

## **Field Report**

# **Preliminary Investigation of Educational Opportunities For Refugee Children in Egypt**

Wesal Afifi

August 2003

## **Introduction**

The intent of this report is to provide information about and raise awareness of current educational opportunities for refugee children in Cairo. This study focuses on the administrative procedure of obtaining access to and enrolment into both public and private schools in Cairo, examining what obstacles there are to this process and exploring possible means of overcoming these obstacles. The current dearth of information on the subject of educational opportunities for refugees hinders efforts at enhancing these opportunities because without an understanding of the process of and barriers to enrolment, interventions made will either be inappropriate or insufficient. This study is a step towards making up for the paucity of information on this subject and an indication as to what further research is needed and where interventions need to be taken.

The underlying presupposition of this study is that educational needs of refugee children in Egypt are *not* being met and that the large majority of refugee children are either not receiving any education whatsoever or are receiving an insufficient amount.<sup>1</sup> While Egypt has placed a reservation on Article 22 (1) of the 1951 Convention, which states that refugees shall be accorded ‘the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education,’ access to education for refugees is nonetheless a basic human right that must be accorded to them. To have hope for their future and for the benefit of the community in which they live whether they integrate, return to their country of origin or are resettled to a third country, education is essential.

In order to grasp the kinds of obstacles facing refugee children, this report provides the reader with a basic background into the current challenges facing the Egyptian public school system and the administrative obstacles in the admission process. The Egyptian public school system has been under severe criticism by many educators and parents; an inadequate curriculum, emphasis on memorization and crowded classrooms are just some of the criticisms that will be discussed further on in this report. This ongoing educational crisis in public schools

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 5 ‘Education enrolment of Sudanese refugee children 1999-2000’, Dingemans (2002).

needs to be understood in order to consider its consequences on attempts to increase the enrolment of refugees into public schools and children's experiences should they become enrolled. In light of this state of affairs where public education appears to have already exceeded its capacity to absorb additional students and provide a good standard of education, this report also explores alternative means to increase access to education for refugees. These alternatives include international private schools, private institutions such as the British Council and agencies and organizations such as the European Union, UNICEF and UNESCO, all of whom are already involved in education projects and could potentially incorporate refugees into existing projects or provide funding for refugee related educational projects.

This investigation also raised a number of issues concerning what is the best means to increase educational access in places of 'temporary settlement' where the government is not particularly receptive to local integration efforts and actually restricts the ability of refugees to locally integrate, for example through laws prohibiting the right to work.<sup>2</sup> While refugees may reside in Egypt for an extended period of time, the difficulty in making a life for oneself in Egypt especially for families with children mean that resettlement and repatriation are often viewed as the only two durable solutions. Therefore approaching the right to education in places of temporary settlement raised two interconnected issues. The first is that one is operating in an environment that does not support or encourage local integration with an expectation on behalf of the government and refugees that Egypt is a place of temporary settlement. The second issue is that in such environment that is not conducive to the support of local integration efforts, what kind of strategies should be taken by the concerned parties to enhance as far as possible refugees' access to education? How effective are individual efforts at promoting the educational opportunities of refugees as opposed to what could be achieved through group efforts and ideally through an organization whose mandate it is to protect the rights of refugees, namely the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

---

<sup>2</sup> Egypt has placed reservations on the following articles from the 1951 Convention: article 12 (1) relating to Personal Status, article 20 relating to Rationing, article 22 (1) relating to Public Education, and articles 23 and 24 relating to Public Relief and Labour Legislation and Social Security respectively.

This report will draw upon fieldwork that this author has carried out since October 2002 until August 2003 while also studying for the Graduate Diploma in Forced Migration and Refugee Studies at the American University in Cairo, in addition to academic literature and other research concerning education conducted in Egypt and other places. This comprised of information gathering efforts to ascertain basic information into admission processes and obstacles in addition to approaching private institutions, schools and international organizations in an effort to promote their involvement in the subject of refugee education either through enrolling refugees in their schools, assisting them through the provision of funding or incorporation into existing projects.

The term 'refugee' in this report will be used to refer to all displaced persons regardless of whether they have been recognized under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or the 1969 OAU Convention, unless specifically mentioned otherwise.

### **The Right to Education**

The fundamental importance of the right to education is unquestionable and has been reiterated in numerous conventions and declarations. According to Article 28 (1 a) under the 1989 Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC), primary education shall be made "compulsory and available free to all." No qualifications are made to the enjoyment of the right to education and the CRC singles out refugee children as holders of all rights present in the convention.<sup>3</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights responsible for monitoring the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) has described education as "a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights...But the importance of education is not just practical: a well-educated, enlightened and active mind, able to wander freely and widely, is one of the joys and

---

<sup>3</sup> Article 22 (1) "States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties." Egypt did not place any reservations to the CRC with the regards to education.

rewards of human existence.”<sup>4</sup> Article 13 of the ICESCR also recognizes the right of education to “everyone.”

Despite Egypt’s ratification of these various conventions, the implementation of the right to education has been minimal. The lack of implementation of the right to education should be placed in the context of other rights and against a challenging political and social setting in Egypt that currently affects the ability of all refugees to enjoy rights that are provided for them under the 1951 Convention. Stefan Sperl’s detailed case study of the UNHCR’s urban policy in Cairo clearly indicates that for most refugees, integration is not an option in Egypt due to laws enacted by the government prohibiting basic rights to refugees making resettlement the only viable durable solution (2001). Sperl has noted that the Egyptian government has “so far taken very few concrete steps to fulfil the obligation and responsibilities stipulated by the Convention” and that there exists on the part of the government a “fundamental unwillingness to permit the legal integration of refugees into Egyptian society” attributing this unwillingness to the current economic and demographic situation (2001: 35, 36). In particular, prohibition on the right to work bars any refugee from securing a stable and secure income consequently affecting his or her ability to enjoy other rights.

Despite these obstacles, the right to education must not be considered a luxury for refugees in Egypt or in any situation. Even in situations of crises, education “serves a really important psychosocial role” by providing “the opportunity to pursue something that’s normal” (Stainburn 2002). Furthermore, despite challenges towards their enrolment in schools, refugee children should not be seen as a burden or problem because the positive qualities that they could bring into a classroom has the potential to benefit all those involved in the school. As Rutter and Jones have noted, “refugee students also bring into the classroom a range of opportunities and perspectives that can enrich the learning and understandings of everyone working there” and it is a matter of allowing this potential to be revealed and utilized that should be the task of the UNHCR and other concerned parties (1998: 3).

---

<sup>4</sup> General Comment 13, supra note 70, at para. 1.

## **Refugee Education research in Egypt**

As already mentioned in the introduction, the paucity of information and research about educational opportunities for refugees in Egypt is one of the obstacles hindering the development of these opportunities. Esther Dingemans' field report on *Educational Needs and Priorities for South Sudanese Refugees in Cairo* provides the most comprehensive study on this subject to date (2002). While providing information on the education conditions for refugees in Cairo including government policy and the current situation in Egyptian schools, she also provides an important insight into the educational needs and priorities of the South Sudanese Community in Cairo and educational initiatives generated by refugees themselves with the premise that an understanding of this is essential towards stimulating school attendance.

Focusing on the educational needs and priorities of the South Sudanese Community, Dingemans presents the findings of a questionnaire survey among 40 refugee parents covering aspects such as living conditions and employment, the children's educational history, the importance attached to education by parents and community leaders, education and well-being and quality of education. As expected, most parents gain employment in the informal sector and express insecurity about their jobs that often have long working hours with meagre wages. About 90% of Dingemans' respondents did attend primary education in schools for displaced children before arriving in Egypt and parents continue to see education as a priority. Education serves an extremely important role for most of the respondents for several different reasons, including the transmission of cultural norms and values from one generation to the next, a vehicle for upward mobility and to rebuild South Sudanese society and their identity as a community (2002: 15-16).

