Technical Assistance for Development and Civic Education in Egypt (4E)

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1. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIC EDUCATION IN EGYPT (4E)
AN INTRODUCTION

On the 25th of September 2015, the UN General Assembly’s resolution A/RES/70/1 announced a “plan of action for people, plane and prosperity.”¹ A list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals were proposed to be achieved by 2030, under which 169 development targets were set, looking at: ending poverty and hunger, improving health conditions and well-being of the global population, offering education opportunities to all segments of the population, achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls to know and take ownership of their rights and responsibilities, making available healthy water and sustainable energy supplies to all communities, promoting inclusive and equitable economic growth and industrialization, building resilient infrastructures and settlements, protecting and restoring our environment, promoting peace, and strengthening global partnerships.

Among these, two stand out: one as the final aim, and one as a general and indispensable means of achieving it. As such, the final aim of all development targets and work should be the achievement of peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16), and the mandatory means should be education (SDG 4). For a development process and its results to be sustainable, individual, local and society-wide ownership is needed, education being the quintessential empowerment tool for such ownership to take place. Further on, sustainable development is the cornerstone of a peaceful and inclusive society, as, through its results, it builds cultures, structures, attitudes and actions that promote positive value creation and maintenance at all levels of life and society.

The achievement of the new development goals requires thus a more empowering education curriculum, together with the recognition of a wider set of civic attributes, principles, values, knowledge and skills. People’s “ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world”² needs to be complemented with the “understanding of the causes of social and economic inequality, locally and

¹ UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1 from 2015, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, New York, 2015, Preamble.
globally, and values, knowledge, skills, and “behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.” For this to happen, the curriculum of three education lines needs to be merged: development education, civic education and peace education.

1.1. THE PROJECT
The present report is the output of a 5-months long assessment process implemented in the frame of the project “Technical Assistance for Development and Civic Education in Egypt” (4E), which was implemented by the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR) between October 2015 – February 2016. The project in itself was built around the main objective of supporting interested Egyptian organizations, initiatives and practitioners linked to development education and youth work in:

- Generating demand-driven and evidence-based development education and youth work strategies and programs;
- Increasing their cumulative impact generation capacity through a better knowledge of past and existing actors and initiatives, understanding of the needs, challenges, achievements, impact and lessons learned in the country;
- Improving the integrated nature of their work, through increased awareness, knowledge and skills on topics related to development and peace education curricula;
- Facilitating exchange of best practices and lessons learned in development education and youth work.

In order to produce sustainable results, the project targeted those Egyptian alliances, organizations and professionals that are active in the various areas of development education and youth work, and that wish to enhance their impact at the individual and community level. Creating a core group of knowledgeable and skilled educators opens up the possibility of multiplying knowledge among a wider constituency, linked to youth education in active community work, leadership, social entrepreneurship, negotiation and development education.

The project was implemented with the financial assistance of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs from its official development assistance budget, in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) – Regional Center for Europe and the CIS.

1.2. CUMULATIVE IMPACT AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT: METHODOLOGY & PROCESS
The Cumulative Impact and Needs Assessment (CINA) process was designed with a dual aim: to bring well documented information on the present Egyptian development education and youth work context, and, through it, to create an argumented base on which to build a customized training curriculum.

The information gathering and data interpretation work took into account the following principles: multi-stakeholder approach, systemic and cumulative analysis, local ownership of the results, participative process, dialogic approach and confidentiality. It was implemented in three almost parallel phases: comprehensive actor mapping, desk review and survey/interview implementation.

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During the actor mapping process, 98 Egyptian and international organization were identified as engaged in Egypt on various topics of development education and youth work. The desk review facilitated the gathering and consulting of over 700 project documents, reports, analysis and online web-page content related to the 98 mapped organizations, and to the Egyptian development education and youth work context in general. 15 interviews and following survey process were implemented with key Egyptian informants, gathering first-hand information and experiences on the successes and challenges facing practitioners and organizations engaging in development education and youth work on the ground.

The interview/survey process had the following demographics:
- 25% of the survey/interview participants were represented by men, 75% by women.
- Two thirds of the respondents were Egyptian nationals, the majority of them working in national and local NGOs. Next to these organizations, respondents came from international NGOs, intergovernmental organizations, youth organizations, social enterprises and the formal education sector.
- The average year of experience in the case of the female respondents was of 10.55 years, in the case of male respondents 12.75.
- In what their expertise areas are concerned, all respondents were directly linked to youth work and community development, retaining experience in 28 different thematic and technical areas. Thematically the experience areas can be linked to 8 sustainable development goals out of the 17: quality education (25.00%), decent work and economic growth (16.66%), peace, justice and strong institutions (12.50%), partnership for the goals (10.41%), reduce inequalities (6.25%), gender equality (4.16%), sustainable cities and communities (2.08%), and responsible consumption and production (2.08%). The remaining 20.83% of the respondents had technical expertise and background in research, project design, proposal writing, PR & communication and partnership management.

