

CHILD POVERTY AND DISPARITIES IN EGYPT

Building the Social
Infrastructure for
Egypt's Future

SUMMARY REPORT

GLOBAL STUDY ON CHILD
POVERTY AND DISPARITIES



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Preface

Investing in its children is the best investment Egypt can make. Children's health and well-being determines to a great extent the country's well-being. Investment in its children and their development is therefore a reflection of the priority given to the rights of girls and boys in the development agenda. Children are Egypt's single largest population group and their well-being today determines to a great extent the country's current development. Children also determine Egypt's future and its path to prosperity. Failure to invest in childhood results in lost opportunities that often cannot be regained later. Today's poor children are very likely to be tomorrow's poor parents, and thus perpetuating a cycle of poverty from generation to generation which in turn undermines the growth and development of the nation. As one of the early signatories of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Government of Egypt has recognized this window of opportunity by declaring the first ten years of this millennium as the "Second Decade for the Protection and the Welfare of the Egyptian Child."

This report is the first comprehensive study in Egypt that concentrates both on poverty and childhood simultaneously and adopts an approach that is unique in a number of ways. In keeping with every child's right to be heard, the qualitative research on the children's, and their families' perceptions of child poverty constitutes a critical component of the study. The voices of children have proven an indispensable part of research on child poverty.

The study furthermore analyzes poverty from a multi-dimensional perspective, and not only from the perspective of lack of income or low consumption. While income is considered an important dimension of poverty, it is but one of eight poverty dimensions that are measured. The findings based on various levels of disaggregation confirm that income poverty and deprivation are not synonymous.

One of the main findings of this report is that while significant progress has been made in many areas, including legislative reform, millions of Egyptian children continue to live in poverty today and face the risk of passing this deprivation on to their children. Recent economic reforms, social policies and programmes have not been sufficiently pro-children. The report therefore recommends that policies intended to address child poverty do this through policies directly targeted at children rather than to rely on indirect effects on children's well-being. At the same time, public policies—be it social or macro economic policies—should always be designed with due consideration to their direct or indirect impact on children. Thus children should be explicitly considered in any poverty mapping or poverty reduction programmes.

Moreover, in addition to the usual statistical estimates of poverty—which often are the sole focus of most poverty

studies—the report analyzes the full policy cycle to determine interdependence between legislation, policies and programmes, budget allocation and developmental outcomes achieved for children. It identifies gaps in the policy cycle and provides concrete and operational proposals to bridge them.

It should be noted that the report does not provide a comprehensive overview of all existing programmes addressing child well-being. They were selected on the basis of their coverage, relation with comprehensive development framework, strategic importance and budget allocation.

In part this was due to limited access to programme evaluations and the costs of national plans. Even when the information was accessible, it was not available in a way that allows analysing its implications for the fulfilment of the rights of Egypt's children. Moreover, in the absence of results-based planning and programme-based budgeting, it has proven challenging to obtain reliable data that directly relate government budget and expenditures to specific programmes and nationwide initiatives.

Therefore, another report recommendation notes that Government budgets should be structured to reflect the policies and programmes it funds and the outcomes it intends to achieve.

This study was the first ever attempt to calculate the level of child poverty in Egypt and has contributed to the body of evidence required for child sensitive public policies. To support programme budgeting and policy making with explicit consideration for child poverty, it is therefore imperative to continue systematic analysis of child poverty appropriate to the specific Egyptian context. To this effect, the indicators and definitions presented should be carefully reviewed and adjusted using lessons learned from the present study.

In summary, it is hoped that the approach, findings and recommendations of this study will serve to widen the consideration of child friendly policies as well as increase academic debate on poverty reduction and that it will contribute to ultimately building the social infrastructure for Egypt's future; a future where children can achieve their full development potential and develop into healthy and productive citizens.

Co-chairs of Steering Committee of the Child Poverty and Disparities in Egypt study

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Summary Report

Introduction

The majority of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their 18 targets relate directly to women and/or children. Despite progress in this direction, millions of children and women in the world are still being left behind. With the deadline of 2015 approaching, UNICEF has taken up a plan to leverage evidence, analysis, policy and partnerships to promote gender equality and deliver results for all children. As part of this process, UNICEF commissioned a study on child poverty in Egypt, which is one of almost 50 such country studies in 7 regions.

The study was conducted by the Center for Economic and Financial Research and Studies of the Cairo University. The research team was led by Dr. Alia El Mahdi and coordinated by Dr. Manal Metwaly. Dr. Heba El Laithy, Dr. Habiba Hassan-Wassef, Dr. Dina Armanious, Dr. Ibtissam Gafawary, Moataz Atallah, and Dr. Anwar El Naqeeb were members of the research team.