The result of refugee children's inability to enrol into a school inevitably means that these children have nothing to do all day, as Dingemans' respondents agreed upon. These children suffer from boredom and also the inability to regain a sense of normality in their lives that going

to school everyday would provide them. Most parents whose children did not attend school expressed concern for the emotional well-being of their children. However there are also a number of concerns for parents of children who either attend or do not attend with regards to how Egyptians may treat their children, fearing discrimination and maltreatment. Furthermore concerns for their children's safety on the way to and from school due to Egypt's hazardous roads is also a risk that some parents do not wish to take. There are several concerns that parents have voiced with regards to enrolling their children in public schools, from financial incapacity to fear of children's safety to of course bureaucratic obstacles and unfamiliarity of the proper documentation that is required for enrolment (2002: 16-26).

Dingemans' study indicates a number of important points that need to be taken into account when trying to expand opportunities for refugee children. Without consultation with children's families and an understanding of their concerns and their educational preferences for their children, it will be difficult to make an impact on as many children as possible. However, there are several limitations to Dingemans' report with its focus on the South Sudanese community and on the educational needs and priorities of this community seen from their own perspective. Other refugee groups such as Somalis, Liberians and Sierra Leoneans are not addressed and the actual admission process to Egyptian schools has also not been fully discussed, which this study aims to cover.

In an article published in the *Cairo Times* in the Summer 2001, Peterson noted that converting the right to education into reality "is a complex and difficult process which will require flexible thinking and active collaboration between refugee families, UNHCR, the Egyptian government, educators, and other interested parties." Two years since this publication and the prospects for refugee children accessing their right to education is still extremely bleak, but Peterson has correctly pointed out that both flexible thinking and active collaboration between all parties involved are essential ingredients to providing greater access education to a great number of refugees.

However, the current state of affairs indicates that there has neither been enough flexible thinking or active collaboration between the parties involved, resulting in refugees accessing education in a rather piecemeal fashion. Flexibility is also necessary because exceptions may have to be made sometimes with regards to documentation required for enrolment which some refugees may not possess in addition to the changes refugees may bring to a classroom throughout the school year:

Classes are constantly changing: new students appear and others disappear. The disruption this causes and the extra demands on teachers to welcome, reassure and effectively educate the newcomers and the rest of the class should not be underestimated. Under such circumstances induction becomes a continuous process rather than a carefully organized event....It requires careful planning and implementation for a continuous induction policy to ensure that refugee children have an easy and successful transition into the life of the school... (Rutter and Jones 2001: 6).

### **The Admissions Process**

This section presents the findings of discussions with various parties including the Ministry of Education, school-teachers and administrators at the Sacred Heart Church, Egyptian parents and refugee families concerning the admissions procedure for enrolling at Egyptian public schools. Details are given concerning the 1992 Ministerial Decree concerning *Wafideen* children.<sup>5</sup> as well as the different bodies that are involved in the admissions process. While speaking with the Ministry of Education perhaps would have been sufficient to gain an understanding of what documents and other requirements are needed in order to understand how refugees can register in schools, the perspectives and experiences of teachers and parents were also important in order to enrol to assess whether there exists a divergence between policy and practice.

---

<sup>5</sup> The verb *Wafada* in Arabic translates into 'to come' or 'to arrive' and the noun *Wafid* literally translates into 'comer.' The *Wafideen* Office hence deals with all students who have arrived from abroad, both non-Egyptians and Egyptians who have lived abroad and all these students are also referred to as *Wafideen*. There is no specific distinction within the term *Wafideen* that distinguishes refugees from other migrants.



The admissions process in this section will focus solely on Egyptian public schools and private schools that use the Egyptian curriculum. Other private schools that follow either British, American, French or German curricula will be dealt with later on. The quality of education in Egyptian public schools and the implication on the ability of these schools to absorb refugee students will also be discussed.

### *The Wafideen Office and the Ministry of Education*

The Wafideen Office falls under the Ministry of Education and is located in the Ministry of Education compound. Speaking with any official will require permission from the security office at the Ministry in the form of a letter from one's institution.<sup>6</sup> After receiving the stamp from the security office, I proceeded to the Wafideen Office where I met with an official who instructed me to speak with the head of the office whom I still required permission from. I explained to her briefly the information that I was looking for and she proceeded to inform the employee I had first spoken with the information that he could disclose to me. We returned to his office where he first provided me information concerning what documents are needed to enroll into school. These documents included a valid passport with a valid residency, a birth certificate and a letter from one's embassy. When asked what would happen if someone could not come up with all these documents he responded that these documents are essential and that only with a decision from the Minister can they override these requirements. A school certificate from a valid source is also required, but if this is not available, the student can sit an exam, which usually takes place at the end of August or beginning of September.

---

<sup>6</sup> Professor Hania Sholkamy helped me compose the letter in Arabic. After presenting the letter however, I was required by the official at the Wafideen Office to re-write it due to the fact that I had not written the Minister's full title: *Al-Sayid, Al-Doctor, Al-Ustath, Wazir Al-Tarbiya W'al Ta'lim*, which translates literally into: Mr, Dr, Sir, Minister of Education. In addition, while at the Security Office, there was some doubt whether I was Egyptian or not. I had left my Egyptian national ID card at the Ministry gate and I was told that it would be a problem if I was not Egyptian. They did eventually let me go, but it does raise questions for what an already bureaucratic procedure for an Egyptian would be like for a foreigner trying to reach a Ministry official for research purposes.

The enrolment process at schools however does not take place at the Wafideen office in the Ministry of Education but at an administrative office located in each district and I was informed that each district is informed of how to deal with non-Egyptian students and is aware of the Ministerial Decree (No. 24 of 1992) which sets out the conditions for enrolment. If they do face any particular problems, they can contact the Wafideen office at the Ministry. Article 5 of this Decree sets out the categories of students which are to attend either public or private schools. The only students who are permitted to attend public schools include Sudanese, Libyans, Jordanians, children of political refugees,<sup>7</sup> and children of Palestinians who work in the government of public sector, or military in Egypt.<sup>8</sup> The rest are to attend private Egyptian schools with the exception of those students who do not have private schools in their area of residence<sup>9</sup> and those who the Minister of Education decides can be accepted to public school according to their particular circumstances.<sup>10</sup> Concerning the issue of space, I was informed that there is no such thing as not enough space for students and that a place in school can be found for everyone, with no discrimination made between Egyptians and Wafideen students.<sup>11</sup>

I was also provided with a list of the numbers of African students currently enrolled in both Egyptian public and private schools.<sup>12</sup> Later on in this study while visiting a French school<sup>13</sup> to ask whether there were any refugee students enrolled at the school, it occurred to me that there was perhaps a confusion between the term ‘refugee’ and ‘wafideen’ that ministry officials were perhaps not aware of. There appeared to be a misunderstanding, or simply

---

<sup>7</sup> Those who have received refugee status under Article 53 of the Constitution, which is granted by the Office of the President.

<sup>8</sup> The other categories also include children of with divorced or widowed Egyptian mothers, children of the Arab League and its organizations in Egypt, children delegated by their countries to study in Egypt, children of consultants and attaches of Arab Embassies in Egypt and children of workers in the public or governmental sector or armed forces in Egypt.

<sup>9</sup> Article 5 (11).

<sup>10</sup> Article 5 (12).

<sup>11</sup> However, as will be discussed later in the report, there is clearly a problem with overcrowding in Egyptian schools and lack of space. Dingemans also noted that some parents’ efforts to enrol children were unsuccessful due to shortage of places and that the children were placed on waiting lists for the next year (2002: 20)

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 2. There was no further breakdown in statistics of how many were in public or private schools or under which categories these students fell under e.g. beneficiaries of scholarships, children of political refugees, children of the Arab League Secretariat etc. When I asked which of these students were refugees, I was simply told that the UNHCR had these statistics. See Appendix 1 for list of African Students.

