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Girls' empowerment through sports: Sports and physical activity with life skills

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The American University in Cairo

Girls' Empowerment through Sports:
Sports and Physical Activity with Life Skills

A Thesis Submitted by

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<u>DEDICATION</u>

I dedicate this work to the marginalized and disempowered rural girls, who are subjected to violations of their basic rights to learn, play, and express themselves. To those who are the victims of harmful practices perpetuated under the name of traditions and social norms. And to those who are the mothers of tomorrow hoping to stop this vicious cycle of violations from happening to their future daughters.

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ABSTRACT

Social norms, myths, and misconceptions negatively impact girls' self-esteem, self-confidence and self-efficacy. These harmful traditions and social norms often cause feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness. With limited opportunities provided to girls, in general, and rural girls, in particular, including limitation of mobility and exclusion from education and employment, girls often lack self-esteem. This study focuses on rural marginalized girls in Upper Egypt, which is a conservative setting characterized with harmful social norms and practices; such as, early marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). This study examines rural girls' empowerment through sports and physical activities and argues that sports and play are rights through which other rights can be addressed. Sports and physical activities are innovative approaches that can bring about self-reliance, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, which ultimately promote girls' empowerment. In this respect, the study provides an analysis of UNICEF Egypt's Sports for Development Project (S4D) namely Sports and Physical Activities with Life Skills. The project was implemented in Assiut governorate in collaboration with Assiut Childhood and Development Association (ACDA), and the Ministry of Education (MoE) Directorate in Assiut governorate. The S4D project was piloted in 50 community schools in three rural districts; namely, Abnoub, El Fath, and Dayrout during the academic year 2013-2014. The analysis was undertaken in light of the three main components of the empowerment theory, which are: the intrapersonal, the interactional and the behavioral. The results of the analysis revealed that sports and physical activities with life skills can promote girls' empowerment and enhance their school attendance and hence retain them in education. The analysis also revealed that even though sports and physical activities are effective innovative approaches, their deployment in development interventions has been overlooked by the development organizations. Most of the development interventions tend to adopt complex approaches, thus pay less attention to simple and entertaining approaches such as sports and physical activities. Consequently, there is a need to promote the use of sports as a right and as a crosscutting strategy to address other rights.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

C4D – Communication for Development

EDHS – Egypt Demographic Health Survey

HRBA - Human rights-based approach

MDGs – Millennium Development Goals

MENA – Middle East and North Africa

MoE – Ministry of Education

MoYS – Ministry of Youth and Sports

NCCM – National Council for Childhood and Motherhood

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

NPC – National Council for Population

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SYPE – Survey on Young People in Egypt

S4D – Sports for Development

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

UNDAF – United Nations Development Assistance Framework

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

UNOSDP - The UN Office of Sport for Development and Peace

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In Egypt and in rural settings in particular, females are generally perceived as the un-preferred sex by their parents. Gender issues start from childhood and are exacerbated during adolescence when girls become more marginalized. Social norms, misconceptions, ignorance, and poverty created a mind-set that males are more favored. These socio-cultural factors, among other reasons, have hindered girls' involvement and participation in general, and in sports and physical activities in particular.

The status of females has a strong effect on the development of the country. Egypt has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.59, which ranks it as the 136th country out of 145 countries in the 2015 index.[1] This low position is particularly attributed to females' social and economic empowerment. Therefore, this study focuses on the empowerment of girls. Particularly, the study is grounded on the concept affirmed by the UNICEF Sports for Development (S4D) Strategy, which holds that the right to play is a right through which other rights can be addressed. Sports and physical activities are, therefore, used as a tool that can contribute to the empowerment of girls.

In this regard, the thesis examines UNICEF Egypt's S4D Project entitled "Sports and Physical Activities with Life Skills", which was implemented in 2013-2014 in 50 community schools in three rural districts of Assiut governorate. The project aimed at empowering girls in the targeted community schools through providing a package of life skills by means of sports and physical activities. It is worth mentioning that the community schools project is itself one of the gender targeted programs initiated by UNICEF Egypt in 1992. Consequently, the thesis provides an orientation on the community-based education (CBE) as part of the UNICEF gender targeted programs while also shedding light on the context in which the S4D project was implemented. Specifically, the conceptual framework

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[1] World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report*, 136
The Global Gender Gap Index 2015 ranks 145 economies according to how well they are leveraging their female talent pool, based on economic, educational, health-based and political indicators.

of the thesis addresses the discourse on sports and feminism, and the empowerment theory of Zimmerman. In the end, the thesis proposes recommendations and policy implications to improve the use of sports and physical activities in promoting life skills in order to enhance girls' participation, and by extension empower them.

The following research question is addressed throughout the study: *To what extent, does introducing sports and physical activities with life skills in community schools contribute to the empowerment of female students?*[2] This study finds that the inclusion of sports and physical activities with life skills can contribute to the empowerment of marginalized female students in community schools. The reason behind such finding is that sports and physical activities can promote girls' self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-reliance.

Methodology:

The thesis uses a mixture of primary and secondary sources since the main form of the analysis is qualitative. Secondary analysis includes a review of the literature addressing theories of feminism and sports as well as the empowerment theory. The secondary sources referenced include books, journal articles, UN reports, statistical reports and surveys, UNICEF S4D project reports and documents, webpages, and NGO reports. Furthermore, the thesis outlines the international discourse on sports and play to shed light on how sports are stressed upon as a development tool within the constructs of the international covenants and treaties. In addition, the study provides a contextual analysis of documents and reports addressing the status of girls in Egypt.

To examine the thesis statement, the empirical part provides an assessment of UNICEF S4D project implemented in 2013-2014. The assessment depends on the primary source of data and is divided into two main parts. The first part assesses the project's impact on the target group in light of the three main components of the empowerment theory: the intrapersonal, the interactional and the behavioral. The second part focuses on the programmatic aspects of the project. This part assesses how the project responded to the requirements of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) good programming practices.

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[2] Please note that almost 70% to 80% of the community schools' students are girls.

The first part of the assessment of the UNICEF S4D project presents the findings of the fieldwork that was implemented on two stages. The first stage aims at analyzing the impact of the S4D project that was implemented in partnership with Assiut Childhood and Development Association (ACDA) Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), and the Ministry of Education (MoE) Directorate in Assiut under the title "Sports and Physical Activities with Life Skills for Rural Girls" Project. Within this stage the results of the pretest and posttest, which was implemented before and after the implementation of the S4D manual in the 50 targeted community schools during the academic year 2013-2014, are analyzed. A total of 1,391 students (941 females and 450 males) from the 50 targeted community schools participated in the pretest and posttest. The results of the pretest and posttest were deduced from the database of UNICEF S4D project that is administrated by the implementing partner NGO, ACDA, within the project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework. The pretest and posttest were developed by Aspire.[3] The tests were implemented with all the students who participated in the S4D project in the 50 targeted community schools by their respective teachers who were also trained by the project on the S4D training manual. Then, ACDA's local coordinators collected the pretest and posttest forms. The data entry processes was done at ACDA, where the database is administrated.

The second stage of the fieldwork was carried out within the framework of this study. Through this fieldwork, the findings and the results are presented based on the focus group discussions (FGDs) and the semi-structured interviews conducted by the author in October and November 2016. This stage of the fieldwork measures the impact of the project on the target group, and verifies the results of the pretest and posttest. In this stage, four semi-structured interviews were conducted with the concerned staff from ACDA, the implementing partner NGO. Additionally, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the heads of the Community-based Education of MoE Administrations in Abnoub and El Fath rural districts in Assiut. The interviews aimed to deduce lessons learned, challenges, and recommendations to promote the use of sports with life skills as a means to empower girls. Furthermore, three FGDs were held with a sample of 38 students (31 females and 7 males), from the targeted community schools in Abnoub and El Fath rural

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[3] Aspire is a firm contracted by UNICEF to develop the manual and undertake the training workshops

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districts. In addition, two FGDs were conducted with a sample of 12 teachers from Abnoub and El Fath rural districts. In this stage of the fieldwork, human-interest stories were collected to reflect the change in the students' skills and knowledge brought about by the S4D project. The stories also help shed light on the biased treatment and social subjectivity which rural girls are exposed to. Lastly, the assessment of the fieldwork of the two aforementioned stages is undertaken on the basis of the three main components of the empowerment theory (to be addressed in the literature review and the theoretical framework chapter): the intrapersonal, the interactional, and the behavioral empowerment.

The second part of the assessment of UNICEF S4D project aims at evaluating the S4D project from a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) perspective. Adopting the HRBA requires the operationalization of good programming practices. This operationalization requires certain elements to ensure the adoption of the HRBA. Consequently, this part of the assessment presents the analysis of the S4D project in light of these HRBA elements for good programming practices.

Limitations and Challenges:

In Egypt, collecting data in general and from the education sector in particular, is considered a "state security issue". Therefore, during the fieldwork phase, the partner NGO raised concerns around security permissions and clearances from the Ministry of Education (MoE) Directorate in Assiut. Up until the last minute, the semi-structured interviews and the FGDs were not confirmed due to the reluctance of the concerned authorities to approve the fieldwork. In addition, the UNICEF project was completed in 2014 and many of the girl beneficiaries of the project have already graduated from the targeted community schools and joined public preparatory schools. This posed difficulty in reaching a higher number of girls through the fieldwork.

Furthermore, despite the fact that school activities are addressed in many studies, there is a lack in the literature addressing sports in community schools specifically. This gap represented a challenge when analyzing physical activities in community-based education and its limitations. However, this gap is considered an opportunity at the same time, for it contributed to the significance of the thesis.

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Furthermore, it was initially planned that the fieldwork would also include a pretest with a control group of students to be selected from different community schools other than those at which the project was implemented. This is to be able to determine whether the increase in the students' knowledge and skills is merely due to the introduction of sports and physical activities with life skills in the targeted community schools or due to other factors too. It was hard to obtain the required clearances to conduct fieldwork in other community schools beyond those that participated in the project. Alternatively, the focus group discussions and the semi-structured interviews, which were conducted within the framework of the fieldwork of this thesis, contained specific questions that could help verify the results of the pretest and posttest and distinguish the impact of the S4D project on the targeted groups. For example, in the semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the officials from the Community-Based Education Department of the MoE Directorate of Assiut and the concerned staff from ACDA NGO, and also in the FGDs that were conducted with the teachers of the targeted community schools, the participants were asked whether there was a difference in the skills and knowledge between the students who participated in the project and those who did not. This is mainly to verify the difference that they observed between the students who benefited from the S4D project and those who did not in order to determine whether the introduction of sports and physical activities with life skills as a variable can promote students' empowerment or not.

It is also important to note the limitation of the data analysis provided in the empirical part of this study. The results of the pretest and the posttest are mainly deduced from the project's database administrated by ACDA. The reports that were generated from the database are not disaggregated by sex. Therefore, the results of the analysis of the pretest and posttest are inclusive of all students including girls and boys. However, the majority of the community schools' students (70% to 80%) are girls, which infers that the results of the analysis of the pretest and posttest are more than 70% representative of girls.