This report is a summary with the main findings and recommendations of the full study report.

Multi-dimensional and child centred approach to poverty

The brighter we make the lives of our children, the brighter the future of our nation.

Children are one-third of Egypt's population today and over one-fifth of Egypt's children are growing up in poverty. Egypt's children have a right to better lives and futures.

Children who grow up poor are more likely to suffer from health problems, have less education, and lack the skills to support themselves in increasingly competitive global markets. Children who grow up poor are likely to become parents of poor children.

This report uses a rights-based framework to child poverty that defines poverty as multi-dimensional. The dimensions of poverty are interrelated and interdependent. If a child is deprived of one of its rights, it is likely to affect a child's ability to exercise other rights. This reinforces the idea of indivisibility of children's human rights. Poverty is therefore a condition and not a characteristic. As a result, although time-bound priorities can be set, all rights must be considered equally important because each one of them, individually and together, influences a child's well-being.

The state of well-being of children in Egypt is strongly influenced by the legal, institutional and policy context. Therefore, the report intends to identify the linkages between economic and social policy and child outcomes; or between the efforts and the outcomes. It provides an overview of recent developments in the legal framework related to children. In addition, it analyzes national strategies, public policies and a selection of most relevant programmes that aim at reducing child deprivations by providing social services and protection for all children and families caring for children.

This report provides a comprehensive, mixed method analysis of the current situation of the nearly 26 percent of children in Egypt (7,293,927 children) today who live deprived of their rights to be children and enjoy their childhoods. The situation of poor children in Egypt is studied from several perspectives and different methods. These analyses are framed within the current public policy and service delivery environment for children in Egypt. It begins with an analysis of how socioeconomic factors affect the lives of poor children.

UNICEF's definition of poverty, like all others, recognizes the importance of increasing income as a strategy to exit poverty; however, income is only one component of its anti-poverty strategy. Poverty cannot be eliminated by increasing income alone, nor can poverty be eradicated by the sole provision of social services, education, and health. Measurements of poverty should be multi-

dimensional and so should anti-poverty strategies. The report therefore presents an analysis of which children are poor in Egypt using various different definitions of poverty. The first definition is an income-based, consumption approach to childhood poverty. An alternative definition of poverty as deprivations is applied that measures Egyptian children's access to water, sanitation, shelter, education, health, nutrition and information (see Annex for an overview of the operational indicators that measure the various dimensions of deprivation). The disparities and immediate and underlying causes of childhood poverty are explored, drawing on the rich body of data and analytical work that has been conducted in recent years by the government and its development partners. The report also presents children's perceptions of poverty from focus group interviews conducted with children throughout Egypt.

Based on analysis of public policies and their outcomes, areas in which progress needs to be made are identified and recommendations on means for which children to move forward are offered.

The report builds on the Household Income and Expenditure Surveys by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) and the Egypt Demographic Health Surveys (EDHS) by the Ministry of Health (MOH) to calculate the various dimensions of deprivation.

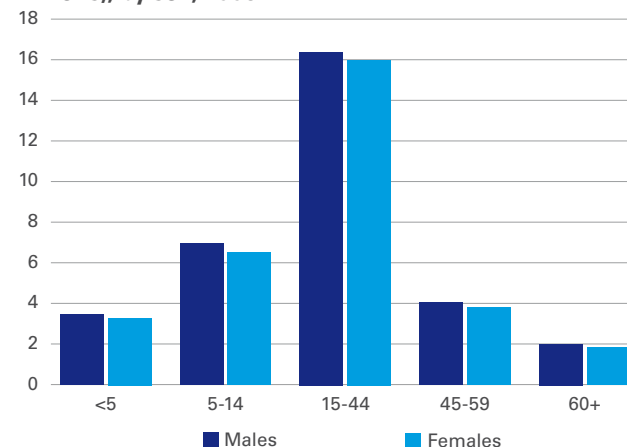
The analysis of public policies and their outcomes was based on official government sources and scientific publications. Access to programme evaluations and the costs of national plans has been limited. Also, in the absence of results-based planning and programme-based budgeting, it has proven challenging to obtain reliable data that directly relate government budget and expenditures to specific programmes and nationwide initiatives.

This subsequently affected the ability to determine the causal link between legislation, their policies and programmes, the budget allocated to these initiatives and the developmental results achieved for children.