<sup>13</sup> I had been informed by a colleague who attended a French school that Lycee Bab El Louk did once have a refugee enrolled.

ignorance between these two terms. While refugees do fall under the category of wafideen students, unlike other wafideen students, they have fled persecution and their circumstances differ greatly from the other categories, in terms of the documents they may or may not possess, a disrupted education, weaker financial capability among others. There perhaps exists a need to sensitize ministry officials to the particular term ‘refugee’ as opposed to simply placing them under the category of ‘wafideen’.

Ignorance or misunderstandings of the definition of a refugee and what conventions Egypt has ratified with regards to refugees can also be seen elsewhere. A short article published in the weekly newspaper *Akhbar Al-Yawm* entitled “Deputy Adopts a Law for Refugees” illustrates an example of this misunderstanding (2003, 19 July p.12). The article states that the Deputy Huda Ruzkana is presenting a law for refugees concerning how to deal with them and how to distinguish them from migrants. It continues to state that enforcing this law will be carried out with the cooperation of the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs “to look for ways to deal with refugees in light of the law for refugees created by the United Nations, as well to look into the importance of Egypt joining this law.” Clearly the writer has been misinformed, because Egypt is indeed a signatory to the 1951 Convention since 1981.<sup>14</sup>

### *The Sacred Heart Church*

The Sacred Heart Church commonly known as Sakakeeni provides a curriculum similar to that of Egyptian schools and follows the Egyptian school year timetable because of their efforts to integrate some of their students into public schools. Discussions with Brother Enrico and schoolteacher, James Natale in particular helped me understand the practical difficulties towards this integration and how the Ministerial Decree actually works in practice. The schools under the guidance of the Sacred Heart Church are located at the Sakakeeni Church itself, in Maadi and in Arba’ a wa Nuss. Sakakeeni provides for approximately 1016 students while Maadi and Arba’ a wa Nuss provide for 215 and 400 respectively.

---

<sup>14</sup> The article also makes another error by stating that the 1951 was amended in July 2001 although it was actually amended in 1967 by the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.

In order to decide which students to put through the admissions process to enrol into Egyptian schools, Sakakeeni runs internal exams and decides from these results which students will be processed. One of the biggest problems that they face during admission into schools is the legal status of the students and whether or not they have residency, stressing that without residency, it is impossible to access Egyptian public schools, leaving a small number who can actually be placed through the admissions process. Despite meetings with the UNHCR to try to solve this problem, Mr. Natele noted that nothing has been resolved yet.

The documents needed to enrol at school were one's passport with valid residency, birth certificate, a letter from the Sudanese embassy (or sometimes a letter from the UNHCR), 8 photographs and their last school certificate. However, if the school certificate is not available the student can sit an exam at the Ministry of Education. In addition, if the school certificate is more than 2 years old, the student will also be required to sit the exam at the Ministry. Sakakeeni does pay for the costs of the exams, but once a student is enrolled, all costs such as uniforms, transportation and other fees are transferred to the parents. However, a more serious financial burden that is placed on Sakekeeni are the unofficial 'payment' required to be given to the district administrative offices. Commonly called *baksheesh*, without paying these amounts, the processing of applications will be delayed. The higher the educational stage, the higher the payment required. For example, primary levels costs approximately LE 75, and levels above primary cost approximately LE 150. This is in addition to other costs such as examinations and one student can cost LE 450 in total

Schools are chosen by Sakakeeni on the basis of whether they are willing to accept their students and an administration that is also willing to facilitate the process in order that the child receives a good standard of education. In 2001, approximately 250 pupils were enrolled, but that by the end of the year, most of these students had resettled and approximately only 20-25 remained. This highlights what Dingemans already pointed out, which is that refugees with "the

first chance of success” are the recognized refugees with residence permits where “resettlement is a realistic durable solution, making local education a less desired option” (2002: 25)

### *Egyptian Students*

Discussions with several Egyptian parents with regards to the enrolment of their children in Egyptian public schools revealed what the admissions process for them entailed. Upon entering the primary level, Egyptians are required to submit their birth certificate, a document stating their place of residence, the parent’s national identification card, and a health and vaccination card. The parent proceeds to go to any school close to their place of residence and submits these documents. The school has the right to refuse the child if there is not enough space. While children are supposed to start school at four years of age, due to the large numbers of children being admitted, it is not unusual for students to actual begin at the age of five, five and a half or even six years of age. The school will give priority to the eldest children and therefore a child of five and a half will be given preference to a four year old. The statement that there is no such thing as lack of space by the Ministry of Education official is clearly incorrect if even Egyptian students must be placed on waiting lists. The alternative is to enroll at an Egyptian private school. Due to the higher fees, a smaller number of students seek to enroll there and therefore there is a higher chance of admittance.

Concerning the issue of ‘unofficial payments’ required in the admissions process, these usually take the form of ‘donations’ required to pay to the school rather than a direct payment to an official for his/her personal use. For example, there may be a request from a parent who is trying to admit his or her child in the school to make a donation to improve something in the school’s infrastructure. However, these kinds of payments are not officially tolerated or permitted. In addition, as priority is given to the age at enrollment, if an inspection committee from the Ministry of Education looks through a school’s records and finds a discrepancy in ages, an explanation will be required and a fine may well be imposed.

## *Quality of Education*

The quality of education in Egyptian public schools is another significant issue. An already overburdened, and what many would also consider a failing system, would appear to have little to offer to refugee children in terms of quality of education. In addition, an overtaxed educational system is probably less open to the prospect of enrolling more students. Professor El-Safty, an expert on Egyptian education has noted that, “there is no positive aspect about education in Egypt” (personal communication, July 2003). The problems are numerous, ranging from a poor curriculum, emphasis on rote learning, poor quality of teachers, overcrowding in schools and poor facilities. She marks the 1970s as the beginning of the decline arguing that the situation has only continued to deteriorate rather than improve.

The weekly newspaper, *Akhbar Al-Yawm* ran a 3-week special reportage from May 24<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> June 2003 on the Egyptian educational system. Triggered by an article published by the Editor in Chief of the newspaper Ibrahim Sa’da, entitled “The Confessions of Dr. Hussein Baha’a El-Din [the current Minister of Education]” in which Dr. Baha’a El-Din apparently confesses to the collapse of the educational system and his guilt in contributing to this collapse (24 May 2003), the next two publications of *Akbar Al-Yawm* are followed up with articles written by administrators, teachers, parents and also include the opinions of students in public schools. The challenges facing the current Egyptian public school system as expressed by a variety of viewpoints assert that a revolution or a miracle is needed to upgrade the current failing system.

The complaints concerning the educational system range from a number of issues repeated in almost every article. For example, one parent complained that memorization has become the foundations of education and that methods of teaching must be geared towards understanding and creativity rather than rote learning (31 May 2003, p 10 Al-Sayid Sharif). Students were also asked their opinion of the problems that they face at school and like parents,

they blamed the Ministry of Education for overcrowding in classrooms, their teachers' lack of motivation to explain class material and their focus on private lessons instead. Students also admitted that cheating in examinations is widespread due to the dense and complicated curriculum that they must memorize. One student in preparatory level 3 noted that during examinations, the teachers take LE 5 from every student to buy tea, cigarettes and water for the examination supervisors so that the supervisors will allow the students to cheat. Parents too have admitted that they know that their children can neither read nor write well and that they pass examinations by cheating through private lessons by being given the exam papers beforehand. Parents were also heavily critical of teachers and their private lessons for the poor standards of their children (Imbabi et al. *Akhbar Al-Yawm* May 2003).