The assessment gathered information on the impact creation needs and challenges, strategies overcoming these challenges, former/existing/future approaches to development education and youth work, achievement and successes, impact measuring, lessons learned and best practices. The obtained information was analyzed on four level, as follows:

1. Personal competency level:
   a. Existing qualifications, knowledge and skills of practitioners working in development education and youth work in Egypt.

2. Community impact level:
   a. Changes sought in the community through the planned/implemented projects;
   b. Groups with access to educational and youth projects;
   c. Challenges facing the target groups in accessing development education and youth projects.

3. Program/organizational level:
   a. Content of the operational work being implemented;
   b. Type of information being transferred during the implemented projects;
   c. Methodology of information transfers;
   d. Cumulative impact creation capacities;
   e. Challenges impact creation;
   f. Successes in impact creation;
   g. Monitoring & evaluation methods.

4. General environment:
   a. Understanding conferred to key concepts of development education and youth work;
b. Thematic knowledge and skills needs within development education and youth work on the ground.

The major shortcoming affecting the results of the assessment process was related the current country context which does not favor open discussions and interviews on certain topics deemed sensitive, among which civic engagement and participation. Due to it, accessing key informants for the interview and survey process proved quite difficult, lowering the multi-stakeholder character of the process.

The following section of the report presents the findings of the assessment and offers a range of operational and policy oriented recommendations towards boosting the impact of development education and youth work in Egypt.
2. CUMULATIVE IMPACT AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT: FINDINGS

2.1. THE GENERAL CONTEXT

The status of active and constructive community member requires a set of values, principles, knowledge and skills recognized by the community, passed down through the different institutions of the society and state: family, peer groups, schools, organizations, and so on. While in the background of each young person’s involvement in the community life rests the informal education received within the family, the formal and non-formal education sector has a decisive role in shaping youth into constructive and active society members. Therefore, understanding the historical and contextual factors influencing the education process and content is quite important. It helps in identifying what qualifies as positive and negative impact on the capability of youth to engage in the community life, and in determining strategies for growing the efficiency of initiatives targeting youth and their active participation in the community.

1. Whether they contain elements of civic, development, peace education, or a mix of them, Egyptian youth are influenced in their desire and openness to engage in their own communities through the education sector and family environment. While according to the key informants family support ranks quite low in encouraging youth for community work on voluntary bases, the overall assessment shows that the non-formal sector takes the lead in inspiring youth in finding constructive manners in which to build the community. The formal education system ranks second and third, differentiation being made between state and private educational institutions. Last ranking are the workplaces of adults and young professionals, these offering the least of the incentives for active community membership.

2. The capacity of the different sectors to instill a sense of active community membership lays in their understanding of what active membership consists of, whether youth should have the role and retain the capacity to shape community life, and the type of education they see fit for preparing youth to face life challenges. The assessment looked at how the above mentioned sectors understand community engagement and the education types that can prepare youth for it. The existence and understanding of four concepts was assessed: development education, peace education, civic education and youth work.

2.1. On the level of the non-formal education sector, there is a good differentiation being made between the four concepts, with a balanced understanding of the necessary connection among them. For development education, the most highlighted elements were the local and global development issues related awareness raising possibility, coupled with capacity building opportunities that are based on practical and experiential methodologies, interaction and participation, and aim towards raising the sustainability of education projects in development. Peace education was linked by the majority of the respondents to the values of peace, tolerance,
acceptance of differences, coexistence and harmony, with the needed “skills for peace” of negotiation, dialogue, conflict resolution and reconciliation. Civic education was identified as a concept closely linked with community focus for common benefits, community participation based on knowledge of roles, rights and responsibilities, participation in governance processes, and ownership of the community life. Finally, the concept of youth work was described as linked with capacity building for the empowerment and benefit of youth, related to their employability, business skills, vocational training, and overall welfare improvement.

2.2. The interconnectedness of the four concepts was also signaled by those that took part in the assessment. Thus, youth work was considered to address development related aspects as well, civic education was closely related to peace education through its ability to create an environment where individuals and communities can live together in harmony, and development education was linked with active community life by empowering social engagement and offering information on responsible citizenship.