Main findings: child deprivation is a growing concern

Egypt has a population of approximately 28 million children. Egypt has taken great strides to improve the well-being of its children. It has reformed its laws regulating responsibilities to care for and protect its children in 2008. It has introduced significant new social programmes to promote the physical, social, educational and emotional well-being of children. It has recently established a Ministry of State for Family and Population (MOFP) and local Child Protection Committees to safeguard children's rights and to protect the welfare of children. Egypt has also made considerable progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Figure (1): Age structure of the population (in millions), by sex, 2006

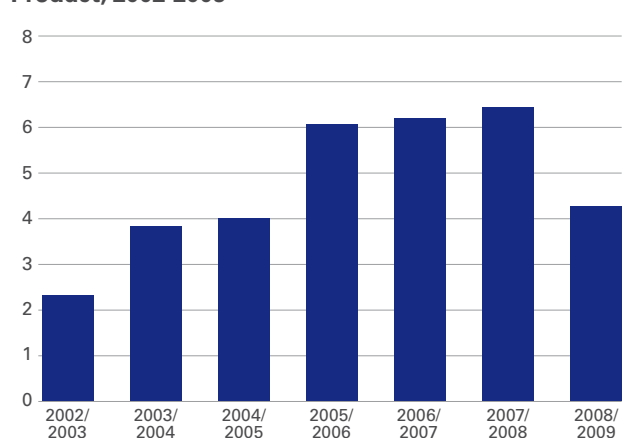


Source: Population and Housing Census, 2006

And yet, the number of children deprived of adequate incomes and living conditions is rising in Egypt. This report found that:

The impressive economic growth in recent years has not been pro-poor and pro-children. Egypt has enjoyed high growth rates since 2004, reaching as high as 7.2 percent in 2008. This growth rate has not led to a proportionate reduction in income poverty or deprivation.

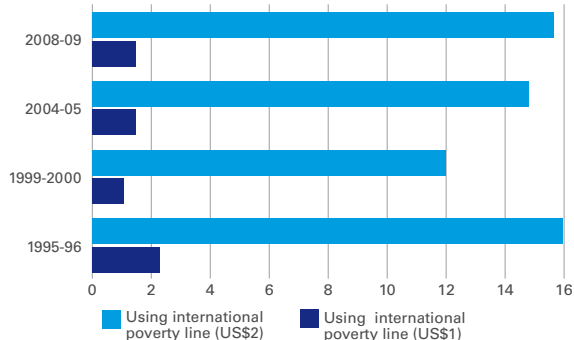
Figure (2): Annual growth rates in Gross Domestic Product, 2002-2009



Source: Ministry of Economic Development, Follow up report of the economic and social plan performance, 2008/2009

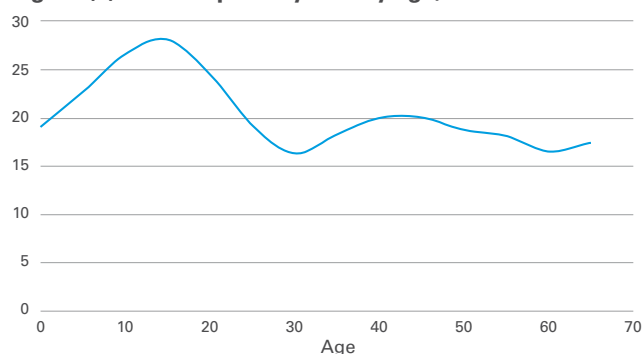
Whether income poverty is measured according to the official income poverty line of Egypt or using global definition of US\$1 per day or US\$2 per day, the number of children living in poverty and extreme poverty is increasing. The number of poor households with children fell from 1996 to 2000 and increased afterwards. In 2009, the number of poor households with children exceeded 1996 levels. 23 percent of children under age 15 years in Egypt were living in income poverty. The poverty risk is highest (approximately 26 percent) among children between 10-14 years and young adults between 15 and 19 years (28 percent).

Figure (3): Number of children in Egypt living on less than US\$1 and US\$2 per day (in millions), 1995-2008



Source: Authors calculations using Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Surveys 1995-96, 1999-2000, 2004-05 and 2008-09

Figure (4): Income poverty rate by age, 2008-09



Source: Authors calculations using Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey, 2008

Progressive changes have recently been made to legislation for children. Designed to comply with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, many amendments to the Child Law have been enacted in 2008 demonstrating efforts to align national policy with international legal instruments.