Teachers were also given the opportunity to respond to attacks from both parents and students arguing that crowded classes make it impossible for them to supervise every student individually or to provide an effective forum for discussion in addition to the problem of being forced to explain a very dense curriculum in a limited amount of time. One teacher in Cairo also stated that his school's administration forces the teachers to raise the passing rates in order that the Ministry of Education does not question the school in addition to making the school appear respectable in the eyes of officials and parents. One issue that was repeatedly raised in this article and many others was the living standards of teachers. The decrease in teacher's wages has pressured many teachers to teach private lessons. One Arabic language teacher noted that he only receives LE 150 per month arguing that this is not enough to raise his own family and so private lessons have become the only option for him in order to live decently and raise a family. Extremely poor salaries have indeed been linked the ever-growing phenomenon of private lessons, which has also been severely criticized ('Teachers: Don't Oppress Us...', *Akhbar Al-Yawan*, 31 May 2003).

These are a few of the main complaints that were raised in *Akhbar Al-Yawm* although there were also several diverse viewpoints concerning what has caused the collapse of the

educational system. For example, an article argues that the cancellation by the Minister of Education of sports, drawing, music, drama and crafts as one of the main reasons for the collapse of the system (Shehata 2003). However, one article noted that all of these issues that have been raised are not new at all and argues that Egyptian families have been complaining and expressing their dissatisfaction to those responsible for this failing system in Egypt, but that there has been no reaction or response from the Minister of Education (Suleiman 2003). Indeed, as Professor Al-Safty has already noted, this deterioration has been taking place for at least 3 decades with the situation continuing to decline rather than improve. Some articles have even mocked the educational system with an article entitled “The Educational System has become a Silly Soap Opera” noting that the Minister’s most famous school motto which is ‘Our school is clean, beautiful and modern’ actually expresses “the opposite of reality as schools are neither clean nor beautiful and are not fit to be a respectable place in which education is provided” (Mahmoud 2003).

The Egyptian educational system is clearly struggling to provide decent standard of education for Egyptian students and is already suffering from overcrowded classrooms, inappropriate curriculum and extremely poor facilities. This inevitably will impact the number of refugee students able to enrol, despite what the ministry officials may say about the issue of space.<sup>15</sup> It is an under-resourced system that is unlikely to be receptive to the needs of refugee students, who may require further tutoring in Arabic language or greater teacher assistance due to the disruptions that they have experienced in their education.

### **Private Sector Education**

With a clearly overburdened Egyptian school system and an equally overburdened refugee school system, the private sector could potentially provide another source for the expansion of educational opportunities. The private sectors encompasses private schools that follow either a British, American or French curricula as well as private institutions such as the British Council.

---

<sup>15</sup> Dingemans also noted that a number of parents tried to enrol their children in public schools “but were not successful because of a shortage of places” (2002: 20).



With clearly greater resources than the public educational system, these institutions do have the financial capacity to provide scholarships to refugees. Furthermore, private schools are the only option for English-speaking refugees as the primary language of instruction in public schools is Arabic. Refugees from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Rwanda and Uganda for example cannot enter public schools even if legal and bureaucratic obstacles were raised due to the language barrier and hence it is imperative that private schools are considered.

Fieldwork in this area raised the question of what might be the best way to approach these institutions. Unlike public education that is free and should in theory be accessible to all children at least at the primary level, the private sector is not required to provide any such services and as is the situation in Egypt, private schools and institutions cater to the middle and upper class that can afford their fees.

#### *Private International Schools*

Private schools were contacted with the intention of asking them to consider providing of a scholarship for a refugee. In order to make a more specific request for the provision of scholarships, I decided to use one Liberian refugee as a possible candidate, discussed with him his educational background and current interests in order to approach a school with a candidate in mind. However, I was still open to the option if the school desired to conduct a competitive scholarship with several refugees applying and the school deciding on whom to admit.

Concerning the capacity of private schools to provide for scholarships, there was no doubt that certain private schools earn huge sums of money and that providing for only *one* scholarship is certainly feasible as far as money is concerned. What was of more concern however was the extent to which private schools would welcome and consider the idea. Eloisa Rivera, a former primary teacher at the International School of Choueifat, Cairo provided me with her perspective on the capacity of these schools to provide scholarships:

As a teacher who worked in one of the most esteemed and profitable private institutions in Egypt, I think that it is definitely within a private school's capacity to provide scholarships and academic support to students from disenfranchised groups, particularly refugees who have experienced a break in their formal education. Page after page of their paid advertising extols every detail from their manicured gardens to their rigorous and international education. Though they are different in many ways, private schools sell the same dream: an excellent education, and many are buying it. Private education has become "big business." In monetary terms, most private schools have the ability to allow a refugee student to attend. Scholarships or "full rides" are not unheard of. Free tuition for dependents is one way in which private schools try to attract potential teachers, and they do it because the cost is minimal. If a school were to admit a refugee student the cost would also be minimal. In Choueifat, it would amount to placing an extra desk in the class, as well as the textbooks and materials. These items were produced in mass quantities by the school itself. A surplus of all the books were kept on campus, and all those that were unused were returned to its home factory where they were recycled or destroyed. In reality, a refugee student would only have to consider the cost of transportation to and from the school, as well as any extracurricular activities he or she wanted to join. These added costs are minimal and could be easily absorbed by the private institution. Ultimately, the capacity of private education to welcome and support a refugee student is not a question of 'Can they?' but 'Will they?' Can it happen? Most definitely! Could it happen? In Egypt? Sadly, it has yet to happen. A school contemplating such a step would encounter great resistance, not so much built upon monetary concerns, but upon decades of ingrained prejudices (personal communication, August 10, 2003).

Corresponding with a colleague, Mauro de Lorenzo on his positive experiences in helping a refugee student enrol at his former high school in the US, he remarked that he only made attempts at schools from which he graduated and suggested to contact schools where I may have a personal relationship either through attendance or knowledge of an administrator there. He also noted that an important factor in the US was for the school to feel that it is benefiting from the enrolment of the refugee and suggested that these benefits include exposing other students to an individual from a completely different background and experience using it as a springboard to involve both students and teachers in international affairs and also in the use of advertising or fund-raising for the school. The unspoken benefit is of course “that the school feels like it is doing a good deed” (personal communication, April 2003.).

Since I did not attend school in Egypt, I was unable to approach schools with which I directly had a personal relationship. My first attempt was at the British International School where our application was rejected. After leaving a letter with the school’s Principal, I received a letter stating that, “While we are very sympathetic to the sad circumstances of Abdullah, it is not the school’s policy to offer scholarships at The British International School.” No further elaboration was provided with regards to why it is not the school’s policy and it is clear that the school could have made a policy to offer scholarships. Indeed, the British International School is perhaps the most expensive school in Cairo. In Year 11, registration costs £100, books cost £900 and school fees for the year cost £6561. School fees in Year 12 and 13 cost approximately £7005 in addition to books. Totalling over LE 75,000 per year, providing one scholarship would have placed a minimal cost on the school and it was extremely disappointing to receive such a careless response from them.<sup>16</sup>

Two French schools were also approached after a colleague who attended Lycee Al-Zamalek informed me that she knew of a refugee who was enrolled at her school<sup>17</sup> and that a friend attending Lycee Bab El Louk had also informed her that a refugee had attended that

---

<sup>16</sup> Speaking later with Professor Sholkamy, she remarked that The British International School in particular prides itself on its exclusivity.

<sup>17</sup> My colleague graduated in 1996 and the refugee was a few years ahead of her.

school. Visiting Lycee Bab El Louk on my own, I was surprised at their suspicion and dismissive attitude. They requested that I obtain an official letter from the AUC before they would answer any of my questions, although I simply wanted to ascertain whether they admitted non-Egyptian students. While I understood why the Ministry of Education may request an official statement of purpose, I was surprised that a school would refuse to answer a simply inquiry. Therefore, I visited Lycee Al-Zamalek with my colleague who was a former student there. However the headmaster (who was new) informed us that whatever African students there were in the school, these were the children of diplomats working in embassies in Egypt for example from Chad or Burundi, not refugees and that they pay the same school fees as Egyptians. No scholarships can be offered either to refugees and anyone applying would have to be able to provide for the school fees. However my colleague was unsure whether the headmaster was being completely truthful or was simply unaware that refugees had been enrolled at the school, as she doubted why a former colleague of hers would say he was a refugee when he was not.