Objectives and Significance of the Research:

It is worth noting that the S4D project is the first attempt of UNICEF Egypt to implement UNICEF global sports for development strategy. The study assesses the

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implementation of this strategy by UNICEF Egypt Country Office. It also provides UNICEF Egypt, as the lead UN agency responsible for children in general and girls in particular, with answers to questions relating to the scaling-up and mainstreaming of the S4D project's approaches as a means to empower disadvantaged girls.

Prior to the implementation of the UNICEF S4D project, a training needs assessment was conducted. One of the major findings of this assessment was that although community schools adopt the active learning approach to education; they do not include sports or physical activities in their school day. This is mainly due to the inexistence of spaces to practice physical activities in community schools. These schools are mainly made up of one room donated by community leaders/members in rural villages. Only a few number of community schools have the advantage of having a small area where students implement activities such as planting.

The lack of sports and physical education in the community-based education can negatively affect the health and wellbeing of the child. Most of the available literature focuses on sports and physical activities in mainstream schools and address competitive games that require large spaces, which is something that community schools lack. No academic literature that addresses this specific gap in community-based education was found. In essence, this means that the right to play, as one of the child's rights, is not emphasized in relation to community schools. This signifies the need to address the role sports and life skills can play to empower marginalized rural girls who have few opportunities to enjoy their basic rights, including the right to play. Therefore, the research also intends to contribute to the literature on sports and physical activities in community schools.

Although many development interventions have addressed girls' empowerment, there is still an increasing gender gap that worsens the status of girls and women in Egypt. These development interventions tend to adopt traditional approaches, which neglect the innovative advances sports can bring about. Therefore, the study highlights the use of sports as an innovative approach that intends to help inform other development interventions aimed at empowering marginalized girls.

Thesis Outline:

Chapter I introduced the general outline of the thesis. It provides a background on the study and presents the research questions, the thesis statement, the methodology, the research limitations, the objectives and the significance of the research. *Chapter II* outlines the literature review and provides the theoretical framework of the study. It addresses sports and feminism theories, along with empowerment theory (including its main components as proposed by Zimmerman). *Chapter III* provides an account of the international context of sports and physical activities and highlights the importance of sports, play, and physical activities as emphasized by many international instruments. *Chapter IV* features the main subject matter of the study – the child and adolescent girls – within Egypt's context. This chapter underlines the need to empower girls. The review of Egypt's context addresses the main challenges facing girls in Egypt at large and in rural Upper Egypt in particular. *Chapter V* addresses UNICEF's response to the issue of gender inequality. It sheds light on UNICEF's gender policy, strategic plan and gender action plan. The chapter, then, gives an idea on the community schools project and presents the UNICEF S4D project, which was implemented by UNICEF Egypt in collaboration with Assiut Association for Childhood and Development (ACDA) NGO, and the Ministry of Education (MoE) Directorate in Assiut in 2013-2014. *Chapter VI* analyzes the UNICEF S4D project. This chapter is divided into two main parts: the analysis of the fieldwork and the assessment of the project from a human rights-based approach (HRBA) perspective. Finally, *Chapter VII* provides the recommendations and the policy implications to improve the use of sports and physical activities as a tool to provide life skills and contribute to the empowerment of girls.

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CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter starts with shedding light on the importance of sports. Then, it provides an account on the theoretical discourse on feminism and sport. The discourse on feminism and sports as well as the empowerment theory comprise the theoretical framework of the study. Specifically, different stages of theory development are addressed. The early phase of sports and feminism (known as the 'atheortical' stage), the liberal feminism and sport, the radical feminism and sport, and finally the postmodern feminism and sports are all reviewed. The chapter also addresses empowerment theory and presents its three main components; i.e. the intrapersonal, the interactional, and the behavioral components of empowerment are addressed.

Why are Sports Important?

Sports and women's bodies are located within the different sports spheres be it social, or economic sport. Theorists perceived sport as both liberating and restraining. Some theorists criticize it for it does not provide an equitable opportunity for girls and women's participation and for the pressure of the social constructs on women to "perform femininity".[4] While some defend sport for the role it plays in allowing the freedom of body movement. Many scholars linked between sports and girls' and women's empowerment because practicing sports has the ability to bring about changes in the personality. It can also challenge social norms and misconception and create a fora where girls and women can participate beyond sport-playing.

In this respect, the UN Office of Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) report on sport and gender empowerment highlights the significance of engaging girls in sports at an early age so as to stimulate their self-esteem.[5] UNOSDP stresses the importance of sport as a right and a means through which valuable information to foster women's self-

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[4] Emily A. Roper, *Gender Relation in Sport*, 29
[5] UNOSD, *Sport and Gender: Empowering Girls and Women,* 143

esteem can be conveyed. Additionally, it highlights the role sport can play in the empowerment of girls and women, as well as a means for social support and inclusion to provide opportunities for female leadership.[6]

The late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed a major shift in relation to feminism and sport that was reflected in the United Nations' treaties and conventions. This contributed to the discourse on sport as a right and a means to achieve other rights. The UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education and Sport that was issued in 1978 is one of the international conventions that adopted such a discourse by underscoring recreational activities and sport participations as fundamental rights. It also states that sports and physical activities are tools to further life skills development; for example, Article 1 of the charter stresses the importance of practicing physical education and sport as a fundamental right for all.[7]

Furthermore, in 1979 the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was issued. The CEDAW addressed the right to play and stipulated two articles (article 10 and article 13) to reaffirm women's right to participate in sport.[8]

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[6] UNOSDP, *United Nations Office for Sports for Development and Peace Annual Report 2011*, 12

[7] Article 1-UNESCO Charter: 1.1. *Every human being has a fundamental right of access to physical education and sport, which are essential for the full development of his personality. The freedom to develop physical, intellectual and moral powers through physical education and sport must be guaranteed both within the educational system and in other aspects of social life.*
1.2. *Everyone must have full opportunities, in accordance with his national tradition of sport, for practicing physical education and sport. Developing his physical fitness and attaining a level of achievement in sport, which corresponds to his gifts.*
1.3. *Special opportunities must be made available for young people; including children of pre-school age, for the aged and for the handicapped to develop their personalities to the full through physical education and sport programs suited to their requirements.*

[8] Article 10 of the CEDAW: *States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and, in particular, to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women: (g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education.*
Article 13 of the CEDAW: *States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular: (c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.*

In essence, the discourse on girls and women's empowerment through sport was well captured by many feminist theorists. The following part sheds light on the theoretical discourse on feminism and sport.

Feminism and Sports:

The theoretical discourse on women and sport addressed three main theoretical phases of feminism and sport. The first phase was an early theoretical platform to develop a research sphere focusing on 'women and sport'. The second stage started in 1978 and was characterized by self-conscious search for the theoretical foundation within feminism. The third phase began in 1980s and was influenced by postmodern sensibilities. The discourse on feminism and sport shows that sport is a feminist concern, because it includes activities in which large numbers of women and girls participate.[9]

Early Atheoretical Attention to Women in Sports:

Analysis of women and girls' participation in sport started in the United States and Europe in the 1970s.[10] However, the early discourse on female participation in sport did not address the issue of women in sport within a theoretical framework, but rather within the inequalities women and girls face and the need to provide them with more opportunities. The research arena during that period was dominated by psychological themes on gender roles, traits and motives. As Greendorfer argues, "Research at the time was dominated by psychological topics focused on sex or gender roles, traits and motives, and role conflict."[11] Hence, gender was perceived as a disruptive issue rather than a coherent framework for human relations within the cultural practices.[12]

The emergence of the discourse on women in development approach (WID) in the 1970s was parallel to that of women in sport, which in turn implies that, sport is correlated to development. The WID approach holds that women have become marginalized as a result of their being left out of the development. It argues that the core issue of equality lies

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[9] Susan Birrell, *Feminist Theories for Sport: Handbook of Sports Studies*, 3
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid, 5
[12] Ibid, 3

in women's inclusion in or exclusion from the development process. It therefore emphasizes the inclusion of women in development programs in order to enhance their opportunities of accessing resources and ensuring their participation in development.[13] Likewise, as mentioned earlier, the discourse on women and sport emerged mainly to provide women with more opportunities.

Moving to Theory:

Both the liberal feminism and radical feminism are referred to as modernism or structuralism theories. The following part moves towards a more articulated theoretical framework on women and ports. It presents sports and liberal feminism, sports and radical feminism, and sports and postmodernism.

The Modernist Theories

I.   Sports and Liberal Feminism:

The liberal feminism theory is based on the similarities between women and men. Despite these similarities they live different lives and have different opportunities. The liberal feminism theory argues that women's disadvantages mainly stem from stereotyped traditional expectations perceived by men and internalized by women. The liberal feminism discourse suggests that breaching these stereotypes can reduce these disadvantages; for example, by availing and providing better training opportunities and more diverse role models to girls, by offering equal opportunities and anti-discrimination programs and policies, or by freeing labor markets.[14]

Despite the fact that the early discourse on feminism and women in development focused on women's participation, it did not thoroughly address sport as a right and a means of participation and inclusion except in the late 1970s. In 1978 two scholars marked a significant paradigm shift in sport and feminism. Both Carole Oglesby's book "Women in Sport: From Myth to Reality (1978)", and Ann Hall's monograph "Sport and Gender: a

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[13] Valerie Duffy, *Gender and Development* 162-163
[14] Susan Birrell, *Feminist Theories for Sport: Handbook of Sports Studies*, 7

Feminist Perspective on the Sociology of Sport (1978)" signify the initial discourse on women in sport.[15]

The paradigm shift embarked by Oglesby and Hall resulted in transforming the feminism theories and approaches and rearticulating the discourse on sport and gender in a more coherent way. The liberal feminism calls for empowering the affected individual to enable individuals' decision-making power. Education is therefore highlighted as a crucial factor that can be used to improve girls and women situations.[16] Furthermore, liberal feminism scholars stress sport's positive contribution to individuals' knowledge and experience, which girls and women lack access to. In this respect, Greendorfer and Oglesby argue that the low participation of girls and women in sport is the result of social norms and patriarchal practices perpetrated by the different institutions dealing with females including the family, the media and the school.[17] Essentially, stereotyping and discriminatory practices can hinder females' equal access to sport activities and facilities.[18]

Conversely, the modern liberal feminism discourse addressed by Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, and Harriet Taylor challenged the stereotyping of male rationality and female emotionality.[19] The liberal feminism theory lays emphasis on equal rights and freedom of the individuals and calls for reform to occur without radically challenging cultures and values.[20] It puts emphasis on the need for gradual and on-going change in the political, economic and social systems.[21] The discourse on cultures provides proof of gender inequality by referring to social norms and harmful traditional practices that result in female disempowerment.