2.3. Looking across the spectrum of results, at the opposite of the non-formal education sector lays the traditional family and community structure. The assessment was mainly interested in the views of marginalized groups on educating youth towards, and offering them possibility for community participation, where access to formal and/or non-formal education is problematic. However, understanding the general perception on the issue wasn’t neglected either. The general desk review has found several studies that cite Egyptian parents’ perception about the type of knowledge and skills that would make their youth good community members. The following perception on good community membership is representative: “right and responsibility-based relationship between the citizen and the state”  

“[…] responsibility to pay taxes and obey the law, while the state respects and protects his or her rights.” In the particular case of marginalized groups, the possibility of active community membership is not always opened for youth, nor is the preference for allocating time for such educational efforts. On the one hand, the non-formal education sector, represented mostly by NGOs, is lacking credibility and legitimacy in certain segments of the community. On the other hand, there is a generational gap in valuing the role of youth in the community, and the changes they are able to bring if possibility arises.

2.4. Between the two ends of this spectrum lays the formal education sector, which has developed its community membership related perception and educational content based on the historical heritage of Egypt and the rapidly changing country context. The assessment has found information dating back to 1993 on Egypt’s official position related to values, knowledge and skills that Egyptian

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7 Ibidem.

8 Opinion expressed by young Egyptian local NGO representative, working in the field of development, youth empowerment and job creation in marginalized communities.
youth should possess and good citizens. If in the period before 1993 loyalty and self-sacrifice for the common good were instilled in youth, in 1997 this was complemented by focus on the personality development, information on rights and obligations, and forming youth with positive reactions to different life situation. In 2001 importance was also given to critical thinking, participation and mutual collaboration for problem solving.

In 2003 the Egyptian Ministry of Education has highlighted several values, principles, knowledge and skills which youth would require to be an integrated and constructive community member. These are: “civic education (duties and rights); life skills (ability to negotiate, to cooperate, tolerance of others, and diversity in opinions); government system (democracy, constitution, People’s Council, elections, citizens’ role in elections); preserving heritage (Arab and Egyptian heritage, Islamic and Coptic heritage, Arab and Egyptian values and traditions); Egypt’s relations with other countries (on the Arab level, the Islamic level, the African level, and the global level); non-government organizations (conditions to establish NGOs, the role of NGOs); Arab organizations and institutions (League of Arab States, Arab Common Market, Islamic Conference Organization, African Unity Organization; and international organization and institutions (United Nations, World Health Organization, and International Labour Organization).

3. To understand the cumulative impact creation capacity of all the above mentioned sectors, it is also important to identify which are the regional and international trends with which policy, activities and content link up to. For the general country context it is important to mention the 2013 Carnegie Paper, “A Review of Citizenship Education in Arab Nations”, which has looked at the ways in which countries of the MENA region are integrating the concepts of democracy, human rights, women’s rights, citizenship identity, attributes of good citizens, and civic activities and skills into their formal education curricula. According to the publication, Egypt’s formal education sector engages with the mentioned concepts to a certain extent, highlighting their existence and use in Islam, in an effort to draw the concepts closer to the cultural, moral and religious norms and values accepted by the different communities at the time in question.

4. The current assessment took another approach to looking into the cumulative impact creation capacity of educational efforts. Respondents were requested to rank internal trends that characterize program and activity development favoring youth and community membership: national priorities, international conventions signed by Egypt, needs of the beneficiaries, donor requirements, lessons learned from previous projects, existing local and national capacities. The responses show

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an almost even distribution among the six factors considered, a higher inclination being displayed towards donor requirements and the needs of the beneficiaries.

5. Next to aligning activities to goals, needs and priorities external to organizations, the sustainability of impact requires internal objectives set alongside clear cut visions of change. Analyzing the vision statement of the organizations included in the assessment’s actor map, the assessment has found that the majority of the organizations are working towards changing the empowerment level of youth as an intermediary step in social change creation. Out of the 35 identified terms during the texts analysis, the most frequently used were: youth development/empowerment, sustainable development, improving people’s lives, democratic transition, social change, human rights promotion, gender equality, child protection, and creating peaceful, tolerant and accepting society. Figure 4 shows the frequency of appearance of these terms in the analyzed vision and mission statements. The remaining 25 terms had an occurrence ranging from 11 to 1, and were mostly describing activities that are put in the service of change generation, rather than a vision of change.