A multitude of social programmes exist to aid children and their families; however many are yet to reach national coverage and have not prevented the observed increase in child poverty. The non poor are more likely to be recipients of cash transfer programmes in Egypt. Many of these programmes have eligibility criteria that are based on employment and earnings which the poor fail to meet. Programmes to the poor tend to have lower benefits that are insufficient to raise the poor out of poverty.

Children are most likely to work when they have parents who are not working and the vulnerability of these children increases greatly. Parents may be unable to work due to illness or disability, or absence from the household. In addition, given the prevalence of children living on the street, it is clear that current systems for caring for children whose parents cannot care for them are inadequate.

Budget allocations directed to childhood development have increased in absolute terms but decreased in relative importance. During the Second Decade for the Protection and Welfare of the Egyptian Child (2000-2010), budget allocations for authorities benefiting children have grown three times as slow as budget allocations for other authorities.

Millions of children live deprived of one or more of their rights to be children. More than 7 million children (one in four) live deprived of one or more of their rights to be children and enjoy their childhoods. Around 5 million children are deprived of appropriate housing conditions (including shelter, water and sanitation) and 1.6 million children under 5 years suffer health and food deprivation.

Table (2): Number and percent of all children who experience deprivations, by type and number, 2008

Deprivation experienced	Number of Children (in millions)	Percent of Children
Children who experience only one deprivation	5.99	21.20
Deprivation of shelter, sanitation or water	5.20	18.24
Deprivation of either food or health for children under five years old	1.58	17.3
Children who experience at least two deprivations	1.29	4.56
Children who experience at least three deprivations	0.16	0.58
Children who experience at least four deprivations	0.03	0.09
Children who experience at least five deprivations	0.001	0.002
Children who experience at least six deprivations	0	0
Children who experience all seven deprivations	0	0

Source: Authors calculations using Egypt Demographic and Health Survey, 2008

Table (1): Government expenditures on children (in LE million), 2003 -2007

Expenditure	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Totally directed to children	15,276.6	16,569.7	17,224.2	18,673.6	20,158.0
Partially directed to children	13,851.2	14,484.3	13,977.5	15,769.6	17,983.1
Spending of other authorities	98,191.8	114,933.8	130,409.1	153,374.1	179,133.7
Total	127,319.6	145,987.8	161,610.8	187,817.3	217,274.8

Source: Government Budget, Final report 2002-03/2004-05, and Government budget 2005-06/2006-07, cited from National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, Towards Child Rights Budget, Unpublished report

Table (3): Percent of children experiencing type of deprivation, by wealth quintile

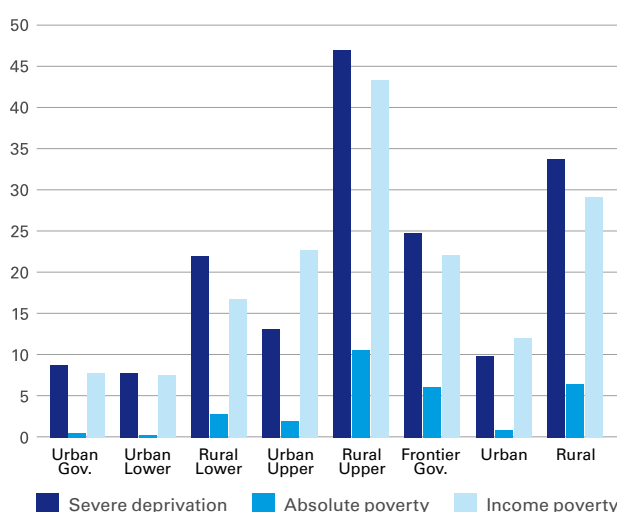
Wealth index quintiles	Natural floor	Crowdedness (more than 5)	Food	Education	Information	Health	Sanitation	Water
Total	14.8	2.20	17.0	3.21	2.41	2.4	4.15	2.84
Quintile 1 (poorest)	50.10	6.80	16.3	9.08	10.20	3.6	8.29	7.21
Quintile 2	14.29	2.17	17.4	2.95	0.18	2.5	4.52	3.47
Quintile 3	2.54	0.57	16.0	1.13	0.04	2.0	4.29	1.97
Quintile 4	0.54	0.40	17.9	0.55	-	1.9	2.34	0.47
Quintile 5 (richest)	0.03	0.03	17.6	0.81	-	1.8	0.32	0.17

Source: Authors calculations using Egypt Demographic and Health Survey, 2008

Income poverty and deprivation measures are not synonymous. Households with children who experience income poverty may or may not experience other forms of deprivation. Income poverty is highly correlated to shelter deprivation. Among children living in the wealthiest fifth of all households with children, 17.6 percent experience food deprivation.