The gradual transformation that was addressed by liberal feminists is in line with Sally Engle Merry's view on global rights and local cultures. Merry criticizes the idea of imposing global rights on local cultures and refers to the need to establish common grounds

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[15] Susan Birrell, *Feminist Theories for Sport*: *Handbook of Sports Studies, 3*
[16] Wellington Samkange, *The Liberal Feminist Theory: Assessing its Applicability to Education in General and Early Childhood Development*, 1174
[17] David L. Andrews and Ben Carrington: *A Companion to Sport*, 97
[18] Ibid, 97
[19] Ibid.
[20] Wellington Samkange, *The Liberal Feminist Theory*, 1174
[21] Ibid.

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to gradually create an enabling environment for girls and women's participation.[22] She argues that culture is generally not used to describe the rich countries of the global North, but the poor countries of the global South- even then, it is mainly in reference to the marginalized, isolated and rural areas.[23] In many instances, these global rights endeavors therefore do not tailor development interventions to cope with cultural and local particularities.[24]

In addition to the need to address the negative impact of cultures and patriarchal systems on girls and women's participation in sports, liberal feminists address the issue of women's representation in high positions in different institutions working in the field of sports and physical activities. Furthermore, women and sport activists were instrumental in creating a discourse that addresses women in sport in the international sphere, which, in turn, resulted in a number of statements and legislations emphasizing the role sport can play in the development of girls and women.[25] Susan Birrell argues that, "Liberal feminists work to remove the barriers to girls' and women's participation in sport through legislation such as Title IX and the Equal Rights Amendment in the United States", which contributed to the legislative framework of women and sports.[26] Liberal feminism strives to solve the problem of gender inequality within the existing system. Due to its focus on individualism, liberal feminism holds that equality for females can be attained through availing the same opportunities and freedoms.[27]

Consequently, the 1990s witnessed a greater focus on women and sport. International conferences and declarations addressed the issue of girls and women's participation in sport, which opened up opportunities for girls and women to take part in sport and physical activities. Among these declarations are the 1994 Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport; 1998 Windhoek Call for Action; 2008 IAPESGW "Accept and Respect" Declarations which will be addressed later in the study.[28]

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[22] Sally Engle Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*, 27
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid, 100
[25] Wellington Samkange, *The Liberal Feminist Theory*, 1174
[26] Susan Birrell, *Feminist Theories for Sport: Handbook of Sports Studies*, 6
[27] Fatma Awad and Rebecca Newel Eldon, *Questioning Liberal Feminism*, 10
[28] Wellington Samkange, *The Liberal Feminist Theory*, 1174

However, the liberal feminism discourse on women and sports is criticized for its focus on rationality over physicality. In this respect, Mary Wollstonecraft and Elizabeth Stanton stressed that the rights of freedom and equality are owed to all rational beings regardless of sex.[29] The emphasis on rationality here draws the attention to the minds and ignores the body. This leaves the idea of men physical superiority over women unchallenged and hence hinders women's participation in sport and deprives them from its benefits. [30] Furthermore, the liberal feminism call for girls' and women's participation in sports did not challenge the dualistic perception of the two sexes and the valuing of the mind over the body.[31] Consequently, the emphasis on rationality makes liberal feminism uncertain about women's participation in sport.

Eventually, liberal feminists were influential in providing the foundation for policies and legislations addressing women's right to participate in sports.[32] Confronting the dilemma around females and what is perceived as 'normal' in sports can indeed contribute to challenging other social norms. Consequently, female engagement in sport has the potential of challenging the 'normal' and hence the 'social norms' to bring about social change beyond sports.[33]

II. Sports and Radical Feminism:

Likewise, radical feminism seemed to be indecisive about women and sports. [34] The group of radical feminism that supports valuing feminine attributes and talents tend to support girls and women's participation in female-only sports that accentuate cooperation and teamwork instead of competitive games that cause aggression.[35] The radical feminism theory developed out of the radical politics of the 1960s and 1970s focused on the underlying causes of male superiority and patriarchal dominance.[36] Radical feminists correlate between women's oppression and the institutionalization of sexuality.

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[29] Amanda Roth and Susan A. Basow, *Femininity, Sports, and Feminism*, 246
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Roger Levermore, *Sport in International Development*, 127
[34] Amanda Roth and Susan A. Basow, *Femininity, Sports, and Feminism*, 246
[35] Ibid.
[36] David L. Andrews and Ben Carrington: *A Companion to Sport*, 98

While liberal feminism addressed the issue of women representation in decision-making position in the field of sport, radical feminism put much emphasis on the power of males over females. Referring to the issue of 'heterosexuality', radical feminists argue that male power is manifested and maintained.[37] Radical feminism claims that women's participation in sport is influenced by their need to present a "heterosexy" image.[38] This refers to the focus on appearance as evidence that sport is gendered. [39]

In this respect, Jarratt's article "Feminists Issues in Sport" refers to the conflict women who succeed in sport face. This conflict signifies the difference in their roles in sport and their feminine roles.[40] Jarratt argues that in response to this conflict, women in sport have a tendency to exaggerate in their feminine appearance and heterosexuality.[41] This contemplation goes very much in line with Jayne Caudwell presentation of feminist vis-à-vis femininity. In her article 'Sport Feminism(s): Narratives of Linearity', she refers to sexualities, embodiment, identity, fluidity, and spatiality.[42] She insists that feminists have investigated the impact of cultural norms and sexual politics on women and girls by drawing reference to how they have bargained and challenged dominant norms of embodiment and femininity.[43]

Furthermore, Birrell and Richter put forth that radical feminism called for celebrating women's qualities through restructuring sport into forms that praise these qualities rather than the traditional forms which support masculinity and aggression.[44] Within this discourse, Dworkin argues that violence against women, including sexual violence and harassment, is part of the social control and women's sexual inferiority.[45] Resultantly, radical feminism calls for celebrating women's uniqueness and for the adoption of 'separatist lifestyle' so as to create 'women-only' space aside from violence

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid, 98-99

[39] Catharine A. MacKinnon: *Gender - The Future*, 504

[40] Elizabeth H. Jarratt, *Feminist Issues in Sport,* 494

[41] Ibid, 494-495

[42] J. Caudwell, *Sport Feminism(s): Narratives of Linearity,* 119

[43] Ibid, 121

[44] David L. Andrews and Ben Carrington: *A Companion to Sport*, 99

[45] Ibid, 98-99

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and sexual assault.[46] This, in turn, contributed to the discourse on the lesbians' right to be included in all spheres including sport.[47] In this respect, Cahn, Cunningham, and Griffi maintain that, "Research in this area shows how lesbians in sports and physical education are constructed as deviant, silenced, delegitimized, and stigmatized as abnormal. Importantly, they demonstrate, also, the negotiations and resistances developed by lesbians to maintain a presence in homophobic sport contexts".[48]

However, radical feminism was criticized for focusing on sexuality. The sexual critique within feminism became apparent in the 1980s.[49] This critique mainly focuses on the tendency of radical feminism to emphasize essentialism and reductionism where femininity is reduced to biological explanations.[50] Reducing feminism to these biological explanations goes in line with the oppressive thinking of patriarchal communities where women and girls are perceived as objects rather than as human beings. This thinking does not pay much attention to gender inequality aspects, which go beyond the biological differences to shape the uneven shares of roles and responsibilities. These shares, which are usually not in favor of women, do not allow women and girls to take part in sport activities.

Radical feminists also criticize sports in regards to how some games favor male physicality. Along these lines, Costa and Guthrie point out that, "Sports often value male strengths like upper body strength over female strengths like agility"[51]. Radical feminists basically highlight the use of male physical strength to confirm the inequality between the two sexes.[52] Put another way, while sport for development is perceived as a tool to strengthen social integration; radical feminists were; nonetheless, critical of sports because they argue sports can be utilized to support superiority. Jarratt's point of view goes in line with this thinking. Referring to sport as an arena especially designed to show male physical superiority; she argues that there is a sense of outrage that women take part in this male-

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[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid, 98
[49] Clare Hemmings, *What is a Feminist Theorist Responsible for?*, 71
[50] David L. Andrews and Ben Carrington: *A Companion to Sport*, 99
[51] Amanda Roth and Susan A. Basow, *Femininity, Sports, and Feminism*, 247
[52] Ibid, 246

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dominated field.[53] In addition to the heterosexual appearance, it is argued that women tend to take part in female-identified sports.[54]

In addition to the heterosexual appearance, radical feminism highlights the participation of girls and women in spaces that are women-only and sports that are female-identified.[55] This call reaffirmed the social and cultural knowledge that support the idea that women should play socially accepted gentle games. This is to say that the radical feminist discourse around female participation in sport is limited by gendered boundaries reaffirming male superiority.

Sports and Postmodern Feminism:

While the discourse on women and sports in the 1980s focused on modernism and structuralism, the 1990s paved the road for the "cultural turn".[56] Specifically, the 1990s witnessed an increasing influence of post-structural and postmodern feminist theories. Postmodern feminism comes within the third wave of feminism theories.

The third wave of feminism is key to the main topic of this thesis, girls' empowerment, as it shares some similarities with poststructuralism notion of girls and women's empowerment. In this respect, David L argues that, "Whilst the third wave emphasizes desire, pleasures, empowerment, and activism, similar to many poststructuralist concerns, it also embraces much of the second-wave legacy particularly its critique of the beauty culture, sexual abuse, and power structures."[57]

Poststructuralism is commonly mixed up with postmodernism. In fact, the two terms are often used in an interchangeable way.[58] Notwithstanding, postmodern is more concerned with the critical study of modernity, while poststructuralism is concerned with the critical study of the power-relation of and structures of modernity.[59] These studies give much emphasis on considerations of power, identity, social disparities, and gender

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[53] Elizabeth H. Jarratt, *Feminist Issues in Sport,* 491
[54] Dawn Heinecken, *Gender and Jockography*, 328
[55] Ibid.
[56] Aitchison, Cara C, *Feminist and Gender Research in Sport and Leisure Management,* 422
[57] David L. Andrews and Ben Carrington: *A Companion to Sport*, 105
[58] Aitchison, Cara C, *Feminist and Gender Research in Sport and Leisure Management,* 430
[59] Ibid.

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representation in sport.[60] Scholars addressed postmodern or post-structural feminism as an instrumental discourse in putting forth more building blocks to the theoretical literature on women and sport.