6. The assessment has identified 47 areas of activity that the mapped organizations implement towards the achievement of their vision and mission, each organization being active in more than one of these areas. Figure 5 exemplifies the identifies areas, together with the frequency rate of
each activity within the mapped organizations. Training and capacity building (BROWN) activities rank first, with a total of 21.75% of all mapped activities, being followed by empowerment and life skills development activities (DARK GREEN) with 13.05%. Programs targeting the economic empowerment and livelihood creation for youth (LIGHT ORANGE) rank third in the assessment with 9.57%, being followed by activities promoting active community engagement (ORANGE) with 8.70%. The remaining activities have the following ranking: gender equality related programs (DARK ORANGE) – 8.41%, democracy development (BLUE) – 7.83%, health and environment (LIGHT GREEN) – 6.67%, resource material and policy generation (MAGENTA) – 5.80%, experience sharing (DARK RED) – 5.22%, improvement of access and infrastructure to formal education (PURPLE) – 4.93%, and various types of financial aids (TURQUOISE) – 3.48%. The remaining 4.64% is split between arts, ICT, sports and media (YELLOW), as activities promoting active and constructive community involvement for youth.

### 2.2. CHALLENGES AND NEEDS IN CUMULATIVE IMPACT CREATION

The assessment has highlighted several challenges and needs affecting development education and youth work in Egypt, and their overall capacity for creating cumulative impact on youth and their active community membership.

1. On an overall scale, both the desk review and the interview/survey process has revealed that there is little documentation and quite few dialogues are taking place on the impact creation capacity of organizations involved in development education and youth work in Egypt. While the formal education sector has been put under scrutiny by numerous organizations, highlighting their gaps and needs to be addressed, “literature on the impact of outside school programs and organizations are almost non-existent.”\(^{10}\) The few organizations that do undertake such initiatives had been found to be mostly international, local or national appraisals being very few. Few dialogue spaces reduce the efficiency of the learning and reflective practice cycles of project management, decreasing the possibility for joint needs assessments and project planning. It also makes it quite hard to collect lesson learned and improve future project planning and programming based on these. The assessment has shown that alignment with lessons learned from previous projects ranks second-to-last (14.52%) in the preference of respondents in developing new project ideas and activities.

2. While the majority of the respondents consider their projects to be local demand driven, and answering the needs of their beneficiaries, the analysis of their cumulative practice shows otherwise. Having at their disposal limited and short term funds, the majority of the organizations working in development education and youth work in Egypt align their project objectives and activities with donor requirements. This option ranks first among the preference of the respondents, with 20.16% considering it a priority. In the same time, aligning project to national priorities ranks last, with 12.50%. Placing a strong emphasis on donor requirements during planning and strategizing can hinder the long term sustainability of any project that seeks lasting societal impact. This can be assured only by placing in the center of all processes the interlinked needs of the beneficiaries and the community, transforming these into development opportunities. In the same time, focus on needs and not donor targets reduces the risk of competition for funds, and raises the cooperation possibility\(^{11}\) towards cumulative impact creation.

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3. Placing needs and objectives external to project beneficiaries at the base of the project reduces the likelihood of proper situation assessment prior to project planning. This, in turn, damages the vision setting process. And sustainable and cumulative impact rests on the appropriateness of the vision and the activities implemented within the different projects. As shown earlier, the assessment has identified 35 terms that are frequently used in the vision statements of the mapped development education and youth work organizations. Only 10 of these terms (28.57%) defined sought change or impact, the rest (71.43%) naming activities that can be placed in the service of change generation. There is a considerable need to formulate correct vision statements, covering the sought changes within the community, linking this to the needs and expectations of both the organizations and their beneficiaries.

4. As shown earlier, the desk review has revealed a total of 47 activity areas in which Egyptian organizations implement programs related to youth work and development education. At a closer look at their thematic coverage, the majority of them are more youth work and civic education related, leaving the development and peace education segments quite uncovered. Figure 6 showcases development and peace education related thematic areas and the extent to which they are included in the educational and practical work of the mapped organizations.

Overlapping these findings with the ones on the vision statement of mapped organizations (Figure 4), we may see that while the visions explicitly highlighting peace, tolerance and acceptance rank last in frequency, in this latter case the most needed thematic areas according to respondents are those related to the exact same issues: post-dispute youth inclusion practices, multiculturalism, traditional practices for a peaceful community. This is yet another instance that shows the need to create a stronger link between needs assessment and vision/change definition. It would insure that the created impact boosts the potential for constructive community membership among youth rather than deteriorating it, or maintaining it a pre-program implementation level.

