA 1, an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Situational Analysis was conducted in order to establish a holistic ECD structure and interventions in the country. UNICEF carried-out a rapid assessment on existing models of nurseries. Based on the gathered data and information, UNICEF developed an integrated and cross-sectoral ECD model. A draft standards for assessing the quality of existing nurseries is being reviewed and finalized with the government at the time of release of the present report.

Under KRAs 2 and 3, the Thematic Funding enabled UNICEF to co-finance the implementation of the European Union (EU)-funded programme "Expanding Access to Education and Protection for at Risk Children in Egypt (2015-2020." The programme aims at increasing access and quality of community-based schools for the most vulnerable and socially excluded children. In June 2016, a baseline survey was conducted in order to identify the target locations for the programme. Based on the survey, target

locations for 2016 were identified as well as identification of 1,650 out-of-school children in Assiut and Qena governorates to be enrolled in community-based schools. In order to specify the target community schools, joint community-based education profile assessments were conducted with the Mudiriyas¹. Through this process, UNICEF established robust relationships with Mudiriyas that contributed in the capacity development of education administration at the governorate/community levels.

A total of thirty additional primary schools were also identified in Alexandria and Sohag governorates to become inclusive schools. Within the thirty selected schools, ten schools received resource room furniture and educational materials. Furthermore, three schools in Alexandria have been identified to receive pre-fabricated rooms to be used as resource or training rooms and three schools in Sohag along with one school in Alexandria were selected to be prepared as Performance Improvement Centres (PICs). UNICEF equipped 15 resource rooms (ten in Sohag and five in Alexandria) serving nine schools with educational materials. Teachers used the resource rooms to provide supportive instruction to the disabled students.

UNICEF reached 1,326 children with disabilities in 120 schools integrated into the public education system. To support these schools, UNICEF procured and distributed supplies for the existing resource rooms in order to improve the inclusive teaching and learning environment. Further, UNICEF supported the training of 841 school teachers, principals, Board of Trustees, social workers in schools and Ministry of Education (MOE) staff on diagnosis of disabilities, child centred learning, and examinations specifications for disabled children. In order to support the teachers following their trainings, UNICEF printed 16 different publications covering 10 topics in inclusive education. These publications included training materials consisting of a Facilitator Manual and a Participant's Manual. In total, UNICEF printed and disseminated 21,260 books.

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT IN 2016

Egypt is a lower middle income economy, characterised by regional inequalities. Poverty is widespread and concentrated in rural areas and urban slums. In 2014, it was estimated that 26.3% of the Egyptian population (approximately 22 million people) lived under the poverty line. While progress has been made in many social indicators in the last decades, inequalities and disparity of opportunities between regions and socio-economic groups persist. The current demographic trends, with the perspective of an accelerated growth of the school-age population, are expected to further increase the pressure on, and the need for investments in the school system.

Education

Egypt's Vision 2030 and the Constitution prioritize equal opportunity of quality free compulsory education to all children and skills development toward establishing a knowledge society.

In 2016, the UN assisted the Government in increasing access to education, improving the quality of teaching and learning environment; and contributed in building a stronger education system with a focus on the relevance of education to the labour market. Egypt has the largest education system in the Middle East and North Africa. The trend shows that approximately 22 million students enrolled in pre-university education in Egypt in 2015-2016.³

¹ Mudiriya is an education directorate at the 'governorate' level.

² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Egypt; web-site: http://www.eg.undp.org/

³ Previous trends show that, on average, 90 percent of all pre-university students in Egypt are enrolled in MOE schools while the remaining 10 percent are enrolled in Al-Azhar schools.

Good progress has been made towards assuring the right to education for all. In the school year 2015/16, gross enrolment ratios reached 96.1 percent for primary education, 94.8 percent for preparatory education and 68.8 percent for secondary education – an increase from the school year 2014/2015 with the rates of 94.9, 94.8, and 68.2 percent, respectively.⁴

Compared to 2014/2015, the number of students enrolled in community schools increased by 8,158 children, adding up to 114,939 total students in 2015/2016. Especially for girls, enrolment in all three levels of education has reached equality. Gender parity (net) is currently at 1.02 in primary, 1.07 in preparatory and 1.05 in secondary education.