The theoretical discourse of postmodern feminism helped explain a number of modernist misconceptions and myths about authenticity of the self.[61] As Charles Taylor and Webb Keane point out, "Euro-American ideas about human liberation hinge on the notions of authenticity and self-mastery".[62] The authenticity of the self, which is a core notion of some theories, including the focus on identity that is emphasized in liberal and radical feminism, is substituted with the notions of subjectivity.[63] This is to say that individuals as subjects are identified within contexts. This thinking challenges the structuralist thinking of the holistic and cohesive narrative of women's issues. Postmodernism challenges the notion of totalizing theories, which aim to recognize the world within one collective descriptive structure.[64] As Andrews and Carrington argue, "Radical feminism rejects the view that it is a lack of equal access or opportunity (liberal), patriarchy (radical), capitalism (Marxist) or a combination of patriarchy and capitalism (socialist) that explains women's oppression."[65]

Consequently, postmodernism challenges the relationship between language and reality. From a postmodern feminist point of view, in a way, reality neglects language. Postmodern feminism argues that language is not only a tool for self-expression, but it is a means to construct our consciousness.[66] This implies a paradigm shift in the feminism discourse, which holds that there is no "truth", but there are rather "provisional truths". Furthermore, postmodern feminism tends to challenge the perception that suggests that women should be "feminine" or "masculine".[67] Generally speaking, these terms are stereotypes that contribute to limiting women's opportunities. Poststructuralist feminism

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[60] Emily A. Roper, *Gender Relation in Sport*, 29

[61] Susan Birrell, *Feminist Theories for Sport: Handbook of Sports Studies*, 11

[62] Jason Hickel, *The 'Girl Effect': Liberalism, Empowerment and the Contradictions of Development,* 1359

[63] Ibid, 11

[64] Emily A. Roper, *Gender Relation in Sport*, 26

[65] David L. Andrews and Ben Carrington: *A Companion to Sport*, 102

[66] Susan Birrell, *Feminist Theories for Sport: Handbook of Sports Studies*, 12

[67] Emily A. Roper, *Gender Relation in Sport*, 26

argues for the deconstruction of the term "woman" and the recognition of a diversity of femininities, masculinities, and sexualities.[68]

Michel Foucault is one of the main scholars contributed to the postmodern shift. This shift focuses on the 'analysis of social organization, social meanings, power, and individual consciousness' constructed through language or other forms of representation.[69] Such an analysis requires a focus on the construction of narratives and the challenges of meanings. The narratives on sport and the body provide clear contexts for this analysis.[70] Furthermore, Foucault argues that the subject should not be viewed in an abstract manner, but rather within a context. He states, "We rather should understand the subject that is, the individual person—as the product or effect of a variety of power relations manifested through a plurality of discourses." [71]

The Foucauldian notion of the production of power through discipline provides a new building block for the study of sport and the body. A number of theorists argue that body practices are core for training the docile body. Herculine Barbin contends that Foucault's work is not meant to counter argue the historical knowledge that produced what is called the "truth" that there are two "sexes" categories, but rather he claims that that the effects of this historical truth is the reason that created the disparities and inequality between the two sexes.[72] In this respect, Hargreaves discusses individuals' participation in physical education classes as an arena to emphasize 'schooling the body'.[73]

The body has also been the focus of critical discourses addressing and deconstructing 'femininity'. Sports provide an arena for feminism discourse. Feminists are engaged with the embodiment of femininity usually through analyses of women who participate in sports that have been traditionally defined as "men's sports".[74] It is generally perceived that women who play sports that are identified as aggressive are compromising their feminine appearance. The women in these contexts are doing gender via a body

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[68] David L. Andrews and Ben Carrington: *A Companion to Sport*, 102
[69] Susan Birrell*, Feminist Theories for Sport: Handbook of Sports Studies*, 12
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid, 11-12
[72] As cited in Michael Burke, *Sport and Traditions of Feminist Theory*, 277
[73] As cited in Susan Birrell*, Feminist Theories for Sport: Handbook of Sports Studies*, 11-12
[74] David L. Andrews and Ben Carrington: *A Companion to Sport*, 102-103

aesthetic but even so often are still disciplining their bodies so as to follow the rules of femininity.[75]

One of the prominent postmodern feminists is Judith Butler. Butler's thoughts were influenced by Foucault's theories. She argues that "sex" is naturally constructed and that people perform "gender" by doing femininity and masculinity.[76] In her book "Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex", Butler expands her argument to claim that sex is a constructed aspect of bodies.[77]

Butler refers to the interrelationship among the terms: sex, gender and sexuality. She argues that since the 1970s, it has been customary to use the term 'sex' to refer to individual's genetic category.[78] While gender was used to refer to cultural behaviors and role of males and females and 'sexuality' implies one's choice of sexual partner.[79] The three, sex/gender/sexuality, are not causally related, but our cultural constructs influence us to believe they are.[80] Roth and Basow dispute that Butler's point of view can be linked to the strength differences, which liberal feminists accept as natural, while radicals perceive as an aspect that is being used to reaffirm male superiority.[81]

In conclusion, both liberal and radical feminism were criticized for their proposition of 'pure' categories of feminist theory. They rendered their discourse to the focus on "sex" as the main factor of oppression and overlooked other aspects be it class, race, nationality, and religion.[82] While radical feminism was criticized for its focus essentialism and reductionism,[83] postmodernism was criticized for its potential for relativism that emphasizes difference and thus neglects the notion of women's shared knowledge and experience in relation to gender. This makes postmodernism distant from the everyday actual lives of many people. [84]

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[75] Ibid, 103
[76] Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction,* 272
[77] As cited in Amanda Roth and Susan A. Basow, *Femininity, Sports, and Feminism*, 246-247
[78] Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction,* 281
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Amanda Roth and Susan A. Basow, *Femininity, Sports, and Feminism*, 246-247
[82] Susan Birrell*, Feminist Theories for Sport: Handbook of Sports Studies*, 7
[83] David L. Andrews and Ben Carrington: *A Companion to Sport*, 103-104
[84] Ibid, 104

However, the academic discourses around transgressive bodies, female masculinity, and sports addressed in feminist theories brought attention to challenging the normative notion of sport as a male exclusive arena.

Empowerment:

Empowerment is the main aspect through which individuals exert full control over their lives. To do so, individuals have to be acquainted with skills that qualify them to have this control. These skills comprise the ability to set their own goals and plans, have self-esteem and self-reliance, as well as problem solving skills.

Definitions of Empowerment

The discourse on the empowerment theory is often confined to individual's feelings of influence and control. This concept associates empowerment to the paradigms of self-perceived strengths; including self-esteem and self-efficiency. The empowerment discourse addressed by Zimmerman provides a number of definitions of empowerment. One of these definitions integrates person-environment interaction by stating:

"Empowerment is an intentional, ongoing process cantered in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lack an equal share of valued resources, gain greater access to and control over those resources."[85]

According to Rappaport, the definition of empowerment holds that empowerment can occur at several levels of analysis. Hence, he defines empowerment as follows: "Empowerment is viewed as a process: the mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives." [86] Conversely, Zimmerman provides a definition of empowerment that addresses the decision-making skills. This definition holds that: "Empowerment is the capacity to exert control and influence over decisions that affects one's life space for one's own benefit".[87] Essentially, he expands the theory of

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[85] Marc A. Zimmerman, Julian Rappaport, and Edward Seidman, *Empowerment Theory: Psychological, Organizational and Community Levels of Analysis,* 43

[86] Ibid, 43-44

[87] Ibid, 44

psychological empowerment beyond the concept of the self-perceived strength to encompass skills, knowledge, and behaviors as well.

Empowerment Theory:

Zimmerman argues that psychological empowerment consists of three main components: the intrapersonal empowerment, the interactional empowerment and the behavioral empowerment.[88] The first component; the intrapersonal empowerment, involves one's sense of control. Intrapersonal skills mainly focus on the personality, the cognitive, and motivational aspects.[89] The personality aspect includes the locus of control, which is built upon the individuals' belief that they have control over events affecting them, while the cognitive aspect embraces self-efficacy, which involves the individuals' belief in their ability to achieve goals or reach targets.[90] The third aspect is the motivational aspect of perceived control.[91]

The second component is the interactional empowerment, which goes beyond the individuals' sense of control. It emphasizes the knowledge and understanding of the system of power and the social and political environments.[92] It addresses the transactions among individuals and their surrounding environments that enable one to successfully benefit from and influence social or political systems and resources.[93] It also includes analytical thinking aspects, which encompass skills like problem solving that are crucial to active participation in and engagement with the community.[94] This also involves knowledge about the resources needed to achieve goals.[95] The interactional component of empowerment links up between the individuals' self-perceptions about locus control (intrapersonal component)

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[88] Marc A. Zimmerman, *Psychological Empowerment: Issues and Illustrations,* 23
[89] Marc A. Zimmerman, Julian Rappaport, and Edward Seidman, *Empowerment Theory: Psychological, Organizational and Community Levels of Analysis*, 47
[90] Ibid, 47
[91] Ibid.
[92] Marc A. Zimmerman et al., *Further Explorations in Empowerment Theory: An Empirical Analysis of Psychological Empowerment*, 3-4
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.

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and the action individuals need to actively perform in order to influence and benefit from resources (behavioral component).[96]

The third component is the behavioral empowerment. This refers to certain actions one performs to bring about influence on the social and political environments through participation in community activities and organizations.[97] Therefore, participation in voluntary organizations and community activities are associated with psychological empowerment.[98]

At its core, this model of empowerment affirms that empowerment occurs not only at the emotional level (intrapersonal empowerment), or merely through action (behavioral empowerment), but also through having knowledge, realizing constructs of power and being aware of the means through which resources can be accessed to support the achievement of a goal (interactional empowerment). Consequently, Zimmerman takes on the argument of Berger and Neuhaus (in which they suggested that people's participation in community organizations helps decrease their sense of isolation and powerlessness, and contributes to their empowerment).[99] These community organizations can also function as mediating structures through which participants gain different skills, create a sense of community, and enhance their self-confidence.[100]

The empowerment theory shares some similarities with self-determination theory, which sheds light on the external effects of environment in enhancing or hindering individuals' efforts towards sovereignty and competence.[101] However, the theoretical discourse on empowerment has differentiated between the self-determination theory and empowerment. Feeling effective and having the chance to have influence on the external environment are necessary but not adequate aspects in stimulating empowerment.[102] Consequently, interventions aiming to promote empowerment must enhance strong sense of the inner-self through opportunities of both action and control. In this respect, emphasis

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[96] Ibid, 4
[97] Ibid, 5
[98] Ibid.
[99] Marc A. Zimmerman, Julian Rappaport, and Edward Seidman, *Empowerment Theory: Psychological, Organizational and Community Levels of Analysis*, 47
[100] Ibid.
[101] Gullan, *The Roll of Empowerment in a School-Community Service Program,* 667
[102] Ibid.

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must be given to increasing knowledge and awareness of the socio-political contexts and skills to effectively explore systems of autonomy and power so as to benefit from, and influence resources available in the surrounding environment.[103]

Conclusively, feminist theories created a discourse on women and sport that challenges social norms and promotes equal opportunities. This discourse is key to the main theme of the thesis and also provides a building block to its empirical part. Equal rights and equal opportunities, which are stressed in each one of the aforementioned theories, are a goal and a means to empowerment.