Children in income poor households are more severely deprived. Slightly less than half of children (47 percent) in income poor households experience at least one severe deprivation compared to 14 percent of non-poor children. And differences in deprivations experienced between the poor and non poor measured in terms of income is wider when we consider children suffering from at least two severe deprivations (absolute poverty). The percent of children experiencing at least two or more deprivations is 10 percent for the income poor and only one percent for the non income poor.

Figure (5): Incidence of severe deprivation, absolute poverty and income poverty, by region

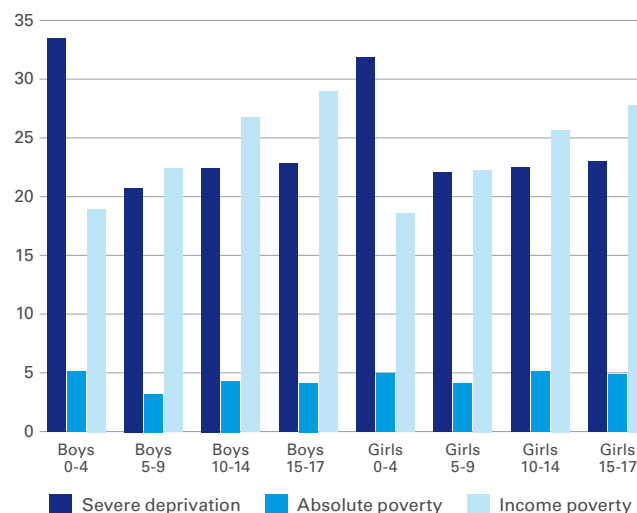


Source: Authors calculations using Egypt Demographic and Health Survey, 2008 and Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2008-09

Poverty is regional. Regardless of the measure of poverty used, poverty among children is more highly concentrated in rural areas and higher in Upper Egypt than Lower Egypt. In 2008/09 reported income poverty rates for household with children are 30.5 percent in rural areas compared to 12.6 percent in urban areas. Upper Egypt reported income poverty rates for children in urban households of 21 percent. Children living in rural Upper Egypt are most vulnerable to income poverty – the poverty rate among these children is 45.3 percent. This is in comparison to poverty rates of 7.9 percent in urban households with children and 17.6 percent for rural households with child in Lower Egypt.

Poverty does not differentiate by sex. Both girls and boys are vulnerable to poverty and deprivations at similar rates. Similarly, the sex of the head of the household does not significantly affect the income poverty rate or deprivation of children in the household. However, girls, especially in rural areas, are the least likely to attend school or complete their education, thus increases the likelihood that they will be poor as adults.

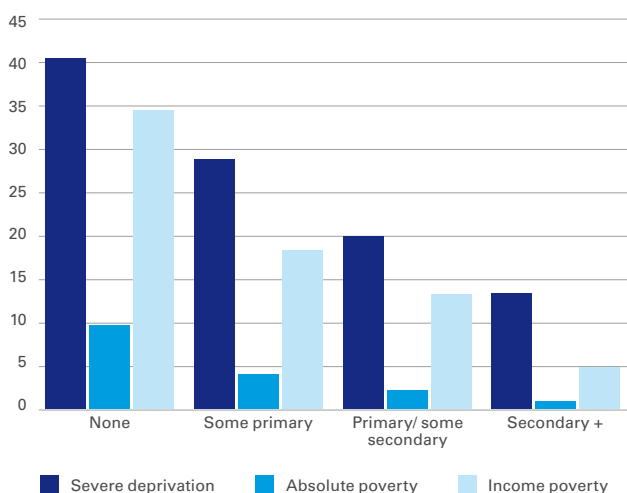
Figure (6): Incidence of severe deprivation, absolute poverty and income poverty, by sex and age



Source: Authors calculations using Egypt Demographic and Health Survey, 2008 and Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2008-09