However, evidence indicates great disparities within the different regions. Children who are out of school are more likely to come from the poorest quintile, are females, or are living in rural areas. The number of children dropping out of primary education has increased from 0.2 percent (2009/10) to 0.5 percent (2014/15), while drop outs in preparatory education has decreased from 5.4 to 4 percent. In primary education, more boys drop out than girls, while in preparatory education more girls drop out than boys. ⁵

In addition, the gross enrolment rate for pre-primary education remains low at 31.7 percent in 2015/2016 despite slight increase from 31.3 percent in 2014/2015. Only 36.5 percent of children demonstrate school readiness at primary entry in the development domains of social, language, cognitive and motor skills.⁶

The majority of children with disabilities enrolled in education are male with 63 percent and from urban areas with 85 percent. Since hardly any data are available on the overall number of children with disabilities, a comparison of needs and coverage is not possible.

The school environment adversely affects completion rates; around one in five school buildings are not fit for use and lack functional water and sanitation facilities. Students suffer from rigid conventional style teaching techniques in which participation is not encouraged and corporal punishment is commonly applied. Until 2012, less than 10 percent of the total number of schools met the national standards for quality education⁷. On average, the class density increased from 21.3 students per classroom in 2014/2015 to 22.6 students per classroom in 2015/2016.

The quality of education remains a major challenge that hinders the capacity of children to develop to their full potential. Despite increase in access to education, children are not learning. More than half of Egyptian Grade 8 students do not meet the low benchmark (53 percent for mathematics and 58percent for science) of international learning achievement assessments. The score of Egyptian student decreased by 15 points for mathematics and 13 points in science from 2003 to 2007. The score in science further decreased by 37 points from 2007 to 2015. Female student score better in mathematics and science than male students, and the decrease in test scores affected female students less.⁸

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⁴ UNICEF (2017): Children in Egypt 2016 – Statistical Digest.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2013/2014

⁷ National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation NAQAA list of accredited schools in Egypt 2013. Retrieved from http://www.naqaae.eg/services/naqaae-acc-inst.html

⁸ TIMSS 2003 International Mathematics Report; IAE (2003): TIMSS 2003 International Science Report; IAE (2007): TIMSS International Mathematics Report; IAE (2007): TIMSS International Science Report; IAE (2015): TIMSS International Mathematics Report; IAE (2015): TIMSS International Science Report.

Rote memorization has been identified as a serious problem leading to low learning achievements. Main focus lies on memorizing and recalling information rather than encouraging critical thinking and forming an own point of view. Since the education received in the classroom is not sufficient, private tutoring is common. About 25 percent of students below the age of 18 received private lessons in primary, even 41 percent in preparatory and 42 percent in secondary education.

Circumstances beyond the control of the student explain about 24 percent of educational achievement inequalities in primary, 31 percent in preparatory and 22 percent in secondary education. According to national examination scores, parents' education, family wealth, and birth governorate are main factors leading to inequalities in learning achievements. Inequalities build up progressively through the education levels depending on the school system attended and private expenditure on education.

The reasons of these challenges lie in both the supply and the demand side of education. The causes for the inadequacy of education opportunities, particularly in the most deprived areas, relate to: (i) inadequate infrastructure; (ii) lack of transport facilities to reach the schools which are located very far from where the socially excluded children live; (iii) social and behavioural influences mainly affecting girls at the higher grades; (iv) unavailability of qualified teachers and limited Egyptian public spending on education - which is merely reaching the Constitutional minimum requirement of 4 percent of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that has not shown growth for the last 6 years; (v) poverty and unaffordability of costs; (vi) high prevalence of violence both at home and at schools; and (vii) low quality of education or low perceived relevance of education for the labour market with a phenomenon of graduate unemployment.

UNICEF Interventions

UNICEF's education program contributes directly to a number of SDG targets, including all of those associated with Goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all). UNICEF's interventions are all aligned with the National Strategy Vision 2030 as well as the UNDAF 2013-2017 Framework, namely: Outcomes 2 (Output 4.6 "to serve children in Egypt aged 4-5 have more access to inclusive quality pre-primary education" and Output 4.7 "to serve children in Egypt aged 6 - 14 have more access to, and complete, quality basic education, formal and non-formal).