Liberal feminists strive for equal rights with men and calls for individuals to be treated in accordance with their talents and efforts as opposed to the physiognomies of their sex. The liberal feminists' movement calls for the removal of any constrains- be it political, social, legal or economical- that can obstruct women's attainment of the same opportunities as their male counterparts. The liberal feminism discourse uncovered certain discriminatory practices, which indeed helped provide a legislative framework for girls and women's participation in sport.

On the other hand, radical feminism calls for celebrating women's particularities. It created a discourse on 'women-specific' types of sports and 'female-only' spaces, which paved the road for the discourse on lesbians' right to participate in sports. Despite that this call strongly conflicts with the local cultures in the Middle East and Islamic countries, the idea of female-only space, which was presented by radical feminism, is very much in line with the oppressive patriarchal systems prevailing in these countries. For example, in Egypt, and in rural settings in particular, the participation of girls and women in sport is perceived as shameful. Girls' participation in sport in youth centers, for instance, is associated with bad reputation because youth centers are known to be places for males only and it is unusual that females go to youth centers. Therefore, these communities could be receptive of the idea of female-only space as it goes in alignment with these their thinking of segregation between men and women.

Additionally, one of the most important issues addressed by radical feminism is the abuse and harassment women may face in sport. Parents' safety concerns, which will be

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[103] Ibid.

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discussed later in the study, are among the main factors hindering girls' participation in sport in patriarchal conservative communities. In these communities girls are held accountable for the misbehavior of males.[104] In these conservative contexts, natural maturation processes and their physical signs usually limit girls' participation in sport. This also reaffirms the idea of female-only spaces that was promoted by radical feminism.

Postmodernism tends to challenge the perceptions, which hold that women should be "feminine" or "masculine". Postmodernism was criticized for focusing its discourse on relativism; that in turn made it distant from the real lives of many people.[105] Nonetheless, postmodernism helped shifting understandings of gender and sport into new discourse of identities, bodies, and empowerment, it promotes these concepts within the progression of preceding feminist theories.[106] As Hargreaves notes:

> "More research is needed to help us understand the realities
> of injustice and discrimination in sport, the lived social realities of
> oppressed groups. This is not an argument to throw away all narrative
> methods but rather to remind ourselves that stories can be used as an
> aid for change, stories can persuade others of beliefs and notions of
> value, they can act as arguments, and they can influence public opinion.
> But to nurture such a potential we should link personal, individual,
> 'different' accounts to wider social circumstances."[107]

The importance of stories as an aid for change that can reflect arguments and influence public opinions, which Hargreaves stressed, is key to this thesis. The empirical part of the thesis uses stories as tools to reflect a positive narrative on the importance of sport as means to promote empowerment of marginalized groups in general and girls in particular. Eventually, the discourse on feminism and sport provides an academic framework around many relevant issues including sport and the body, femininity and masculinity, and superiority and inferiority. It attempts to challenge the normative notion

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[104] Marianne Meier, *Gender Equity, Sport and Development*, 15
[105] David L. Andrews and Ben Carrington: *A Companion to Sport*, 104
[106] Ibid, 105
[107] As cited in David L. Andrews and Ben Carrington: *A Companion to Sport*, 105

of sport as a male exclusive arena and paves the road for female participation in sport as a crucial modality to refute stereotyping of girls and women.

Furthermore, the discourse on feminism and sport provided a turning point to address issues around gender inequalities and the need for female empowerment. As stated earlier, and according to Zimmerman, empowerment is based on three main components: the intrapersonal, the interactional and the behavioral. These components aim to address those who are marginalized and disempowered so as to invite their potentials and promote their self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-reliance. Therefore, as stipulated earlier in the thesis statement and illustrated in the theoretical discourse addressed in this chapter, sports can promote these skills and values, and by extension help empower girls.

Consequently, the feminist theories and empowerment theory that are addressed in this chapter provide a theoretical framework for this study and act as a base upon which the empirical part of the thesis, examining UNICEF Sports for Development (S4D) project, is analyzed. Essentially, since sport was addressed in this chapter as a right and a means to empower girls and women, the following chapter will present a number of international declarations, conventions and treaties that addressed sport as a right and a cross-cutting strategy through which other rights can be addressed.

CHAPTER III
SPORTS AND PLAY IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPHERE

Sports and physical education are crucial to the healthy development of the child. They constitute a crucial aspect of early child development. In addition to physical skills and abilities, sports and physical activities are important for children and adolescents as they can implant core values and skills; including teamwork, adherence to rules, respect for others and for themselves, self-esteem and self-actualization.[108]

The right of access to and participation in sports and play has been addressed in a number of international conventions starting from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued in 1948. Furthermore, the safe play is a child right that is stipulated in Article 31 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), and other international treaties promote. Since this study focuses on sports and physical activities with life skills as a means of girls' empowerment, this section addresses sports, play, and physical activities as a right promoted in a notable number of international conventions.

Many international organizations including UN agencies addressed sports as one of the modalities through which other development issues can be addressed. In 2002, the United Nations Secretary-General assembled an Inter-Agency Task Force to assess activities relating to sports within the United Nations framework.[109] The membership of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace included the ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNDC, UNV, UN/AIDS and WHO. The Secretariat was the non-governmental organization, "Right to Play".[110]

One of the main products of the Task Force is the "Sports for Development and Peace: Towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals" report. The findings of the report affirm that sports are influential and cost-effective tools to advance the Millennium

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[108] Sport and Development Organization, *International Platform on Sport and Development,* http://www.sportanddev.org/en/learnmore/sport_education_and_child_youth_development2/healthy_development_of_children_and_young_people_through_sport/
[109] UNICEF, *Sport, Recreation and Play*, 1
[110] Ibid, 1

Development Goals (MDGs).[111] The report gained the consensus of the world leaders at the UN Millennium Summit. In 2003, the UN General Assembly embraced a resolution on the role of sport as a tool to enhance education, health, development and peace, declaring 2005 as the International Year for Sports and Physical Education.[112]

Sports for Development: A Global Commitment:

Although the call of the Secretary General, which is referred to in the previous part is relatively recent, the correlation between sports and international treaties and conventions started with the Human Rights Declaration in 1948. The right to rest and leisure is one of the rights stipulated in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. This right is highlighted in Article 24 of the declaration, which stipulates, "Everyone has the right to rest and leisure; including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay".[113]

Furthermore, the Convention on the Rights of The Child (CRC) induces the right of every child to take part and engage in play and recreational activities. This right is stressed in Article 31 of the CRC that underlines the right to leisure and play. It states, "Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities".[114]

Moreover, and as referred to in chapter II, the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education and Sport in 1978 is one of the main conventions, which addressed women and sport. The charter emphasizes the right to play and participate in sports and recreational activities as a fundamental right. It also states that sports and physical activities are tools to promote life skills development.

Another instrument that addressed sports as a right is the Declaration of Punta Del Este third International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS III) of 1999. UNESCO held the conference in

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[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] See: "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/
[114] See: "The Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC)", http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx

collaboration with the intergovernmental committee for physical education and sports and non-governmental organizations involved in physical education and sports in 1999. The participating ministers noted that, although substantial progress has been made at the global level, girls and women representation in sport remained very low.[115] They urged states and sports organizations to take effective actions in order to ensure the engagement of girls and women in physical education and sport in all dimensions, and at the different levels be it: regional, national and local levels, using the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), and the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport 1994 as reference documents. [116] The declaration stated that sport is a right for all, and placed a special emphasis on the engagement and participation of children and women in sports.[117]

Additionally, the UN General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/S-27/2) 2002 - A World Fit for Children - calls for states, as well as multilateral agencies, civil society, private sector, and media to ensure children's enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.[118] The declaration calls for providing equality education, and stresses the promotion of physical, mental and emotional health among children and adolescents, through sport, play, physical activities, recreation, arts and cultures.[119]

Furthermore, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966 called for the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

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[115] UNESCO, *The Declaration of Punta Del Este,* 11-16
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] UNICEF, *A World Fit for Children,* 33
[119] Ibid.

The covenant comes with two articles, article 12[120] and article 13[121], which stress the importance of sport and physical activities.[122]

Sports in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

The Sports for Development and Peace International Working Group (2008) highlighted the importance of sports to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).[123] The first MDG is the eradication of extreme poverty. Sports can contribute to the enhancement of life skills; including social skills, self-esteem, and self-confidence, which can increase employability skills. The most marginalized groups are linked to community services through sport-based outreach programs. It also reaffirmed that sport programs provide jobs and skills development.[124]

The second MDG is the achievement of universal primary education. The MDGs work on promoting school sport activities and programs to mobilize children to attend school, which, in turn, can help improve academic performance. Furthermore, sport-based community education programs offer unconventional education opportunities for children who cannot afford mainstream education and do not attend school. One of the main benefits of sport is to enhance values and skills like accepting the other and respecting diversity. That is to say that sport can help combat stigma against children with disabilities, and hence, increase their chances to attend school.[125]

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[120] *Article 12 – Int'l Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.*

[121] *Article 13 – Int'l Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*: *States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.*

[122] UN, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,* http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx.

[123] Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, *Harnessing the Power of Sport for Development and Peace: Recommendations to Governments, 3,* 9

[124] Ibid, 173

[125] Ibid, 134-135

The third MDG is core to the topic of this thesis. It emphasizes the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. It is evident that sport improves the mental and physical health of girls and women.[126] It can offer opportunities for social inclusion, networking and friendship, which can contribute to the empowerment of girls and women.[127] As mentioned earlier, sports can enhance the individuals' self-esteem, self-confidence and leadership opportunities, which can; consequently, positively contribute to girls' control over their body, and their participation in decisions that affect their lives and wellbeing. In addition, sport-based programs provide women and girls with disabilities with information on healthy life style and leadership experience that also contribute to their empowerment.[128]

Additionally, providing health information through sport can contribute to the fourth MDG – reduce child mortality – as sport-based programs can communicate health information and messages to adolescents and young mothers to ensure healthier children. Adolescent pregnancy is associated with high risk of death and other dangerous consequences. Advocating for a healthy life style through sport can help decrease the rate of adolescent pregnancies; furthermore, sport increases physical fitness, which enhances children's health and resistance to diseases.[129] Sport-based health campaigns including; vaccination campaigns, also help decrease child mortality rates. [130]

Sports also can contribute to the fifth MDG, which stresses the improvement of maternal health. In addition, it can help combat HIV and AIDS, malaria, and other diseases that are stipulated in the sixth MDG. This is through decreasing stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, sports are associated with healthy life style and resistance to risky behaviour that contribute to the contamination causing HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.[131]

The UN efforts over 15 years to achieve the MDGs ended up with the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Under the leadership of the United Nations,

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[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid, 135-137
[128] Ibid, 137-138
[129] Ibid, 12
[130] Ibid, 31
[131] Ibid, 26

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17 SDGs were identified to pursue in the next 14 years.[132] The social justice programme of Egypt's 2030 agenda includes reducing the social intergeneration and gender gaps.