#### *Other Private Institutions*

With the extreme difficulty of completing one's secondary education in Egypt, the British Council opened the possibility that refugees might at least through self-study or private tutoring be able to sit their GCSE and A-Level exams. Speaking with one refugee from Sierra Leone, he recounted how he did indeed sit his exams in Sierra Leone but was then forced to flee due to the civil war and never received his results. Here was just one example of how the opportunity to sit exams at the British Council would have allowed one refugee to complete his secondary education and provide him with greater opportunities of accessing university. Other refugees from Sierra Leone and Liberia in particular, many of who have studied an English curriculum could have also benefited from this opportunity.

My first contacts with the British Council however revealed that students could only sit these exams if they are enrolled in one of 52 private schools<sup>18</sup> due to a protocol between the British Council, the University of Cambridge and the Ministry of Education. Pursuing the matter further, I contacted the British Council's Country Examinations Manager, Martin Lowder who informed me that the protocol is actually with regards to natives, but may not be applicable to foreigners and that he would contact Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) to find out whether this protocol is applicable to refugees. After speaking with Mr. Lowder again, he informed me that he received a rather contradictory message from Cambridge, which said that they could register refugees at the British Council, but that they would still want them registered at private schools too. Since registering at schools is precisely the problem that I hoped to bypass, Mr. Lowder provided me with the email address of Paul Lewis, the CIE's Regional Director of the Middle East and North Africa.

I wrote to Mr. Lewis explaining the situation in Cairo for refugees and the difficulty of enrolling in schools but received the unsatisfactory reply that "CIE only endorses learning at CIE registered schools where standards can be monitored and enforced" and that they "cannot endorse the use of unregulated private tutors to deliver learning leading to CIE assessments." He suggested that finding a "good quality, low cost school" that can be approved by CIE would be the key to resolving the issue. This response is still unjust for refugees in light of their situation.

I replied with another email to Mr. Lewis, Mr. Lowder, and the British Council and CIE in England elaborating further about the situation of refugees and that if there have been a good quality and low cost school, I would not be writing to request this and refugees on their own initiative would have enrolled and registered. The reply was yet another disappointing response illustrating the absence of any sort of understanding for circumstances of a refugee student. CIE claims that the issue at heart is really "whether the alternative of private tuition is educationally sound or desirable" and that in their experience it is not and that "CIE syllabuses are designed to

---

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 2.

be delivered in a school setting over 2 years where opportunities for cross curricular development and extra curricular activity are available, they are not in unregulated private tuition.” Private candidates could only be accepted on a case by case basis for students “who have followed CIE syllabuses as designed and who are displaced to Egypt immediately before they are due to take their final CIE assessments.” Finally, he suggested that “focussing on access to quality education rather than the assessment provider” may better serve the educational interests of refugees in Egypt. Although I had indicated in my letter that it is clearly in the best interests of the student to attend school regularly and to study the subjects to be examined at school, I also explained in further detail that this was simply not feasible for refugees.

The question that Mr. Lewis raised concerning the benefits of regular school attendance as opposed to the alternative of private education is valid and important. However, the situation that presents itself to refugees at the present time in Cairo, and particularly those who only need 1-3 years to complete their secondary education, is to either sit one’s examinations after a period of self-study or private tutoring or to neither receive any schooling nor sit examinations and remain at whatever level one had reached in the country of origin. It is unfortunate that Mr. Lewis has dismissed private tutoring or self-study as a possible alternative means to pursuing a school education. Mr. Lewis put forward the suggestion that a “regulated refugee study centre/school under UNHCR control” may be starting point and while this is certainly a valid suggestion, funding constraints unfortunately determines what can be proposed. As Sperl has indicated, decreases in funding for education has resulted in a downward trend in education which does run “contrary to a number of recommendations made by previous missions which have shown concern about the Cairo programme turning into an open-ended care and maintenance operation...” (2001: para 42).

Under the suggestion of Professor Harrell-Bond, I also contacted The United World (UWC) of the Atlantic. Founded in 1962 with the vision of creating “a school where the youth of the world could unite, to gain a knowledge and understanding of a variety of races and

cultures,” Atlantic Colleges provides a 2-year International Baccalaureate curriculum and examination (<http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/atlantic/index2.htm>). Furthermore, 85% of students have obtained scholarships that provide financial support ranging from 30% to 100% of the total cost and therefore appeared to be an ideal institution in particular for a Sierra Leonean refugee candidate in Egypt. However, I was informed through email correspondence that they could not consider this refugee because he was already 21, and the UWC only considers students between the ages of 16-18. While I was aware through Professor Harrell-Bond that they had previously made this exception at the Adriatic College in Italy and reminded them of this, they still refused to make this exception once more. It was extremely disappointing that the difference of a few years was made an obstacle to this refugees' potential opportunity to continue his education.

#### *Other Organizations*

In addition to contacting educational institutions, other organizations and UN agencies were also contacted in an effort to find out possibilities for providing scholarships, funding or inclusion of refugees into already existing educational programs for Egyptians and whether they could be sensitised to the situation of refugees.

The UN was an obvious target due to its already existing projects especially with regards to education in Egypt. One of the major UN projects currently taking place in Egypt is the improvement of “basic education” (<http://www.un.org.eg/UN%20System/Default.htm>).

UNICEF in particular has been working in particular in initiatives in girl's education. After contacting UNICEF, I was informed that their projects currently only involve Egyptians and that they have already begun implementation of their project that is expected to end 2007. Even after this date, they are unlikely to include non-Egyptians in their projects as they are currently only working in three governorates in Upper Egypt and not Cairo.

The EU has also been involved in funding educational projects in Egypt with a current project aimed at improving:

the basic education system in Egypt - focusing on educationally less privileged geographical areas - and progress towards the goal of universal elementary education.

The programme targets increased enrolment and reduction of dropouts, especially among girls and children of disadvantaged communities, improved quality of teaching and strengthened planning and management capacities

([www.eu-delegation.org.eg/PEducate.htm](http://www.eu-delegation.org.eg/PEducate.htm)).

After contacting the EU, I was informed that they are currently working with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Industry and that it is impossible to add anything to the projects because they are already bound by bilateral agreements. However, there are tentative plans for the funding of a project for children at risk for the end of 2003 and this would be an excellent opportunity for the UNHCR to present a proposal to the EU to include refugees in the project.

#### *Refugee Initiatives*

Refugees themselves have also attempted to expand their educational opportunities by whatever means available to them and a few of these examples will be provided here. The first case is of a refugee from Sierra Leone who since his arrival in Egypt in 2000 has pursued his to the best of his resources. While not attending formal schooling he has enrolled in computer courses at the British Council, taken a French course at the French centre and also attended short courses organized by the AUC. His was required to pay fees for the courses at the British Council and French centre, which prohibited him from completing all the course stages. In addition to this, he approached the St. Fatima school in Abbassia to find out whether he could enrol there to complete his secondary education. However he was informed that they do not offer scholarships and he was unable to afford the fees required. Continuing to pursue possible opportunities to complete his secondary education, he also wrote to the United Nations International School at New York to see whether he could enrol there but was informed that he could not enrol because he was 18 years of age. In addition, he also approached the British Council to find out if whether



he could sit his examinations there but was also informed that it is necessary to register at a school before sitting the exams.