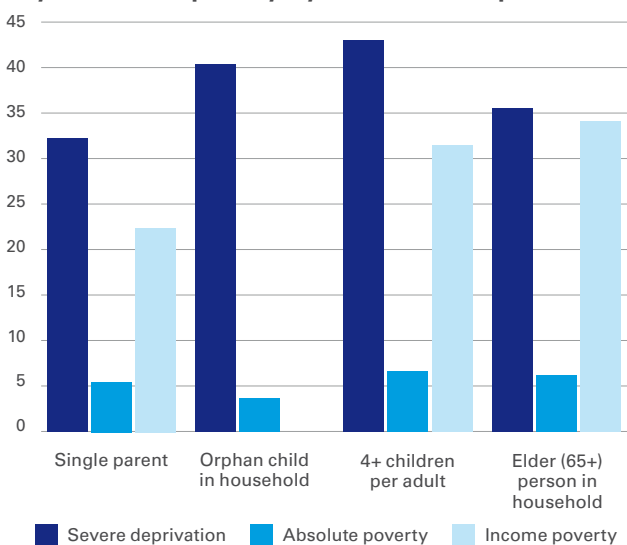
A mother's education is a strong safeguard against poverty. The more education a woman receives, the less likely she is to raise her children in a poor household on all measures of poverty and deprivation. Nearly one-third of households with children whose head did not attend school live in income poverty compared to 18.6 percent of heads who have obtained a primary education and about 13.4 percent who received a secondary education or higher. For mothers whose education equals or exceeds secondary education, the likelihood of their children being educationally deprived drops to 0.7 percent.

Figure (7): Incidence of severe deprivation, absolute poverty and income poverty, by mother's educational level



Source: Authors calculations using Egypt Demographic and Health Survey, 2008 and Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2008-09

Figure (8): Incidence of severe deprivation, absolute poverty and income poverty, by household composition



Source: Authors calculations using Egypt Demographic and Health Survey, 2008 and Household Income, Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2008-09

Vulnerable households are more likely to be poor and deprived. Children's vulnerability to poverty and incidence of deprivations increase when children are raised in a household headed by a single parent, live in households that have three or more children, or live with an elderly person or orphan child.

Poor households are less likely to have children enrolled in school. Education is the best route to escape poverty and yet poor, rural households are the least likely to have children attending school and least likely to have children who pursue their education through the secondary level and beyond. There are too many poor, urban households whose children are not enrolling or staying school as well. Data indicate that one in 14 children never attended school and hence suffers from educational deprivation, while only one percent of non income poor children experienced education deprivation. While labour force participation rates increased for the country, the unemployment rate of post-secondary graduates is rising. This a discouraging message for families struggling to keep their children in school.

Both adults and children in Egypt believe that poverty exists because the government needs to do more. This informs us that the poor, from an early age, learn to depend on the government for their well-being. However, government resources are believed not sufficient to provide social protection services that reach and adequately support the poor.

Policy recommendations: building Egypt's social infrastructure

Increased investment in children is needed for maintaining the pace of the Egypt's continued progress and development. Child outcomes and the fulfilment of children's rights are strongly influenced by public policy. Sustained pro-poor and pro-child growth not only requires a commitment to build the physical capacity of a nation but also to develop its social infrastructure. This is especially relevant to investments in children whose quality of life determines the future of the country. Children are Egypt's future.

Child poverty and its alleviation is the result of complex interactions between household structures, job market conditions, government support and other factors. The most successful policies, therefore, are those that tackle child poverty on multiple fronts. They combine a universal approach (such as child income support) with measures targeting the most vulnerable (such as childcare in deprived areas) and facilitating access to the job market and various services (education, health and housing).

At the same time, successful policies addressing child poverty are those that tackle child poverty directly and do not rely on indirect effects on children's well-being.

The findings of this report lead to a number of recommendations that are imperative for the building of Egypt's social infrastructure. Some are of general nature and contribute to the design and implementation of appropriate child sensitive and participatory public policies. Others are more directly related to particular forms of deprivation and aim to overcome specific violations of children's rights.

Towards appropriate and child sensitive public policies

Evidence-based public policies: The process of public policy making should be based on the systematic analysis of recent, pertinent and validated evidence. This evidence includes published studies and surveys, expert knowledge, stakeholder consultations and voices of beneficiaries, evaluations of previous policy evaluations and costing of policy options. These policies should be evaluated for their potential impact on children who represent one-third of Egypt's citizen's.

Refinement of Egyptian definition of child poverty: This study was the first ever attempt to calculate the level of child poverty in Egypt and has contributed to the body of evidence required for child sensitive public policies. To continue systematic analysis of child poverty appropriate to the specific Egyptian context, the indicators and definition should be carefully reviewed and adjusted using lessons learned from this report, most in particular from the qualitative research conducted as part of this study. Quality of education and availability of adequate clothing are two examples of indicators that should be considered as part of the future child poverty definition.

Human rights-based approach to public policies: All national policies and programmes should be based upon the foundation of children's rights and the child law that has been recently amended in Egypt. This requires the adoption of a multi-dimensional approach to poverty or child deprivation, which includes but is not restricted to income poverty.