The SDGs are to inform and guide the global action for development worldwide; including the field of Sport for Development and Peace. Since the beginning of the MDGs in 2000, sport has proven to be a cost-effective and a simple tool for peace and development objectives. Sport has played a crucial role in promoting each of the eight development goals. The declaration of the 2030 Agenda for SDGs emphasized the role of sport to achieve social development.[133]

The above-mentioned contributions of sports to the achievement of the MDGs, as indicated by the Sports for Development and Peace International Working Group, are also stressed upon in the SDGs. Additionally, the recommendations of the United Nations Secretary-General's report, which were referred to earlier, reaffirm including sport and physical activities into the development agenda of states, incorporating sport-related activities in the UN agencies' programs, enabling the development of innovative approaches of partnerships, and including sport for communication and social mobilization at all levels.[134]

Sports and Gender:

The right to recreational activities and sport is also warranted in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979. The convention explicitly states the right of girls and women in two articles. As mentioned earlier in Chapter II, articles 10 and 13 urge state parties to take all appropriate measures

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[132] UN, *Sustainable Development Goals*, http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/
[133] The agenda of the SDGs 2030 states that: *"Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives"* https://unchronicle.un.org/article/role-sport-achieving-sustainable-development-goals.
[134] UN, *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal,* 21

to eliminate discrimination against women and to provide them with the same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education.[135]

Ensuring gender equity within the sport arena is, in itself, considered a crucial means of enhancing the potential of sport as a tool for improving gender equity and empowering girls and women. The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport 1994 came as an outcome of the first international conference on women and sport that took place in Brighton, UK, in 1994. [136] Basically, the conference placed a special focus on how to enhance the process of change that would rectify the imbalance in the participation of girls and women in sport. The Windhoek 1998 conference is a subsequent conference to the Brighton declaration. The conference reaffirmed the principles stipulated in the Brighton declaration and called for accelerating actions in many areas.

The most important product of the Windhoek 1998 is the "Windhoek Call for Action".[137] Among the actions set forth in the Call for Action were the promotion of the right of females to sports as a means to social, health and economic empowerment. The conference addressed the issue of creating policies and programs that address girls and women in sports and stressed upon their representation in formulating those policies and programs. Furthermore, it emphasized the need to avert the "world crisis in physical education" through developing and supporting quality physical education programs as a main method for positive introduction of young girls to skills through sport.[138]

Moreover, the Windhoek conference underlined the need for mechanisms that secure the participation of girls in sport and physical activities beyond schools, so as to include community-based activities. Safe play environment for girls participating in sport is one of the key principles of the conference. The conference called for the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence, and abuse to secure the protection of girls participating

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[135] See: UN Women, *General Recommendations Made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women*, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm.

[136] See: International Working Group on Women and Sport, *Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport, 1994,* http://www.sportsbiz.bz/womensportinternational/conferences/brighton_declaration.htm.

[137] United Nations. *Challenging the Gender Order: Opening Keynote speech at the Fourth World Conference on Women and Sport, 7*

[138] RQA Ltd & the United Kingdom Sports Council, *Women and Sport from Brighton to Windhoek Facing the Challenge*, 5

in sport. Moreover, the Windhoek 1998 urged states to develop legislations and policies and to secure funding monitored through gender impact analysis as a means to affirm gender equality in all aspects of sport.[139] Another key milestone of the Windhoek 1998 is the call for the realization of development objectives through ensuring equal opportunity for female development through sport.[140]

Another subsequent conference to the Brighton Declaration of 1994 is the Montreal, Canada Conference in 2002. A very important product of the Montreal 2002 conference is the Montreal Tool Kit. The tool kit is a reference manual that includes 20 sport tools. The tool kit acts as proof that sport and physical activities have the capacity to empower girls and women.[141]

The Beijing Platform for Action is also a crucial human rights instrument, which advocates for women's rights in general including the right to participate in sport and physical activities. The Platform was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. It provides significant policy recommendations on gender equality and sport. It also promotes the full and equal participation of girls in extracurricular activities, such as sports, drama and cultural activities.[142] It calls, as well, for addressing the inequality girls and women face through the provision of accessible recreational and sport facilities by all concerned state and community entities.[143] The platform urged them to develop and support sport and physical activities programs in the education system and set up gender-sensitive programs for girls and women of all ages in community institutions so as to avail an enabling environment for girls' and women's participation in sport and physical activities.[144]

Furthermore, the first international conference on sport and development was held in 2003 in Magglingen, Switzerland. The conference came out of Magglingen Declaration of 2003, which was founded on the principle of sport as a human right, which had the

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[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Sport and Development Organization, *the Montreal Tool Kit: A Legacy of 2002 World Conference,* https://www.sportanddev.org/en/document/conference-reports-and-proceedings/montreal-tool-kit-legacy-2002-world-conference.

[142] United Nations, *Beijing Declaration and Platform,* 68

[143] Ibid, 172

[144] Ibid, 211

potential to improve physical and mental health and help overcome trauma.[145] The recommendation of the declaration emphasized the need to establish mechanisms and measures to include women, girls and other marginalized groups in sports initiatives.[146]

In 1996, the Philippine Sports Commission, the Philippine Women's Sports Foundation, the International Council for Health Physical Education, Recreation, Sport and Dance (ICHPER-SD), and Girls and Women in Sport Commission hosted the first Asian conference on women and sport.[147] The Manila Declaration on Women and Sport was the main outcome of this conference. The declaration was founded on the Brighton Declaration Principles with principal amendments to respect cultural matters.[148]

The declaration stated that equality, development and peace require a coherent commitment from all stakeholders including governmental, non-governmental and all bodies responsible for sport. This is through applying the principles set out in the declaration by developing policies and measures that secure women's and girls' participation in sports in safe environment that protects their rights.[149] It also called for enhancing the recognition of values and skills, which sport can promote, as a means for personal development and healthy lifestyle.[150]

Finally, the aforementioned presentation of sport within the international sphere makes it evident that sports and physical activities can enhance health and wellbeing, and build many social and life skills; including communication, leadership, and teamwork. Sport can improve learning and productivity and stimulate economic regeneration to help alleviate the impact of poverty. This presentation addresses some of the research questions and will be reflected on and examined even further through the fieldwork of the thesis, which will be demonstrated in the empirical part of the thesis.

The international commitment towards sport which is illustrated in this chapter is key to understand that the recognition of sports for development started decades ago and

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[145] Sport and Development, *the Magglingen Declaration and Recommendations. Creating a Better World Through Sport, 2003,* https://www.sportanddev.org/en/article/publication/magglingen-declaration-and-recommendations-creating-better-world-through-sport.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Darlene, *The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport: A Management Audit of Process Quality*, 58
[148] Ibid, 71
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid, 54

was stressed upon in a notable number of international conferences, conventions, and declarations. Nonetheless, its application on the ground as a right and a tool to empower girls and women is still limited and inadequate. This is mainly because sport can provoke stereotyping and myths, and in communities where girls and women are socially and economically marginalized, their opportunity to participate in sport, and hence acquire its benefits, is challenged. In this respect, the following chapter outlines the main challenges facing girls and women in Egypt.

CHAPTER IV

THE ISSUE: CHILD AND ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Country Context

Situation of Girls in Egypt:

Despite the increasing number of development interventions to decrease the regional discrepancies and provide equal opportunities, Egypt still faces widening regional disparities between its urban and rural populations.[151] These disparities are evident in key issues including health, social, and economic indicators. In specific, regional gaps remain in fertility, maternal mortality, female age at marriage, and the rate of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).[152]

When it comes to rural girls, the regional disparities escalate. Girls in rural communities undergo adolescence transition into more restrictive roles and lifestyles than those in urban communities. This transition is mostly aligned with limited social, educational, and economic opportunities.[153] Girls in rural areas who have not had the opportunity to go to schools or dropped out before completing their basic education are the most disadvantaged group of young Egyptians. Although this group is large, girls in general and adolescent girls in particular continue to be mostly neglected from the public discourse because they not only have few advocates for their rights, but they are also commonly provided with very limited opportunities to claim these rights.[154] Furthermore, misconceptions, myths and taboos have led to the marginalization and vulnerability of girls in Egypt; starting from being the un-preferred sex by their parents, through an upbringing which creates a mind-set that their male counterparts are more privileged.[155]

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[151] El-Zanaty & Way, *Menya Governorate, A Profile Based on the 2003 EDHS*, 107
[152] Ibid.
[153] Brady et el, *Providing New Opportunities to Adolescent Girls in Socially Conservative Settings: The Ishraq Program in rural Upper Egypt*, 31
[154] Ibid, 5
[155] Ibid.

Egypt ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The concluding observations of the CEDAW, 2010[156] and the CRC 2011[157], draw special attention to areas of concern regarding the rights of the child and adolescent girls that need to be taken into consideration by the State. These include combating violence against girls, equal access to quality education, protection of domestic workers, prohibition of early and temporary marriages, access to reproductive health services, freedom of expression, respect for the views of children, and access to age-appropriate and adequate information.

Furthermore, prioritising girls contributes to the Egypt - United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) outcomes related to quality services, poverty alleviation and democratic governance. The UNDAF for Egypt 2013-2017 states specific outcomes that are relevant and in line with the UN Joint Statement on Accelerating Efforts to Advance the Rights of Adolescent Girls.[158] The outcomes stress the need for more and better skilled women and other vulnerable groups to have decent jobs. They also emphasize that children aged 6-14, in general, and girls, in particular, should have access to quality education.[159] The outcomes also further the leadership and civic engagement opportunities as means of empowerment of women and young people.[160]

The status of girls and women has a strong effect on the development of the country. Egypt has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.59. This positions it as the 136th country out of 145 countries in the 2015 index.[161] Gender issues start from childhood and are aggravated during adolescence when girls become more marginalized. These issues include, but are not limited to, dropout of schools, unemployment, civic engagement, gender-based violence, FGM/C, and early marriage. The following section outlines these issues and sheds lights on these challenges within Egypt's context.

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[156] United Nations. *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, 5-6

[157] United Nations, *Committee on the Rights of the Child: Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention*, 23

[158] United Nations. *United Nations Assistance Framework: Achieving MDG with Inclusive Growth, Freedom, Social Justice and Dignity*, 22

[159] Ibid, 31

[160] Ibid, 36

[161] World Economic Forum, *the Global Gender Gap Report*, 136

Education:

Generally, the education indicators of females are lower than males. Egypt's indicators of 2012 showed that the illiteracy rate of males was 7.6% and 13.9% for girls.[162] Girls in rural areas who have not had the opportunity to go to schools or dropped out before completing their basic education are the most disadvantaged group of young Egyptians. The Survey on Young People of Egypt (SYPE) 2014 revealed that there is a large gender gap with 13% of female youth having never attended school in rural Lower Egypt, and 23% in rural Upper Egypt.[163]

Upper Egypt is suffering from economic and social marginalization. The region is predominantly rural with poor education services. The Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) 2014 showed that the ratio of those who never attended schools for secondary school age girls in Upper Egypt is 71%.[164]

The education indicators show how girls are lagging behind. The high rates of girls' school dropout and never attendance in Upper Egypt are alarming. The current status poses risks of deteriorated social and economic future ahead of these girls.