5. Maintaining sustainable results among youth, and transforming them into active and constructive members of their communities requires further steps. The optimal mix of thematic modules that can bind together youth work, development education, peace education and civic education needs to be complemented by proper content of the knowledge transfer process, mixing theory and practice, skills and tools. Based on the desk review, most formal education programs “place less emphasis on
knowledge and skills than on underlying values”¹², not providing “the pupils with the skills of interactivity, participation, problem solving and awareness of their surrounding or to accept others’ opinion and the legitimacy of differences.”¹³ The interview/ survey process has also shown that in the case of the respondents, knowledge transfer towards youth offers priority to the theoretical components, skills and tools transmission being on the second place. In what organizational capacity building is concerned, improving of staff capacity takes precedent over the overall institutional capacity development. On the question “Which would be the ideal situation to improve impact?” through knowledge transfer and capacity building, the respondents have highlighted the need to prioritize skills and tools transfer in all projects targeting the education of youth towards active community membership, staff capacity building still maintaining its lead position as a key factor in improving the capacity of organizations to create sustainable impact on the youth and their communities.

6. Looking at external factors that can influence the sustainability of project impact, location and the beneficiaries’ access to activities needs to be considered. Building on the earlier findings according to which youth engaged in non-formal education and activities have the highest access to the needed knowledge and skills to become constructive and active members of the society, 61.54% of the respondents have considered that youth living in urban areas have more opportunities to engage in such projects, thus urban activities and project have the higher level of impact. The reviewed literature has shown that “frontier governorates have limited access to these programs”¹⁴, and “most programs carried out by CSOs are centralized in the capital and big cities; Cairo, Alexandria and Menya, and the rest are neglected, especially in Upper Egypt, Sinai and the Red Sea Provinces.”¹⁵

7. Lack of financial resources ranks the highest among

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the factors challenging or hindering youth access to programs. This is followed by the lack of mobility opportunities to the location of the program, and the geographical location of the venue and project activity itself. Gender bias, youth bias of communities holding strong onto traditional values has been also mentioned as a key contributing factor, affecting young girls'/ women’s possibility to take part in activities. Further factors mentioned by respondents include: legitimacy and credibility of NGOs at community level, security concerns, lack of youth engagement, lack of access to formal education systems, lack of efficient advertisement avenues for future and ongoing activities in rural and/ or marginalized communities, language barriers, marginalization, lack of legitimacy of youth as community actors, and the consequent youth disempowerment.

One key aspect needs to be highlighted: repetition of programs that do not build on the results of the previous or existing ones. While the respondents have ranked alignment with local and national capacities as the third most important method through which programs are built, receiving 17.34% of the votes, still the need to reduce siloed approach to development and youth work is clearly shown. Relying on informal meetings as the lead method of communicating with peer organizations (according to 26.66% of respondents) reduces the possibility of multi-stakeholder assessments, dialogues and experience sharing, diminishes the possibility of creating a clear overview of projects and activities being implemented on the ground, and raises the chances of effort and methodology duplication on certain issues. As a joint effect, the possibility of contributing collectively to the overall vision of developing active and constructive members of communities is considerably reduced, and cumulative impact proves hard to be achieved.

8. The respondents were also asked to list further contextual challenges that affect their efforts to meet project objectives and overall vision. Figure 7 is a visual representation of the listed challenges. Complementing the ones that have been addressed in earlier paragraphs, some are related to the beneficiaries of the activities, the bureaucratic permissiveness of the system, or the donor requirements. The aim is to offer additional information on those adjacent areas and needs, which, once explored and bridged, can contribute considerably to the efficiency of project results.

![Figure 7- Contextual challenges to daily project implementation](image-url)
The most significant challenge proved to be the lack of linkage between actors and platforms that can sustain joint work, being followed by the inconsistent education level of beneficiaries, affecting the knowledge and skills bases onto which to build with non-formal tools and methods. The effects of the inconsistency in the formal education system were further stressed, which does not prove to have the capacity to prepare youth for the requirements of the market. These further burdens the non-formal sector, which needs to fill in the knowledge and skills gaps left open by the formal schooling system. The difficulty of navigating the state bureaucracy has been also highlighted among the most stringent ones, together with the need of more clear legal frameworks for initiatives that try to create more livelihood and community engagement opportunities for youth.

9. Respondents have similarly listed programmatic and organizational challenges that hinder the long term sustainability and impact of their work. The lack of proper financial resources ranks first among these challenges, followed by the lack of reflective practices within the organizations and projects. This results in little needs analysis being implemented and the absence of sustainability plans. NGOs are also considered to have little capacity in business management, impacting directly their financial sustainability. This may be considered one of the aspects that influence organizations in prioritizing donor requirements in project planning and development. There are also few human resources to conduct monitoring and evaluation processes during the implementation of activities, and in the post-project periods. These evaluations mostly focus on the achievement of the short term objectives, and meeting the quantitative indicators of projects. This practice leaves uncovered the monitoring of medium to long term results and qualitative impact, which are the key indicators of the achievement of the overall vision for which the projects and activities were implemented in the first place.