Another refugee from Liberia has also demonstrated the persistence in continuing his education despite lack of formal opportunities for him in Cairo to complete his education. He has attended short courses at AUC, and is currently writing about his experiences as a refugee. He is an avid reader of both fiction and non-fiction stories and has also received private tutoring from two different people which including reading novels and has written commentaries on these novels. When asked how these private lessons have helped him he responded that they have advanced his English ability as well raised his awareness of other places. Furthermore reading these novels and writing about them has helped him when writing his own stories and his increased his love of reading literature.

These examples demonstrate not only refugees' eagerness to complete their education and their perseverance in seeking whatever opportunities they can access, but also highlight the need for a coordinated approach whereby refugees' right to education can be advocated on a group basis too.

### *The Somali Dilemma*

Somalis in particular present a challenge that needs to be addressed. I visited three Somali families in the Hay El Asher District where a large number of Somali families live. None of these Somali children that I met had ever received formal schooling, either in Egypt or in Somalia due to the civil war. The schooling they received in Somalia was largely Quranic schooling that took place near the home.

The first family had five children aged between 7 and 13. They have only recently been recognized by the UNHCR last month on appeal and had been in Egypt for approximately 2 years and 2 months. Since their arrival, none of the children have received any schooling, but they have learned Egyptian colloquial Arabic mainly through watching television. During the day the children will either watch TV or play football outside the house with other Egyptian

children. The father, while concerned about his children's lack of education, said that he neither had the residency nor the money to enrol them into school here, and is now hoping to be resettled. The eldest son noted that while he does want to go to school, he has been forced by his circumstances to stay at home and says he feels that he is losing his future.

The second Somali family had 9 children aged 1 and a half months, 2 and half years old, 4 yrs old, 6 yrs old, 8 yrs old, 12 years old, twins at 14 years of age and a 19 year old. They have also recently been recognized on appeal and have been in Egypt for approximately 2 years during which none of them have been to school. In Somalia they also only received a Quranic education and only one of the twin boys can read and write and speak colloquial Egyptian because he is the one who goes to the market. The children mostly stay in the house but the boys sometimes go to the Hay El Asher Youth Centre where they play football with other Egyptian boys, but the girls largely stay at home as there is no place for them to go. They simply cannot afford any additional fees that going to school would place on them. The mother was as a domestic worker until she gave birth and passed the job onto her 19 year old daughter earning LE 450 a month; LE 200 goes to the house rent leaving only LE 250 for food for the whole family.

The last family consisted of four unaccompanied minors currently living with a Somali woman. They are three boys aged 11-13 and a girl aged 14 who is working in the house of a Somali woman with Canadian citizenship. They have not been to school since their arrival in December 2001 and only the girl can speak colloquial Egyptian Arabic. While the girl and oldest boy can read and write in Somali, the two youngest boys can neither read nor write. Again they are plagued by economic problems. The girl receives LE 300 a month but the rent takes LE 250 from her salary, leaving them with very little else.

These three cases illustrate a number of issues. Firstly, due to the complete disruption that the civil war in Somalia has caused to the lives of people, the large majority of these children have been unable to attend and are still currently illiterate because of their inability to

enrol in school here. These children will require literacy classes before they can enrol in the regular school system.<sup>19</sup> Secondly, the language of instruction for these children is another issue as most can neither speak English nor Arabic. While some do speak colloquial Egyptian, this is insufficient to be able to follow classes conducted in classical Arabic. The last point is that these families constant economic insecurity prevents them from investing money into education.

#### *UNCHR's role*

Concerning UNHCR Cairo efforts with regards to education, the reality is that very limited work in this respect manner has been undertaken. After speaking with the UNHCR representatives, it was clear that they themselves did not possess a great deal of information about the situation of refugee children in Egypt, in particular with regards to education. UNHCR's Education project, as detailed in their 2002 Briefing report, is "to provide education grants to approximately 1500 vulnerable refugee children mainly from Yemen, Sudan and Somali living in Cairo for their primary and lower secondary education." These grants consist of LE 450 to be paid in two instalments and an additional amount of LE 200 per refugee students to be paid directly to the school administration only in the situation where there are at least 10 refugee students enrolled with the school. Catholic Relief Services (CRC) is currently the implementing partner for these grants. According to the briefing report, the expected number of registered refugee children in need of this assistance is expected to be at least 1500 refugee students, but that budget limitations constrain the number that can be helped. In addition, this assistance appears to be restricted to primary levels. As a refugee from Sierra Leone (all Sierra Leonean children were excluded from the UNHCR grants) notes, there is no opportunity provided for those who only need 2 or 3 more years in order to complete their secondary education.

Sperl's policy recommendation with regards to education states that

The policy should declare the provision of education and training opportunities for urban refugees to be one of its prime objectives since these provide the best foundation for the

---

<sup>19</sup> St Andrews Church has recently started a literacy program because it found that larger numbers of refugee children were enrolling with extremely low literacy skills.

acquisition of self-reliance; this should include ensuring all children have access to primary schooling as well as facilitating access to education and training at secondary and post-secondary levels; it should be acknowledged that such support may involve longer term funding commitments in form of fees or education grants and the placement of refugees in private schools in no other option is available (2001:13).

However, Sperl has indicated that this policy recommendation is in fact undermined by lack of funds. He details what kind of education projects had been available and the consequences of the reduction in funding for education on these projects. These programmes included a large scholarship scheme funded by UNHCR and a number of other agencies in the late 1970s and 1980s for the benefit of mainly Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees where approximately 2000-3000 refugees secured educational and training qualifications at secondary and post-secondary levels. However Sperl indicated that with the larger numbers of Somalis and Sudanese arriving in the 1990s, the focus of UNHCR's expenditure shifted from education and training to care and maintenance with the scholarships programme for higher education ending in 1995 (2001: para 40-41).

While my aim for interviewing UNHCR officials was to *gain* information, it appears that this office itself has a great need for information. In particular they requested that I look into information on numbers of school age children, the capacity of both public and private schools to accept refugees, what are the possibilities for donor assistance and what are the obstacles to refugee admission to public schools. I was able to cover a number of these points in my research, this research was only preliminary. Much more work needs to be done and it would appear that UNHCR does not have the staff to carry out the needed investigation. However, as Sperl has already documented, decreased funding has unfortunately severely affected education and this is clearly reflected in the paucity of information that UNCHR has concerning educational opportunities for refugees and the small numbers of refugees who are actually

receiving an education. In addition, I was also asked by UNHCR to find out about the projects administered by UNICEF, which also runs an education project. This request suggests that there is an absence to coordination and cooperation between UN agencies concerned with refugee education. Would not UNHCR be best placed to sensitize other UN bodies working in the field of development to the plight of refugees with regards to education in particular.

### *Catholic Relief Services*

I spoke with Provash Budden to find out more information about the educational grants that are provided to recognized refugees. The grant is to provide the child's family with resources needed for school and to provide the school with assistance too, provided that they take more than 10 refugee children. The reality is that most of the grants are given to 'refugee schools' and that only a handful are given to private schools. Budden noted that in general, with private schools, it is an arrangement made between the refugee parents (if they can afford it) and with the headmaster.

While CRS provides these grants, it is still the responsibility of the parents to deal with the Wafideen Office, which is necessary for the proper enrolment of the student in the school. Budden noted that they are still facing problems with regards to documentation, in particular with regard to producing the student's last school certificate. While Budden noted that CRS was interested into looking into more long term solutions i.e. integrating children in to the public school system, this has yet to be implemented by the CRS. Budden acknowledged that while parents may be fearful of harassment and transportation, they should not rely on resettlement or repatriation because many end up staying for a very long period of time.