Although the efforts the Egyptian government has exerted to reform education, to enhance its quality and to expand the number of schools so as to respond to the rapid population growth, the public expenditure on education in the fiscal year 2012/13 amounted to 4.1% of GDP; which constitutes 11.4% of the overall public expenditure.[165] To address the issue of girls' drop out and never attendance, the Ministry of Education's National Strategic Plan for Education Reform for 2014-17 included the scale up of Community-based Education (CBE) targeting out of school children, with particular focus on girls in disadvantaged areas through expanding the number of community schools.[166]

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[162] UNICEF, *Children in Egypt: A Statistical Digest*, 36
[163] Population Council & CAPMAS. *Panel Survey of Young People in Egypt*, 55
[164] El-Zanaty & Associates, *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2014* http://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/OF30/OF30.pdf
[165] Ministry of Education, National Center for Educational Research and Development, and UNESCO, *Education for All in Egypt 2000 - 2015: A National Review*, 155 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002299/229905E.pdf.
[166] Ministry of Education, *The National Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education Reform in Egypt (2014-2030) Education: Egypt's National Project: Together We Can,* 66

Unemployment:

Although the thesis focuses on the child and adolescent girls, studies have proved that preparation for employment starts at an early age. In general, the high rates of unemployment in Egypt are mainly due to the mismatch between the education system and the requirements of the job market. Preparation for employment includes life and employability skills, which the education system in Egypt does not introduce. In this respect, the SYPE of 2010 showed that only about 50% of higher education students believe their education prepared them for the labor market.[167]

Unemployment is one of the most serious social issues facing the country today. Unemployment in Egypt is a problem for those entering the labor market for the first time. At least 90% of the unemployed in Egypt are youth below the age of thirty.[168] Although statistically youth unemployment is more an urban rather than a rural phenomenon, and is more an issue for those in the higher wealth quintiles, this does not mean that those in rural settings and in the lower wealth quintiles are at a particular advantage. The explanation for this is that those in rural settings or in low wealth quintiles are willing to accept low quality jobs in the informal economy to address their poverty, while those in the high wealth quintiles will probably have the family support system and the luxury to wait for their preferred employment opportunity.

Moreover, females are more at risk of unemployment than their male counterparts. Whilst the total youth unemployment rate is 16%, the unemployment rate among young women is 32%, which is more than double of that of young men at 13%.[169] A number of interrelated factors contribute to females' disadvantaged position in the labor market; including their limited mobility for job search and networking.

The work environment and wages are also among the factors contributing to female unemployment rates. The SYPE 2010 findings showed that 56% of the female participants in the survey aged 22-29 years old reported that their wages were low.[170] The findings also

[167] Population Council & IDSC, *Survey of Young People in Egypt: Final Report 2010*, 76
[168] Ibid, 113
[169] Ibid, 95
[170] Ibid, 93

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showed that 38.5% of the female respondents within the same age group stated that they suffered from long working hours, while 19% of them reported that they suffered from harsh treatment at work.[171]

For the age group of 15-20, the age where girls can work legally, unemployment is much higher for female youth than for male youth, and of course far beyond the rates for adults. The SYPE 2014 revealed that very few female youth are actually engaged in the labor market. It also indicated that, among the respondents, 60.4% supported male job priority, 20.6% disagreed, and 19.0% were undecided.[172]

Female unemployment indicators in rural Upper Egypt are the highest. The Egypt Economic Cost of Gender Based Violence Report of 2015 showed that, within the age group of 18-64, 92% reported that they have never been employed.[173] This represents the highest rate of female unemployment among Egypt's regions. Furthermore, the EDHS 2014 showed that in Upper Egypt among the ever-married women aged 15-29 only 13% are employed.[174]

Participation and Civic Engagement:

In general, the traditional and conventional social norms hinder women's participation in the public and political domains, and obstruct the needed family support that can allow women to undertake their work responsibilities along with their family and domestic responsibilities. Additionally, poor representation of women in political parties hinders women from playing a public role. This poor representation is also among the consequences of the lack of participation opportunities provided to girls in their childhood and adolescence stages.

The 2014 SYPE showed that there was a substantial gender gap among the surveyed young people in relation to the participation in political activities. The results showed that where 13.1% of male respondents reported that they participated, only 1.5% of female

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[171] Ibid, 95-96

[172] Population Council, *Survey of Young People in Egypt 2014,* 260

[173] Nata Duvvury et al., *Egypt Economic Cost of Gender Based Violence 2015*, 39

[174] El-Zanaty and Associates, *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2014*, *Governorates' Factsheets,* http://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/OF30/OF30.pdf

respondents reported their participation in political activities. The results also showed that 4.5% of male youth reported having ever volunteered since the time of the 2010 SYPE compared to 2.4% of female youth.[175]

Participation is a crucial skill that is implanted during childhood and adolescence. Opportunities should be provided through the different constructs girls deal with including family, schools, and youth centers. In this respect, indicators showed that, even at the family level, the participation of girls and women in decision-making is limited in Egypt, in general, and in Upper Egypt, in particular. In this respect, the EDHS 2014 indicated that, among the currently married women aged 15-49, only 47% participate in decisions related to health issues, making major household purchases, and visits to their families and friends.[176]

Gender-Based Violence:

Gender-based violence (GBV) is among the main challenges girls and women in Egypt face. With a patriarchal society, where the traditional Islamic family model predominates, Upper Egypt is characterized by strong gender-based disparities in areas of reproductive health, economic functioning, and overall empowerment. Furthermore, domestic violence perpetrated by the husband or the father escalates in rural settings. The mind-set of male dominance in the community has obviously led to certain negative attitudes. About 64.9% of the 2014 SYPE respondents believed that a man could justifiably beat his wife if she "talked to another man".[177]

Therefore, Upper Egypt is considered the most conservative and conventional region of the country. The dominance of the patriarchal values continues to shape local attitudes and behaviors. It is traditionally accepted and valued that women are subordinated to men. The authority of elders over girls, women and youth, and the tendency for conflicts taking the form of tribal disputes are deeply rooted in the social norms and traditions of this region. For example, the 2014 EDHS revealed that, among the ever-married women

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[175] Population Council & IDSC, *Survey on Young People in Egypt, 2014,* 231

[176] El-Zanaty and Associates, *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2014*, *Governorates' Factsheets,* http://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/OF30/OF30.pdf

[177] Population Council, *Survey on Young People of Egypt 2014,* 260

aged 15-49 years old in Upper Egypt, 47% agree a husband is justified in beating his wife for specific reasons. In the Assiut governorate, specifically, this percentage increases to 68%.[178]

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C):

Among the main forms of the gender-based violence is FGM/C. Although the prevalence of FGM/C in girls aged 15-17 has steadily decreased in the past decade from 76.5% in 2005 to 61% in 2014, there are still regional disparities. This means that, in some areas, most girls would be subject to such a practice.[179] In Egypt, 1.6 out of 8.5 million girls (15-24 years) have undergone Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), and 3.1 million girls are at risk, based on mothers' declared intentions to pursue this practice.[180]

From a regional and global perspective, Egypt remains among the top four countries with the highest FGM/C prevalence rate worldwide.[181] The decline in prevalence of FGM/C cases has been uneven; significant regional disparities remain, particularly in Upper Egypt, which still lags behind. For example, while in Lower Egypt, the level of FGM/C decreased from 95% in 2005 to 86% in 2014, in Upper Egypt, the level decreased only from 98% in 2005 to 97% in 2014 among girls and women less than 24 years.[182]

Similarly, while prevalence of FGM/C is lower among women under 24 years in all regions, in Upper Egypt, no clear difference by women's age has been detected. FGM/C prevalence is not declining significantly among ever-married women (15-49 years), as the level of FGM/C has only decreased from 96% in 2005 to 92% in 2014.[183] A critical assessment of the disparities determinants is lacking, thus hampering the capacity of interventions to effectively tackle the underlying causes of the FGM/C trends. Furthermore,

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[178] El-Zanaty and Associates, *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2014*, *Governorates' Factsheets,* http://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/OF30/OF30.pdf
[179] Fatma El Zanaty, *Secondary Analysis of the Egypt Demographic and Health Survey Module on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (2005 – 2014),* 3.
[180] Ibid, 3
[181] Ibid, 2-3
[182] Ibid, 1
[183] Ibid.

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according to the EDHS, the percentage of girls aged 0-17 expected to be circumcised in some Upper Egypt governorates may reach as high as 81%.[184]

Early Marriage:

The 2014 SYPE showed that among married youth, 1.7% of married female youth aged 25-29 in 2014 had been married before the age of 15, 4.2% before the age of 16, and 21.1% before the age of 18 (the legal age of marriage in Egypt). Furthermore, according to UNICEF Children in Egypt Statically Digest 2014, the child marriage among girls aged 15-17 is 6.4%, and girls aged 17-19 is 14.7%.[185] The 2014 EDHS showed that about one quarter (27%) of Egyptian women age 18-64 got married before the age of 18. The 2014 EDHS also indicated that around 24% of women in the age group 25-49 got married before reaching the age of 18.

In Upper Egypt, early marriage is even more escalated. The percentage of women aged 18-64 who got married before the age of 18 reached 37.7% in Upper Egypt, 20.9% in urban Upper Egypt, and 46.1% in rural Upper Egypt.[186] Marriage of young girls increases from the age of 15 and that has multiple health and poverty implications. The fertility rate among adolescent girls age 15-19 has slightly increased from 50 per 1,000 women in 2008 to 56 in 2014,[187] which has a detrimental impact on the health of the mother and the future prospects of the family.[188] Child marriage is among causes of death in girls aged 15-19 in low - and middle-income countries. Maternal mortality rates are twice as high for women ages 15-19 as for women age 20-29.[189] Infant mortality rates are also among the consequences of early marriage and early pregnancy. The death probability of infants born to adolescent mothers within their first year is 80% higher than infants born to mothers within the age 20-29.[190] Unfortunately, child marriages usually obstruct girls' education. This deprives them from their right to education, as well as hinders their potentials to be

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[184] Ibid, 4

[185] UNICEF, *Children in Egypt: A Statistical Digest*, 150

[186] NCCM, UNFPA, and CAPMAS, *The Egypt Economic Cost of Gender-Based Violence Survey*, 56

[187] See: El-Zanaty and Associates, *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2014*, *Governorates' Factsheets,* http://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/OF30/OF30.pdf

[188] Ibid.

[189] NCCM, UNFPA, and CAPMAS, *The Egypt Economic Cost of Gender-Based Violence Survey*, 55

[190] Ibid.