The current UNICEF Country Programme has four Key Result Areas: (1) School-based and community models of quality pre-primary education scaled up; (2) Out of school girls and boys have improved access to quality community-based primary education in intervention areas; (3) Girls and boys with disabilities have improved access to quality education in mainstream schools in intervention areas; and (4) Syrian refugee children (3-11 year old) have improved access to quality education in government and community based schools. The four KRA focus on the most vulnerable population, namely: boys and girls out-of-school, children in rural areas, and children with disabilities. UNICEF's response addresses both Egyptian and refugee children.

UNICEF's implementation puts emphasis on scaling-up effective and sustainable community-based schools. Where the institutional capacity of the MOE is not robust enough to expand a sufficient number of government schools and ensure quality number of teachers, the community schools approach is a feasible and sustainable option to address the public system gaps, especially for the most deprived children. Community schools provide opportunity to access schools and learn to those out-of-school, in addition, as a 'second chance' to those that dropped-out of schools. The method is also cost-effective as well as enhances accountability and sustainability of services on the ground.

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⁹ More information on the SDGs is available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org

The main partners are: Ministry of Education, National Authority for Quality Assurance Agency (NAQAA), Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT), National Center for Examination and Education Evaluation (NCEEE), Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

3. RESULTS ASSESSMENT AND CHALLENGES

In 2016, the Thematic Funding contributed to the KRA 1-3, including institutional capacity building for advancing these three result areas.

KRA 1: School-based and community models of quality pre-primary education scaled up

In early 2016, UNICEF received a direct request from MOSS to scale up nurseries and quality ECD nationwide. Under the current government structure, nurseries fall under the authority of MOSS. The vision of MOSS is to empower women's participation to the labour market by expanding safe and healthy learning environment for their children (2-3 years old); MOSS also envisions to improve ECD in order to contribute to increased school readiness.

In response to MOSS request of technical assistance, UNICEF conducted an ECD Situational Analysis in July 2016 to capture information on existing structure, service types, legal framework and financing. Based on this analysis, the UNICEF Global Chief and Advisor of ECD conducted a mission in Cairo in August 2016 and delivered an inter-ministerial technical workshop to emphasize the importance of investing in children's early years and for inviting commitment, coordination and collaboration among government entities for developing ECD in the country. UNICEF conducted a Rapid Assessment specifically on nurseries in November 2016 to identify existing models of nurseries, methods of registration, governing authorities and any good models that may be scaled-up. The assessment factored-in that nurseries in Egypt comes in various types with different management structure.

Based on the evidence gathered through the Situational Analysis and Rapid Assessment, UNICEF developed the "ECD Model for Co-Responsibility" with the guidance and support from the HQ ECD team. The model aims to provide quality childcare for children 0-3 year old to ensure holistic development of the child through two main modalities: 1) scaling up quality nurseries and parenting education and support programs; and 2) developing a platform to create an enabling environment to empower women and to enhance the coordination among relevant ministries and councils involved in ECD. A Results Framework was also developed and the financial simulation is currently underway. This model package is currently also being translated into an investment case in order for MOSS to submit to the Ministry of Finance for financial support.

As a step for improving the service quality, the draft of standards for assessing the quality of existing nurseries is being reviewed and finalized in partnership with MOSS. The assessment tool will be piloted in three governorates (Aswan, Gharbia and Cairo). Upon successful completion of this pilot, the standards will be expanded to nationwide.

In addition, UNICEF and the AG-Fund/Arab Council for Childhood and Development (ACCD) signed a protocol for tripartite collaboration with MOE. UNICEF and ACCD developed a replicable excellence model for improving the quality of kindergartens for children (4-5 years old) to improve

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¹⁰ World Bank and key line ministries attended the event, including: Ministry of Education, Social Solidarity, Health and Population, Finance, Planning and the National Council for Childhood & Motherhood.

children's school readiness. This model is a pilot school-based reform package and will contribute to develop 'model' Professional Development Pre-Schools (PDPS) over a two-year framework.

Teacher training and administration and management training will be delivered during the first phase. PDPS will then train 5 neighbouring Kindergartens in the next phase. Approximately 600 children age, 185 school administrators/supervisors and 40 teachers will benefit from this pilot. Based on the results of the pilot, the reform package will be scaled-up. The actual implementation began in early 2017 with the support of the Thematic Funding.

KRA2: Out of school girls and boys have improved access to quality community-based primary education in intervention areas.

In 2016, the Thematic Funding contributed to co-finance the inception phase of the EU-funded programme "Expanding Access to Education and Protection for at Risk Children in Egypt."