### **Conclusion and Research Needs**

This report has highlighted some of the main obstacles to accessing education and suggested some possible solutions and alternative means of education. There are certainly further areas of research that will need to be undertaken in order to grasp a better understanding of the issue and ways to overcome current obstacles. Dingemans already touched upon the psychosocial aspects

of schooling and other issues such as these also need to be examined further. For example, how do living conditions, economic insecurity, temporary accommodation, and uncertainty about one's future affect refugees' ability to enrol in schools and maintain regular attendance. In addition, the health and nutritional status of refugee children and its affect on their ability to attend school, concentrate and learn is another possible area of research. It is insufficient to study the educational obstacles facing refugees in Cairo without also understanding the many other challenges that they face living here. This preliminary investigation is best understood if one also takes the time to read other papers concerning for example the asylum determination procedure, a study on how refugees secure their livelihood or the health and reproduction project in order to fully appreciate the legal, financial, bureaucratic and health dilemmas that face refugees in almost all aspects of their lives and not simply with regards to education.

With UNHCR's recent application of the 1969 OAU Convention and consequently the much higher rates of acceptance, many more refugees will consequently have residence. However, this does not necessarily mean that there will be a corresponding increase in the rates of resettlement and resettlement countries, namely the US, Canada and Australia may not consider those refugees accepted under the 1969 OAU Convention as eligible for resettlement.

Higher education is another area that will require further research as this report has focused on primary and secondary education. The visit by a representative of the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) to Cairo in July 2003 emphasized the importance of providing greater access to secondary education. WUSC's Student Refugee Program (SRP) provides an excellent opportunity for refugee students to continue post-secondary education in Canada and the opportunity to settle in Canada as permanent residents. However, completion of one's secondary education is a prerequisite to joining WUSC. It is encouraging that WUSC has taken interest in Egypt as a possible location from which to build a partnership for the SRP and efforts to provide refugees with greater access to secondary education need to be intensified in order to take advantage of such programs that are ready to provide scholarships to refugees.

## References

- 'Deputy Adopts a Law for Refugees.' (2003, July 19). *Akhbar Al-Yawm*, p. 12.
- Dingemans, Esther "Field Report: Educational Needs and Priorities for South Sudanese Refugees in Cairo", unpublished mss, Cairo 2002.
- Jones, Crispin and Jill Rutter (2001) "Mapping the Field: Current Issues in Refugee Education" in Jones, Crispin and Jill Rutter (eds.) *Refugee Education: Mapping the Field*, Staffordshire, Trentham Books: 1-11.
- Mahmoud, Redha (2003, May 31). "The Educational System has become a Silly Soap Opera." *Akhbar Al-Yawm*, p. 11.
- Peterson, Nancy (2001) "School's Out" *Cairo Times* Vol 5 (25).
- Sa'da, Ibrahim (2003, May 24). The Confessions of Dr. Hussein Baha'a Kamal El-Din. *Akhbar Al-Yawm*, p. 1, 10.
- Shehata, Ahmed Juma. "Canceling Activities is the Cause of all the Disasters [in the educational system]" (2003, June 7). *Akhbar Al-Yawm*, p. 10.
- Sherif, Al-Sayid Al-Sayid Sherif (2003, May 31). "Memorization and Dictation are still the Foundations of the Educational System." *Akhbar Al-Yawm*, p. 10.
- Sperl, Stefan (2001) "Evaluation of UNHCR's policy on refugees in urban areas: a case study review of Cairo", EPAU: 1-57
- Stainburn, Samantha (2002) "Interview: When children flee conflicts, they need food, shelter – and school, says the International Rescue Committee's Wendy Smith", *Teacher Magazine* Vol 14 (2). Academic Search Premier. Online.
- Suleiman, Imam (2003, May 31). "Thank You Dr. Hussien Kamal Baha'a El Din for these Confessions." *Akhbar Al-Yawm*, p. 11.
- 'Teachers: Don't Oppress us – Classes are overcrowded and Schools ask us to raise the Success Rates otherwise we will be Punished' (2003, May 31). *Akhbar Al-Yawm*, p. 15.
- Imbabi, Mohamed and Mohamed Abd Al Wahab and Hossam Rashad (2003, May 31). "Students: Teachers Force us to Take Private Lessons and Help us Pass Exams by Cheating." *Akhbar Al-Yawm*, p. 14-15.

## Appendix 1 Egyptian Public and Private School Fees

Public School Administrative fees:

- Primary: LE 22.15
- Preparatory: LE 31.65
- Secondary: LE 39.20

Private School Fees:<sup>20</sup>

- LE 250-450 per year

## Appendix 2 African Students enrolled in Egyptian Public and Private Schools

| Country of Origin        | Number of students |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Benin                    | 3                  |
| Burkina Faso             | 2                  |
| Burundi                  | 1                  |
| Cameroon                 | 4                  |
| Central African Republic | 4                  |
| Chad                     | 24                 |
| Congo                    | 15                 |
| Cote D'Ivoire            | 10                 |
| Ethiopia                 | 27                 |
| Eritrea                  | 46                 |
| Gabon                    | 3                  |
| Ghana                    | 11                 |
| Guinea                   | 33                 |
| Kenya                    | 12                 |
| Liberia                  | 4                  |
| Mali                     | 8                  |
| Mozambique               | 2                  |
| Niger                    | 5                  |
| Nigeria                  | 13                 |
| Senegal                  | 7                  |
| South Africa             | 2                  |
| Zimbabwe                 | 1                  |

## Appendix 3 Yearly School Fees of Private IGCSE Schools for Year 11

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| BBC International Schools             | LE 11,602   |
| El Alsson School                      | LE 22,540   |
| Misr Language Schools                 | LE 20,000   |
| Sakkara Language School               | LE 5500   |
| The British International School      | £ 7461 [Must be paid in English Pounds]                                       |
| The International School of Choueifat | \$6625 [\$3666 must be paid in dollars, and the remaining in Egyptian Pounds] |

<sup>20</sup> Egyptian private schools refer to private schools using the Egyptian curriculum, not private schools with British, American, French or German curricula.