Programme-based budgeting and evaluation of policy impact: Government budgets should be structured to reflect the policies and programmes it funds and the outcomes it intends to achieve. This would contribute an effective mechanism for evaluating programme inputs and outcomes against the child rights framework.

Adequate budget allocation for child focussed programmes: Public policies aiming to improve the well-being of Egypt's children and the recent amendments to the Child Law should be adequately financed and implemented through nationwide programmes that reflect the important political support that the cause of children's well-being enjoys.

Integrated National Plan of Action for Children and multi-sector coordination: Policies and strategies to reduce child deprivation should be an integral component of the coordinated and multi-sector national development framework effectively coordinated by the mandated Ministry of Family and Population. Following the Second Decade for the Protection and Welfare of the Egyptian Child (2000-2010), an integrated National Plan of Action should be developed, which particularly addresses regional disparities. The successful design and implementation of such an integrated Plan of Action depends on the creation of a forum for maintaining a sustained trans-sector multi-disciplinary dialogue at the policy level between all stakeholders and that has the power of decision on resource allocation.

Local level monitoring of public policies: The local level Child Protection Committees should be mandated and supported to monitor and coordinate the implementation of child-focused programmes and to have access to established hierarchal communication channels for the outcomes to reach national policymakers. Such a task is facilitated by defining a core set of measurements and indicators for child development that can be used for monitoring, planning and assessment purposes.

Capacity development of policy makers, community leaders and front line workers: Decision makers and service providers working for and with children should be educated about their respective role and contribution to the implementation of the amended Child Law and on how these rights can be implemented through child centred legislation, public policies, budgets and socio-economic programmes.

Public awareness of child rights and the Child Law: Children and caregivers should be made aware of their rights and responsibilities through dialogue and capacity development.

Addressing multiple dimensions of child deprivation

Building effective and efficient social protection: Cash transfers and family support subsidies that directly benefit poor families represent only a small proportion of total subsidies and grants, and a very small share of total social spending. Presently, subsidies do not constitute a substantial contribution to a poor family's income. In addition, in part due to the inefficiency of the administration of these programmes, the poor do not benefit proportionally from the existing social protection measures.

- Both the coverage and the transfer amount of social protection programmes directed to poor families and their children should be increased.

- The composition of budget allocation for government subsidies, grants and special benefits should be revised to accommodate increased budget of social protection programmes for poor families and their children.
- Soft loans aimed at increasing family productivity and integration into the labour market should be closely monitored to ensure these are used for the intended purposes. Families benefiting from such support should also receive technical and marketing assistance.
- An administrative reform programme should be initiated including establishment of clear and transparent eligibility criteria, streamlining of administrative procedures, constitution of integrated packages, and increasing of capacity and rewards for social workers.
- Public awareness about eligibility for certain social protection programmes should be increased at national, Governorate and local level.
- "One stop shops" at local level should be established to increase public awareness and delivery.
- A nationwide programme should provide children of poor families attending government schools with two school uniforms per year as a contribution to avoid drop out due to lack of family income.
- Water and sanitation facilities in all government schools should be regularly inspected and properly maintained to ensure they are in good working condition and appropriate to both girls and boys. Community based civil society organizations should be invited to contribute to this inspection and maintenance.
- The nutritional value of the school meals package provided under the school feeding programme should be revised to allow contribution to the correction of the nutritional deficiencies that affect their educability.
- The administering of the school feeding programme should be carefully coordinated between the nutrition programmes offered by the Ministry of Education and other organizations working with schools in this area.

Enhancing labour market integration: Most children live in a family with both their parents. Furthermore, income from labour is the most important source of income; however job creation has not kept pace with the economic growth of recent years and is likely to be further eroded by the current economic crisis.

- Better participation of parents in the labour market should be promoted by supplementing family income support through measures such as facilitating access to small and micro credit, income compensation (tax reductions or in-work cash benefits for those with low incomes) and free or subsidised access to childcare (to give parents time for paid work, training or job search).

Intensifying investment children's potential: Both the cognitive and social-emotional skills acquired in early life, provide the basis for later academic and employment success. In spite of political commitment, expansion of early childhood education facilities has been insufficient. The focus groups discussions revealed that primary and secondary schools do not always offer a welcoming and accessible learning environment to children, regardless of income and a child's family situation. The educability of children is also affected by increasing levels of malnutrition.

- In line with the current National Development Plan, early childhood policies should be evaluated to assess the availability, accessibility, content and goals of these programmes.
- The coverage and reach of the Early Childhood Education Enhancement Project should be scaled up nationwide and adequately funded.