The inception phase covered January-June 2016; within this time period, UNICEF coordinated with MOE to carry-out the baseline assessment and identify the target locations (governorate and district level). The identification of targeted areas was made on the basis of available information for a total of twelve selection criteria that were agreed upon between UNICEF and MOE. These criteria encompassed: a range of education-specific statistics (e.g., net enrolment rates, gender gap, class density, socio-economic indicators such as poverty); the MOE priorities as may be spelt-out in the Strategic Plan; UNICEF's experience and presence in certain locations; as well as synergy with other national programmes (Takafol) or those of international or national development partners.

Following the analysis of available data for each of the twelve indicators, a second level of ranking was carried out of governorates within each of the selection criteria. Where relevant, this was done in comparison to the national average. As a result, MOE and UNICEF agreed to target eight governorates under Component One of the EU programme (community-based education), and five governorates under the Component Two (inclusive education). Further, MOE and UNICEF designed a phased-in approach according to which the target locations are presented in two cohorts:

- Year One Cohort One: Component One would target the three governorates of Sohag, Assiut and Qena. Component Two would work in the two governorates of Alexandria and Sohag.
- Year Two –Cohort Two: Component One would target five additional governorates and Component Two would expand to three additional governorates.

In order to specify the target community schools for the Programme, joint-community-based education profile assessments were conducted with the Mudiriyas in 5 governorates (Assiut, Qena, Marsa Matrouth, Alexandria and Baheira). The assessment included information such as number and locations of existing community-based schools, number of children enrolled, teacher profiles, challenges, opportunities, etc.

UNICEF established robust relationships with both Assiut and Qena Mudiriyas that contributed in the capacity development of education administration at the governorate/community levels. Actions plans were developed under a consultative manner with the Mudiriyas of Assiut and Qena to nominate new community school sites for Central MOE inspection and approval.

Furthermore, eight NGOs were shortlisted in Assiut and Qena for implementing activities on the ground. Both school nomination and NGO selection is pending MOE clearance. The target of selecting 36 community schools in Assiut and Qena for 2016/2017 academic year was not fully reached since only 26 schools completed the inspection (based on national standards for quality community-based

education distributed in November 2015 nationwide). In 2017, UNICEF plans to identify the additional ten community schools through evidence-based planning process, jointly with MOE.

KRA 3: Girls and boys with disabilities have improved access to quality education in mainstream schools in intervention areas.

A total of thirty additional primary schools were also identified in Alexandria and Sohag governorates to become inclusive schools. Within the thirty selected schools, ten schools received resource room furniture and educational materials. Furthermore, three schools in Alexandria have been identified to receive pre-fabricated rooms to be used as resource or training rooms and three schools in Sohag along with one school in Alexandria were selected to be prepared as Performance Improvement Centres. UNICEF equipped 15 resource rooms (ten in Sohag and five in Alexandria) serving nine schools with educational materials. Teachers used the resource rooms to provide supportive instruction to the disabled students.

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Constraints and lessons learnt

The MOE procedures to authorize and clear field visits to the schools remained highly centralized. The overall process continued to time-consuming and prone to delays of works. To mitigate this risk, UNICEF reached an agreement with MOE to develop a quarterly detailed field trip schedule for further sharing with MOE and the Ministry of Industrial and International Cooperation (MOIIC). Within this new coordination arrangement, UNICEF would re-submit details of each trip 20 days prior to the visit in order to obtain government required approvals. To better facilitate works under such structure, UNICEF signed annual Annual Work Plans with local governorates to ensure that there is a commitment at the local level and to ensure timely implementation at the sub-national level.

Long government clearance procedures and approval resulted in delays of field implementations. While agreements from the central MOE is essential not only for managing and implementing the Programme, administrations at the governorates level also require a go-sign to deliver activities on the ground. Faced with the uncertainty of how long it will take to obtain ministry approval, 2016 planning required frequent amendments, and UNICEF swiftly adjusted its planning capacity to respond to unforeseen changes at the central and governorate level.

The ECD Situational Analysis and Rapid Assessment contributed to gather important conclusions about the status quo of early childhood development programming in Egypt. A revised and enhanced ECD strategy for Egypt will need to the existing system-related barriers. Coverage and access to quality ECD services are low in areas and population groups where the need is high, including in many rural communities and in un-planned urban settlements. These are also the areas where there is a dearth of human resources as well as appropriate facilities. Pre-primary education is not part of the

compulsory school cycle in Egypt. The Early Child Development and formal education are divided by law into two types, namely: nurseries and kindergartens; this entails additional complexity in terms of mandate at the ministerial level.