The practical applications of the implemented trainings and capacity building programs targeting youth has been also questioned by the respondents, due to the lack of participatory knowledge transfer approaches, and the earlier mentioned lack of focus on skills and practical knowledge in favour of knowledge based learning.

### 2.3. STRENGTHS AND EFFORTS TOWARDS CUMULATIVE IMPACT CREATION

Creating lasting and cumulative impact requires first and foremost learning from own projects and activities, drawing lesson and integrating them into the new project management cycle, and finding spaces and events where meeting peer organizations and sharing experience is possible.
1. Participants to the assessment were asked to identify what are the factors within their work that contribute to boosting the sustainability of their impact. Seven clusters of factors were identified: organizational & programmatic, staff related, collaboration & experience sharing, beneficiaries related, funding related, methodology & toolbox, demand driven.

The two most important clusters were considered to be the ones relating the organization & programmatic factors and the methodology & toolboxes ones, each accumulating 21.43% of the factors mentioned by the respondents. On the organizational & programmatic side, among the factors mentioned were: strong organizational partnerships, flexibility of project design in line with the context and situation addressed, organizational procedures, good project and activity models, well studied program content, programmatic work, enhanced organizational capacities, and post project support provision to beneficiaries. In what the methodology and toolbox cluster is concerned, here participants have listed: practical tools integrated into the information and knowledge transfer process, direct work with the beneficiaries, awareness raising on the planned activities within the beneficiary group of the project/ activity, experiential methods of teaching through which beneficiaries are trained how to rely on already acquired knowledge and skills, bottom-up approaches to all activities, and utilizing various youth empowerment methods.

Having projects and activities that are based on the needs and necessities of the community rank third in importance, with 19.05% of the respondents signaling factors contributing to it: participatory project development processes with the involvement of the local community, and giving ownership to the local community in the process of filling in the identified gaps at community level. Factors related to staff proficiency were mentioned in 14.29% of cases, including: professional and knowledgeable individuals hired for the right positions, expertise and experience of staff in the areas of work they are implementing, and personal drive to achieve the change set forth.

The beneficiaries and their project activities were also considered to contribute significantly to the creation of lasting impact (according to 9.52% of respondents), through their personal and professional profiles matching the project objectives, their motivation in being part of the projects, and their ability of taking forward the received knowledge and skills, and multiply
them in their own communities. Factors related to collaboration & experience sharing did not include only peer collaboration between organizations, but also some related to cross-sectoral cooperation, with focus on collaboration with local and national authorities. 7.14% of respondents have stated that the impact of their projects was boosted by such joint work. The same percentage was reached by factors relating to funding, especially developing alternative financial sustainability next to donor provided funds.

The assessment has conducted further research into the clusters identified by the respondents, in order to highlight what are the key strengths that organizational can maximize in order to bridge the identified gaps and build on for creating cumulative impact.

2. On the organizational & programmatic side it is important to note the wide array of meeting and dialogue spaces that Egyptian organizations working for development education and youth use as environments for boosting their cooperation and joint impact. Next to the informal meetings, that may be less effective in this sense, alliances and joint projects were considered the most used cooperation tools to reach common goals (each scoring 20.00% on their application rate). Third in line are conferences, selected by 13.33% of respondents, offering opportunity not only for networking and partnership creation, but also for the very important experience exchange, reflection and best practice showcasing among organizations working for similar visions. The list is continued with formal meetings, working groups and experience sharing workshops (each receiving 6.67% of the answers), offering space for more focused work both topically and organizationally.

3. In what the overall educational methodology is concerned, the interview/survey process had shown that all three forms of education are employed: formal, non-formal and informal. The assessment has used the following basic interpretations of the three methods:

- “Formal education - Organized, guided by a formal curriculum, leads to a formally recognized credential such as a high school completion diploma or a degree, and is often guided and recognized by government at some level. Teachers are usually trained as professionals in some way.