Providing adequate care services: Lost opportunities in childhood cannot always be regained later - childhood is a window of opportunity for development. However, after years of steady decline in child malnutrition, the rates are increasing, and the impact of the current economic crisis is likely to exacerbate this deterioration in nutritional status. In addition, more than one million children are deprived of proper sanitation facilities at home, with vast disparities between rural and urban areas. Poor sanitation is directly linked to diarrhoea and malnutrition.

- Efforts should be made to launch a REACH programme for country focussed action against undernutrition, as recommended by the Jun 2008 declaration of the United Nations REACH interagency team.
- United Nations agencies should apply the new REACH methodology to identify the nature, extent and distribution of nutrition problems and to assess the degree of Egypt's commitment and capacity to act at scale for achieving accelerated gains.
- A national sanitation master plan and programme should be designed in a participatory manner, including public, private and community stakeholders, to provide stand-alone, collective or community sewage and waste water management solutions. These solutions should be low cost and technologically acceptable adapted to the local geo-physical context.
- A policy for systematic prevention of exposure of children to environmental toxins and pollutants should be adopted as an efficient strategy to protect children from these health hazards.

Assisting parents to protect their children: The Child Law reform resulted in some crucial legislative amendments to the protection of the most vulnerable. Still, many children live without adequate parental care, although the exact numbers are unknown. These children, who often end up in the streets, are susceptible to disease, crime, abuse and neglect. Many discrete projects exist to protect the rights of the most vulnerable; however, a comprehensive national strategy and programme does not exist.

- An inter-ministerial task force should study the cause and potential strategies to address the growing number of children living on the street, child labourers and other children who do not have the care of responsible adults.
- National poverty reduction programmes should pay particular attention to large families who are more prone to be unable to adequately protect their children.
- Reducing of fertility rates and slowing down the population growth leading to smaller average size of

households should be a central component of social sector policies and poverty reduction programmes.

Helping children to have a sense of belonging: Children interviewed through the focus group discussions repeatedly mentioned the need for a community, for not feeling alone. Socializing and engaging in recreational, cultural and sport activities build their social skills, resilience to adverse events. It also helps promote a healthy life style and combat the growing problem of obesity among Egypt's children.

- An inter-Ministerial effort should initiate a national programme to spread the culture of sports, physical exercise and a healthy life style for girls and boys of all ages.
- The establishment and expanded coverage of community libraries, community centres and other safe places for children, exercise and express themselves should be an important element in national policies and programmes on youth.

Annex: Bristol's definition adapted to the Egyptian context

	Bristol indicators of severe deprivation and their thresholds	Egypt's adaptation of Bristol's definition
Shelter deprivation	Children in dwellings with five people or more per room (severe overcrowding) or with no flooring material (for example, a mud floor)	Children in dwellings with five or more people per room (severe overcrowding) or with no flooring material (for example, a mud floor)
Food deprivation	Children under the age of five years whose height and weight for their age were more than three standard deviations below the median of the international reference population, that is, severe anthropometric failure	Children under the age of five years whose height and weight for their age were more than three standard deviations below the median of the international reference population, that is, severe anthropometric failure
Educational deprivation	Children above six years old who had never been to school and were not currently attending school (no professional education of any kind)	Children above six years old who had never been to school and were not currently attending school (no professional education of any kind)
Information deprivation	Children above 2 years old with no access to radio, television, telephone, computer or newspapers at home	Children above 2 years old with no access to radio, television, telephone, computer or newspapers at home
Health deprivation	Children under the age of five who have not been immunized against any disease, or young children who had recently suffered from an illness involving diarrhoea or pneumonia and had not received any medical advice or treatment	Children aged between one and less than five years who had not been immunized against any diseases, or young children who had recently suffered from an illness involving diarrhoea or pneumonia and had not received any medical advice or treatment (for diarrhoea: any homemade treatment including Oral Rehydration Therapy)
Sanitation deprivation	Children who had no access to a toilet of any kind in the vicinity of their dwelling, that is, no private or communal toilets or latrines	Children in households who only have access to pit latrine, bucket toilet or no facility, or who use modern flush toilet, traditional tank or bucket flush and at the same time the drainage system is pipe connected to canal, or to ground water or no drainage system.
Water deprivation	Children who only had access to surface water (for example, rivers, streams and dams) for drinking, or who lived in households where the nearest source of water is 30 minutes or more to get water and come back	Children who only have access to water from an unimproved source such as unprotected well, unprotected spring, surface water (for example, rivers, streams and dams), tanker truck or cart with small tank or who it takes 30 minutes or more to get water and come back



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