4. RESOURCES

The estimated 2016 planned amount for the Education programme was \$ 1.4 million. Funding available was \$ 5.1 million at the end of the year. While only 50 percent of the Regular Resources (RR) was made available by end of the year, UNICEF fully reached its funding target under Other Regular Resources (ORR). This result was mainly due to the generous support from UNICEF National Committees and European donor countries. The Other Resources –Emergency (ORE) received in 2016 are presented to provide the complete overview of the status of funding for the Education programme (regular and emergency).

Sector	Funding Type	Planned \$	Received \$
	RR	269,000.00	138,332
Education	ORR	1,155,000.00	2,927,366
	ORE	0	2,052,211
Total (all resources)		1,424,000.00	5,117,909

5. FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION

In 2016, UNICEF Egypt utilized \$ 138,111 (RR) and \$194,419 (ORR) for activities and interventions described above in the present report. Expenditures were mostly related to inclusive education and community-based schools. Since the present report focuses on Thematic Funding for regular programme, the table below presents the delivery rate under OR and ORR only.

Other Resources – Regular	RR \$	ORR \$
KRA 1: Community Based Education (CBE), community models of		
quality pre-primary education scale up	41,437	11,018
KRA 2: Out of school girls and boys have improved access to quality		
community-based primary education in intervention areas		41,732
KRA 3: Girls and boys with disabilities have improved access to		
quality education in mainstream schools in intervention areas	96,674	141,668
Grand Total	138,111	194,419

6. FUTURE WORKPLAN

Building upon existing achievements and partnerships, UNICEF will continue to providing technical assistance to MOE to scale up the existing models of community-based approach and pilot models for preprimary education. During 2017, the implementation will continue under the current Country Programme under the same 4 KRAs presented earlier in this report.

In 2018, UNICEF Egypt will enter the new Country Programme (2018-2022) where the scope of interventions will expand to create more emphasis on 'incremental' development of children. The new KRAs will be organized in four new areas of work.

- Increase access for the most vulnerable children and adolescents to adequate learning
 opportunities: UNICEF Egypt will directly support the establishment of community and inclusive
 schools. This includes improving school and centre infrastructure and provision of equipment and
 material. Main efforts to address social norms and promote positive empowerment will include
 advocacy and communication for development on the importance of: education to increase
 enrolment and reduce drop-out, tolerance, acceptance and integration of children with disabilities.
- 2. Improve teaching and learning relevant to the cognitive, social and economic empowerment of children and adolescents. UNICEF Egypt will directly support the development of teaching and learning content and professional development of educational personnel. Corresponding capacity development includes relevant training for school principals, teachers, social workers and psychologists, as well as facilitators of youth centres. Programming will include promoting a non-violent learning environment in and around schools, a gender-responsive teaching and learning environment.
- 3. Expand access for children on the move to adequate quality learning opportunities. UNICEF will continue to sustain linkages between formal and informal education, and support access to learning for refugee and other vulnerable children. Since not all refugee children have access to the public education due to legal or language barriers, UNICEF will contribute to strengthen the existing community-based primary education for refugees. Social engagement and life-skills and citizenship education for refugee and migrant youth will be part of future programming.
- 4. Enhance the system capacity for effective and efficient service delivery. Through policy dialogue and strategic partnerships, UNICEF Egypt will focus on enhancing strategies and policies on education and youth development through data, evidence and advocacy. Great focus will be placed on further research of central and de-central management and implementation capacity, as well as linkages of budget allocations, expenditure and cost-efficiency of education programmes.

The planned funding requirements to support the above areas of work will be \$ 22 million during the entire programme cycle (80 percent ORR and 20 percent RR).

7. EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Thematic Funding provided significant support for priority activities related to pre-school education, reaching the out of school children, and inclusive quality education. The Thematic funding support to the Education programme in Egypt has been instrumental to enable UNICEF to attain the results achieved in 2016. New interventions planned for 2017, including pilots, will highly benefit from the Thematic Fund; in this regard, the flexible nature of the Thematic Fund will allow UNICEF Egypt to support crucial interventions generating evidence and data for further advocacy with the national counterparts and decision makers.

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