- Non-formal education - Organized (even if it is only loosely organized), may or may not be guided by a formal curriculum. This type of education may be led by a qualified teacher or by a leader with more experience. Though it doesn’t result in a formal degree or diploma, non-formal education is highly enriching and builds an individual’s skills and capacities. Continuing education courses are an example for adults. Girl guides and boy scouts are an example for children. It is often considered more engaging, as the learner’s interest is a driving force behind their participation.
• Informal education - No formal curriculum and no credits earned. The teacher is simply someone with more experience such as a parent, grandparent or a friend.”16

As the assessment has focused mostly on civil society organizations that complement the efforts of the Egyptian school system, half of the respondents have stated to use non-formal educational methods (e.g. community based programming, simulations and scenario development activities, interactive/ hand-on training workshops, drama and music classes, various forms of public advocacy campaigns), informal education methods ranking second (e.g. after school activities, awareness raising sessions), while formal education methods third (e.g. formal training at authorized technical/vocational training centers, interviews, coaching, general seminars). A quarter of the respondents have stated that they use more than one method, mixing them according to the needs of the beneficiaries, and the objectives of the project themselves.

4. When assessing the manner in which projects are developed, one of the most important criteria to be taken into consideration is the extent to which needs and feedback of the local community and project beneficiaries are integrated into project planning. 18.55% of the respondents (2nd ranked as shown by Figure 3) have highlighted this practice as a means of improving project impact, using tools as: needs assessment, socio-economic assessment, building on previous results, during and post program evaluation, participatory planning process, research, focus groups, participatory rural appraisal, and participatory rapid appraisal.

5. Among the respondents, there are also efforts of integrating, next the needs of the community, the capacities and resources available at local and national level in order to achieve the best impact of the projects (17.34% of the respondents report such practice, raking 3rd according to Figure 3).

This helps cumulative impact creation through: reducing dependency on foreign experts and capacities, offering more credibility and development space for the local know-how, ensuring full local ownership of the projects, opening up the possibility of experience exchange and organizational link-up through the same resource persons used in different organizations and different projects.

6. Stressing further the importance of using local and national capacities in projects and activities targeting youth and their active community membership, one needs to look at the qualifications of the national and local experts in the field of work they are active in. On the side of the formal education system, reports and studies have shown that “the relevant problems among teachers is still the lack of skills of human and social relations and of participation that can enable pupils to make decisions, chose among alternatives and acquire the skills of social behaviour.” Assessing the capacity of staff that work in the non-formal and informal education sector, we might see a different situation. Among the interview/survey respondents 68.75% have stated that they have consistent, higher level formal education in the field of development work, education, youth work, and 12.50% have stated that they have had some education in the field. Only 18.75% have stated not having any previous education related to the present field of work, developing knowledge and experience at the workplace.

7. Identifying and understanding the factors that can boost or hinder project impact, and, based on them, implementing reflective practice process for strengthening the sustainability of our results also requires easy to use mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress, activities, results and changes that we do or do not generate. The interviewed/surveyed organizations have identified quite a wide array of monitoring and evaluation tools from their own practice. Having at the base fully developed monitoring and evaluation departments and/or monitoring and evaluation plans, the following information gathering and analysis tools were mentioned: surveys/questionnaires, focus groups, monthly project reviews, activity monitoring forms, stakeholder management questionnaires, pre- and post-program skills assessment for beneficiaries, participatory evaluation, bi-annual technical and financial reports, field visits, post-project community studies, beneficiary feedback, random community sampling, external monitoring and evaluation, experience exchange, key performance indicators, donor monitoring and evaluation and indicators systems, reflection, data analysis, lessons learned workshops, observation sessions.

8. These are all quite efficient short term impact monitoring tool, providing a considerable amount of quantitative data to analyse and interpret. The desk review has shown that, as a result of these tools, the wide majority of the mapped organizations have transparent and public records of quantitative project results at the immediate end of the activities, overall project. It would be quite beneficial to explore how to transform these tools into assessing qualitative impacts/changes as well, and to use them for assessing the impact of project results after 6-12 months from project finalization.

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3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Developing projects and activities that contribute to the education and up-skilling of youth for becoming active and constructive members of the community is a lengthy and difficult process. Challenges are as much internal to the projects and implementing organizations, as they are external, linked to the context, the structures and the culture in which the organizations and working in. Their influence on each other needs to be also considered.

The following section contains a number of practical ideas brought together by the desk review and interview/survey process, complemented by recommendations on ways through which to bridge identified needs and maximize the highlighted strengths. Recommendations were identified in several major areas making up development education and youth work, including: the environment of development education and youth related activities, the outreach capacity and cooperation.

1. Forming engaged youth at community level is a shared responsibility. “[…] commitment to such obligations must also come from families, learning institutions, academia, NGOs, private voluntary organizations, the private sector, youth-led organizations, the media, political parties, and religious institutions.” Design processes, spaces and activities with input from a wide range of stakeholders. It is the surest way of rallying and constructing support structures for youth and their development. Multi-stakeholder activities have a higher credibility level and outreach power towards youth, creating also private and public community spaces in which youth can act as an integrated member of the community.