**Appendix 4**
**List of IGCSE Schools approved by the British Council**

| <b>School</b>                      | <b>Address</b>   | <b>Phone Number</b> | <b>Email/Website</b>   |
|------------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| Al Bashaer Schools                 | District Ain, Mokkatum   | 5077133 / 5077233   | <a href="mailto:bashaer@infinity.com.eg">bashaer@infinity.com.eg</a><br><a href="http://www.albashaerschools.com">www.albashaerschools.com</a>   |
| Al Oman Language School            | New Maadi Nirko Building<br>Autostrade Street                                | 5216356             |  |
| Amal Language School Maadi         | 61 Road 10, Maadi  | 7507981             | <a href="mailto:amaligcsemaadi@hotmail.com">amaligcsemaadi@hotmail.com</a>   |
| BBC International Schools          | Beginning of Belbeis Road  | 2781111 / 2783333   | <a href="mailto:bbschool@hotmail.com">bbschool@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Dar El Tarbiah School Agouza       | 64 Abdel Moneim Riad St., Agouza   | 3443231 / 3442971   | <a href="mailto:dar_eltarbiah@hotmail.com">dar_eltarbiah@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Dar El Tarbiah School Zamalek      | 24 Ismail Mohamed St, Zamalek (off Brazil St.)                               | 7365979 / 7360472   | <a href="mailto:dar_eltarbiah_zamalek@yahoo.com">dar_eltarbiah_zamalek@yahoo.com</a>   |
| El Alsson School                   | Saqqara Rd, Harraniya Giza<br>P.O. Box 13, 12411 Embaba, Sakkara             | 3888510-18          | <a href="mailto:alsson@starnet.com.eg">alsson@starnet.com.eg</a><br><a href="http://www.alsson.org">www.alsson.org</a>                           |
| El Nasr Schools                    | 32 Abou Bakr El Saddik St, Heliopolis  | 6444250             | <a href="mailto:nehalzاهر@hotmail.com">nehalzاهر@hotmail.com</a>   |
| El Nile Union Academy              | P.O. Box 12, Heliopolis, Gabal Asfar   | 4698518             | <a href="mailto:nua@internetegypt.com">nua@internetegypt.com</a>   |
| El Rowad Language School           | 8 <sup>th</sup> district Moustafa El Nahas behind Masaken El Kodah Nasr City | 2750256 / 2703271   | <a href="mailto:alrowads@link.net">alrowads@link.net</a>   |
| Elwy Language Schools              | 15 Libbiny St. Maryoutia Rd. Pyramids, Giza                                  | 3857142 / 3854174   | <a href="mailto:webmaster@elwy.8m.com">webmaster@elwy.8m.com</a>   |
| Futures American School            | Ahmed El Zoumer St., 8 <sup>th</sup> District Nasr City                      | 2728547 / 2721451   | <a href="mailto:futuresamerican02@yahoo.com">futuresamerican02@yahoo.com</a><br><a href="mailto:nrashad2000@yahoo.com">nrashad2000@yahoo.com</a> |
| Integrated Thebes Language Schools | KM 27 Ismailia Desert Rd. P.O. Box 3021 Madinat Al Salam                     | 4770004 / 4770141   | <a href="mailto:tacey@hotmail.com">tacey@hotmail.com</a><br><a href="mailto:msshamy@yahoo.com">msshamy@yahoo.com</a>                             |
| International School of Egypt 2000 | Mostafa El Nahas St, District 11 Area 15-16 Nasr City                        | 4090958             |  |
| Kenana Language Schools            | KM 30 Cairo – Ismailia Rd.   | 4770660             | <a href="mailto:daliakenana@yahoo.com">daliakenana@yahoo.com</a>   |
| Manara Language School Maadi       | El Ofq El Gedid St, Zahraa El Maadi, Maadi                                   | 5200204 / 7543505   | <a href="mailto:hanaa_rafea@hotmail.com">hanaa_rafea@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Manara Boy's Language School       | 17 El Lewaa Mahmoud Samy St. Nasr City                                       | 6705723             | <a href="mailto:manara_IG_Boys@hotmail.com">manara_IG_Boys@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Manara Girl's Language School      | 21 Dr. Hassan Ibrahim St., Nasr City off Makram Ebeid                        | 6705723             | <a href="mailto:manara_IG_Boys@hotmail.com">manara_IG_Boys@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Manor House School                 | 5 <sup>th</sup> district, 1 <sup>st</sup> suburb, New Cairo                  | 0101017085          | <a href="mailto:mhilmy7@hotmail.com">mhilmy7@hotmail.com</a>   |

|   |  |                       |  |
|---|--|-----------------------|--|
| Menese Language Schools                       | KM 29 Misr Ismailia Rd                                       | 4770826 / 4770827     | <a href="mailto:menese@infinity.com.eg">menese@infinity.com.eg</a>   |
| Misr Language Schools                         | Beg. of Ahram Fayoum Highway P.O. Box 62 Giza                | 3834060 / 383 0170    | <a href="mailto:gloriaegypt@hotmail.com">gloriaegypt@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Modern English School Cairo                   | South of Mubarak Police Academy, New Cairo                   | 6170005-11 0122261646 | <a href="http://www.mescairo.education.eg">www.mescairo.education.eg</a><br><a href="mailto:mes@starnet.com.eg">mes@starnet.com.eg</a>     |
| Mokatem Language School                       | Street 9 in front of El Nasr Buildings Mokattem P.O. Box 116 | 5062782               | <a href="mailto:mokatamlanguageschool@hotmail.com">mokatamlanguageschool@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Narmer Language School                        | 7 Haroun St., Dokki, Giza                                    | 7383450               | <a href="mailto:narmer_school@hotmail.com">narmer_school@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Nefertari Language Schools                    | KM 22 Cairo, Ismailia Rd.                                    | 6560222               | <a href="mailto:azzash@yahoo.com">azzash@yahoo.com</a><br><a href="http://www.nefertari.com">www.nefertari.com</a>                         |
| New Cairo British International School        | P.O. Box 9057 Nasr City                                      | 7582881               | <a href="mailto:ncbis_sa@intouch.com">ncbis_sa@intouch.com</a><br><a href="http://www.ncbis.org">www.ncbis.org</a>                         |
| New Horizon School                            | Zahraa El Maadi City, Zone no. 3 P.O. Box 1079 Maadi         | 5162685               | <a href="mailto:nhsigcse@hotmail.com">nhsigcse@hotmail.com</a><br><a href="http://www.newhorizon-eg.com">www.newhorizon-eg.com</a>         |
| New Orouba Language School Dokki              | 8 Hussein Wassef St, Dokki                                   | 7484496 / 7489420     | <a href="mailto:orouba_dokki@mail.com">orouba_dokki@mail.com</a>   |
| October Language School                       | 7 A.Rahman El Rafaey St., off Mekka St., Mohandessin         | 7608797 / 7480643     | <a href="mailto:soliman_hoda@hotmail.com">soliman_hoda@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Orouba Language Schools Maadi                 | 1 Amr St., District 6, New Maadi                             | 5168700 / 5168399     | <a href="mailto:orouba_igcse@mail.com">orouba_igcse@mail.com</a><br><a href="mailto:atef_bahgat@hotmail.com">atef_bahgat@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Own Heliopolis Language School                | Masaken Misr Leltaemir, Sheraton                             | 2669055 / 2661113     | <a href="mailto:ownsch@hotmail.com">ownsch@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Pakistan International School Cairo           | 6 Mohammed Sakeb St., Zamalek                                | 7359290 / 7359148     | <a href="mailto:pakschl@tedata.net.eg">pakschl@tedata.net.eg</a>   |
| Port-Said Schools                             | 7 Taha Hussein St., Zamalek                                  | 7351506 / 7382077     | <a href="mailto:malaily@go.com.eg">malaily@go.com.eg</a>   |
| Rajac Language School                         | Cairo Ismailia Highway KM30                                  | 4770821 / 4770822     | <a href="mailto:rajacschool@hotmail.com">rajacschool@hotmail.com</a>   |
| Ramses College for Girls                      | 198 Ramses St.   | 6858062 / 4821672     | <a href="mailto:rcg_computer@hotmail.com">rcg_computer@hotmail.com</a>   |
| St. Fatima Language School Nasr City          | 66 Ismail El Kabany St, 1 <sup>st</sup> District Nasr City   | 4029984 / 4023540     | <a href="mailto:igcse@stfatima.education.eg">igcse@stfatima.education.eg</a>   |
| Sunrise English School                        | 14 Badie Khairy St., Heliopolis                              | 6367190 / 6358455     | <a href="mailto:sunrenglish@hotmail.com">sunrenglish@hotmail.com</a>   |
| The British International School              | P.O. Box 137 Gezira  | 7380760 / 7368095     | <a href="mailto:phalaj@hotmail.com">phalaj@hotmail.com</a>   |
| The British School Al Rehab                   | Al Rehab City, Suez Road, New Cairo                          | 6070292               | <a href="mailto:Admin@the-british-school-cairo.net">Admin@the-british-school-cairo.net</a>   |
| The Continental School of Cairo               | P.O. Box 22 Obour City                                       | 6102222-5             | <a href="mailto:admin@continental-school.com">admin@continental-school.com</a>   |
| The Egyptian Language School                  | 5 <sup>th</sup> Compound, Ring Road, Kattameya               | 7580902 / 7581135     | <a href="mailto:welcome@els.education.eg">welcome@els.education.eg</a><br><a href="mailto:eymahmoud@hotmail.com">eymahmoud@hotmail.com</a> |
| The International School of Choueifat – Cairo | New 5 <sup>th</sup> Urban community, Modern Maadi, New Cairo | 7580001-4             | <a href="mailto:isccairo@sabis.net">isccairo@sabis.net</a><br><a href="mailto:mgiddings@sabis.net">mgiddings@sabis.net</a>                 |
| The Modern Education Schools                  | El Kattamia  | 7583307 / 7583310     | <a href="mailto:m_e_a_s@hotmail.com">m_e_a_s@hotmail.com</a>   |