2. The process of turning idle youth into constructive community members requires shift within the community culture as well. Using the educational, dialogue promoter, cooperation facilitator and capacity developer role of the non-formal education and civil society sector, these should play the role of conveners between parents and youth, in order for them to co-create the space and culture that allows active community membership for all generations.

3. Develop projects not only for youth, but by youth. Integrate into project planning, design, implementation and evaluation the youth that will benefit from the project and their points of view. This will add a new dimension to their capacity building, as they will learn how to create their own learning experiences. It will also provide a positive example for the larger community on how to recognize and utilize youth as a valuable resource for positive creation.

4. In a traditional community that questions the role of youth in the development of the community capacity building should address not only knowledge, skills and value transfer. Bringing information about available opportunities is key in keeping youth active, interested and engaged in creating positive value at the level of own community. This requires a proper scoping of the local community and the possibilities it withholds, contributing to transforming these possibilities into approachable opportunities for youth engagement, and facilitating the access of youth to them through open dialogue with the community.

5. Next to working directly with youth, find the best entry point into communities hard to reach. In case geographical proximity poses an issue, partner with local/community organizations or groups that have already developed their own human and logistical infrastructure in the area(s) in question. This will also strengthen and offer credibility to local capacities, rather than importing new ones.

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unfamiliar to and with the community in which work needs to be implemented. In case of traditional communities, make community leaders and elders part of the creation process, developing youth activities together with them. Offering value and listening to their hands-on knowledge and experience with their own communities, will legitimize any project to be implemented in the community, creating openness towards accepting youth as active community actors. Involve them also in capacity building programs, qualifying them to adopt and speak about youth issues to their community members and local authorities.

6. Inquire about who else is working towards similar visions of change. Align project strategy and work not only with the own organizational goals and perspectives, but to the challenges and successes of peers. This will allow to avert the danger of effort duplication, and support cumulative impact creation. Strong collaboration between organization working towards similar goals can “provide a dynamic platform to tackle key challenges facing youth […] development […], as well as provide realistic solutions that may be implemented effectively.”

7. Such alignment and cooperation should reach outside your peer group. Create a systemic approach to the work with youth regardless of the size or outreach of your project. Reach out to those organizations and individuals that are part of the framework that enables project work to take place, or the results to be sustainable. Link up with local and national authorities and donors, making them also beneficiaries of your project. Approaching them as an integral part of youth development processes, rather than external regulating and financing entities, will generate a sense of goals and vision ownership among them, will offer them the possibility of renewing their understanding of community and youth needs, and gain hands on experience with working with civil society organizations. It will also help in raising the transparency level of project being implemented on the ground.

8. Involve the private sector into the efforts of linking capacitated youth with engagement opportunities. Upon receiving a clear, first hand understanding of the issues that youth and their communities are dealing with, and identifying how supporting them can bring added-value to businesses, they may be able to bring more then job opportunities to active and engaged youth. Offering expertise on entrepreneurial education, offering advice on community development possibilities, and opening up their corporate social responsibility (CSR) lines are just a few of the avenues through which they could contribute to the development of the communities in which they activate.

9. Think about your organization, project, and activities as a “social business program” that needs to be maintained on the long term. As a non-profit you might not generate financial return, however, your long term contribution to change among youth is key in the life of the community. Make sure that your financial sustainability does not only rest on donor funding, but you develop alternative sustainability plans from the early stages of the project design.

“We have a new strategy: social business. It helps us to think about sustainability from the design phase of the project. For example if we work with young farmers, training them on organic agriculture, we need a land on which to practice and teach. We purchase a piece of land that we can both use for training purposes, and generate income from cultivating it during the training sessions. The income is reinvested in the project activities and community youth development.”

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19 Recommendation made during the survey process by Egyptian local NGO worker, working on economic empowerment, child care and development and corporate social responsibility.

20 New sustainability strategy adopted by the New Horizon Association for Social Development organization, active in Egypt.
10. Enhance further the sustainability of your results by strengthening the project development process, by linking together the following steps: context and needs assessment, vision and goal setting, strategy development, customized planning, internal capacity building for strategy implementation, activity implementation, and reflective practice: monitoring, evaluation and reinvesting lessons learned and best practices into the new project management cycle. Develop organizational policies that offer guidelines on how to link up the different steps, in order to facilitate the effectiveness of project coordination work.
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