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economic independent from their spouse. This makes the situation even worse in case the girl wants to escape from an unwanted marriage.[191]

Freedom of Mobility and Participation in Sports and Physical Activities:

A significant number of young people, at large, and females, in particular, do not lead healthy life style and do not engage in sport activities. The gender gap extends to the participation in sport and physical activities. The SYPE 2014 revealed that 59.2% of females did not engage in physical activities, whereas the percentage of males who did not participate in physical activities was 33.3%.[192]

Poverty, heavy domestic demands, lack of nearby sport facilities, safety concerns, as well as issues related to social norms are often among the reasons discouraging girls and women from participating in sport. The Swiss Academy for Development Report (SAD) "Gender Equity, Sport and Development" addressed some of the challenges that can face the use of sport as a tool to foster girls' empowerment. The report argues that, in the 20th century in Western Europe, sport was exclusive to those categorized among the high wealth quintile. This means that sports were available to those who can have leisure time to play.[193] Developing countries, in general, are characterized with uneven shares of domestic duties and responsibilities between males and females. Heavy domestic responsibilities, production and reproduction are a primary barrier to females' participation in sports. Consequently, despite the fact that sport contributes to the physical and mental health, sports, physical and recreational activities are looked at as luxurious aspects.[194] Moreover, the SAD report referred to the potential emotional or sexual vulnerability of girls by their coaches and teachers; especially that sport is an intervention that involves dealing with physicality.[195]

Additionally, in many incidents, girls and women are held responsible for the misbehaviour of males. In some socio-cultural settings, natural maturation processes and their physical signs prevent girls at the adolescence life cycle from taking part in many

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[191] Ibid.
[192] Population Council & IDSC, *Survey of Young People in Egypt: Preliminary Report 2014*, 23
[193] Marianne Meier, *Gender Equity, Sport and Development*, 11
[194] Ibid, 11
[195] Ibid, 11-12

activities and hinder their participation in public life and sport activities. Some cultures and societies do also marginalize unmarried young mothers and exclude them from schools, public life and locally organized activities.[196]

Hence, girls' mobility comes out as one of the major factors diminishing their social network and participation. Keeping girls, especially in the adolescence age, in their respective houses functions as a safety concern that obstructs their mobility. That is to say, parents tend to protect their daughters from verbal or physical harassment by limiting their mobility. Within the Egyptian contexts, the base-line survey that was conducted by the British Council and Nielsen in Egypt in 2012 reaffirmed this. The survey revealed that 60% of the parents do not agree that girls should be encouraged to participate in sport.[197]

Additionally, the lack of well-equipped sport facilities is among the main causes of the parents' safety concerns. Poor sport facilities may cause hygienic problems and injuries. In poor communities, very little attention is given to first-aid.[198] The lack of knowledge and training opportunities to coaches and teachers, as well as the absence or the inadequacy of first-aid kits can make girls' participation in sport perceived as hazardous. This also adds to the parents' safety concerns and, in turn, hinders girls' participation in sport, and hence deprives them from its benefits.[199]

The British Council and Nielsen base-line survey addressed a number of studies tackling the issue of safety and inadequacy of sport facilities in Egypt. Among these studies is an evaluation of the facilities inside primary schools in El-Qalyoubia governorate. The sample of the study included 176 staff members working in the education sector in El-Qalyoubia; including PE teachers.[200] The study pinpointed a number of shortfalls in required staff and facilities. Primarily, the study revealed that there were an inadequate number of PE teachers in the primary stage as compared to the number of students and numbers of schools. Secondly, no suitable playgrounds were found for students to practice

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[196] Ibid, 15
[197] British Council & Nielsen Egypt. *Physical Education and Sport for Young People in Egypt,* 18
[198] Ibid, 14
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid, 18

sport and physical activities at school. The playgrounds were not prepared for sport and physical activities, which also risks the students' safety.[201]

When it comes to sport facilities, Upper Egypt is at a most disadvantage. The total number of youth centres in Egypt is around 4,200. Most of them are located in the Delta region, in heavily-populated governorates such as El-Dakahlia (12%), followed by El-Sharkia (9%), Behera (8%), El-Gharbeya and El-Menoufia (each 6%).[202] Upper Egypt has the lowest number of established youth centres, with an average rate of 4%. There is a total 943 sporting clubs in Egypt, yet they are concentrated in the Governorate of Alexandria (17% of the total clubs) and in Greater Cairo (16% of the total clubs).[203] The average of clubs outside these two urban governorates is less than 3% across the different governorates of Egypt.[204]

Why Sports for Empowering Marginalized Girls?

For many decades, development interventions addressing the issue of social norms and harmful practices against girls tended to focus on the parents, the community leaders, and the religious leaders. They focused on the duty bearers aiming to bring about an enabling environment for gender equality and girls' empowerment and neglected the right holders. Consequently, they achieved very little progress. Rural girls' status remains the same in many aspects; including harmful practices such as early marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM//C). It is about time to address the right holders so as to empower marginalized and disempowered rural girls who are subjected to violations of their basic rights to learn, play and express themselves. It is about time to empower those who are the victims of harmful practices perpetuated under the name of traditions and social norms. And to those who are the mothers of tomorrow. These empowerment efforts can eventually help them claim their rights, and most importantly stop this vicious cycle of violations from happening to their future daughters.

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[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid, 20
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.

One of the studies that was conducted on the Ishraq program, which was implemented in rural communities in Upper Egypt, revealed that the program managed to use sports as an approach to promote life skills. Ishraq was designed to give rural marginalized child and adolescent girls, who either did not attend school or dropped out from primary schooling, a second chance. The program targeted 14 villages in Upper Egypt and aimed at fulfilling the gap created by the absence of opportunities provided to this marginalized segment of the population.[205] These girls are commonly destined for a life of poverty, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), early marriage, illiteracy, high fertility, and poor health, social, and educational services.[206]

Ishraq attempted to address adolescent girls so as to change their life prospects during the early adolescence stage where a large number of girls have not had access to public schooling and primary health care. The lack of opportunities provided to these young girls are either because of the inadequacy of services available in their communities, be it educational or health, or because of the poor and ill-informed decisions their parents take, or because of poverty.[207]

Essentially, the program was meant to develop girls' life skills and civic participation. Among the skills the program addressed were self-confidence, citizenship and leadership skills. Consequently, life skills sessions were held on topics such as environmental awareness, violence against girls and women including harmful practices such as early marriage and FGM/C, reproductive health and early pregnancy. The evaluation of Ishraq revealed that the intervention contributed to enhancing girls' self-esteem, self-perception, and decision-making ability. It is worth noting that the program also contributed to expanding the understanding of girls' rights to education and health.[208] One of the main findings of the evaluation of Ishraq program was that the majority of the participants had a solid ground to resist parents' uninformed decisions and family pressure for early marriage.

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[205] Martha Brady et al., *Providing New Opportunities to Adolescent Girls in Socially Conservative Settings: The Ishraq Program in Rural Upper Egypt*, 22
[206] Ibid.
[207] Ibid, 23
[208] Ibid, 23-24

Finally, the aforementioned statistics and indicators show that there is a gender gap that exacerbates the status of women and girls in Egypt in general and in rural settings in particular. Promoting the inclusivity of sports is critical when various groups of girls do not have access to sports and physical activities. Encouraging marginalized rural girls to be engaged in sports, not only fulfills their right to play as promoted by the CRC, but also acts as a cross-cutting strategy through, which other rights such as education, freedom of expression and healthy life style, can be addressed. It can also improve girls' active participation in their schools and contribute to their attachment to their schools, which can help retain girls in education.

CHAPTER V

UNICEF RESPONSE: GENDER EQUALITY TARGETED PROGRAMMING

This chapter sheds light on the efforts UNICEF exerted to address the issue of gender equality. It outlines girls' right to education and elaborates on the right to play as a crosscutting strategy through which other rights can be addressed. This will be discussed in light of UNICEF commitment towards girls' empowerment as stipulated in UNICEF gender policy, gender action plan and the strategic plan.

Furthermore, the community schools project is presented in this chapter for two reasons; the first is that it is considered one of UNICEF gender targeted programs. Mainstream public schools are mainly concentrated in cities, and girls residing in remote villages dropout or do not go to school for public schools are distanced from their residences. The community school project came in response to this need to help retain girls in education. The second reason is that the UNICEF's Sports for Development (S4D) project was implemented in selected community schools in Assiut governorate. Presenting the community school project helps explain the environment in which the S4D project, which is the main focus of the empirical part of the study, was implemented.

Then, the chapter addresses the UNICEF S4D project; namely "Sports and Physical Activities with Life Skills". The project was the first attempt of UNICEF Egypt to implement UNICEF Global Sports for Development Strategy. The project aimed at empowering the child and adolescent girls through equipping students of selected community schools, which mainly target girls, in Assiut governorate with key life skills through sports. Education, in itself, is one of the main methods through which girls can be empowered. The UNICEF S4D project also aimed at increasing school attendance through providing a package of sports and recreational activities with life skills as a means to attract girls to schools, and hence retain them in education.

UNICEF Gender Policy, Strategic Plan and Gender Action Plan:

Tackling the issue of marginalization and discrimination are deeply rooted in UNICEF human rights instruments, guiding principles and programmatic mechanisms. The following part features the main instruments UNICEF uses to guide its girls' empowerment programmatic interventions.

UNICEF Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Girls and Women 2010:

The policy puts the foundation for UNICEF program cooperation with different partners including government, NGOs, civil society, as well as private sector. It aims to promote equality between girls and boys. The policy outlines the core standards of performance that are expected; and defines the organizational apparatuses that will help achieve the planned results over time.[209]

The policy formulates UNICEF's mission and mandate towards the attainment of the MDGs and creating "A World Fit for Children" using a gender equality method. This is through applying the CRC and the CEDAW, using results-based management principles and the methodology stipulated in the United Nations Common Understanding on the Rights-based Approach to Programming. The policy emphasizes that all UNICEF programs are designed and implemented in a way that contributes to gender equality and are measured by evidence-based gender indicators and results statements. [210]

The global commitment to attain gender equality is based on the foundations of human rights. The commitments to achieve human rights cannot be done without positioning gender equality at the top of the development agenda. UNICEF is directed by the human rights-based approach, which provides the framework through which UNICEF fulfils its commitments towards the CRC and the CEDAW. The gender equality requirements of the human rights-based approach stipulate, among others, that program

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[209] UNICEF, *Working for an Equal Future: UNICEF Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Girls and Women*, 2
[210] Ibid, 7

design and planning should secure that results are planned precisely in light of prior analysis of gaps in the realization of the rights of girls and women.[211]

UNICEF programs of cooperation aim to enhance the capacity of duty bearers to implement and operationalize these requirements, and the capacity of women, girls, men and boys to realize their positions as rights-holders, and to be able to claim these rights. UNICEF has a crucial role in relation to girls' rights and gender equality. This role includes supporting legislative and policy frameworks, budgetary methods and service provision systems that reflect global human rights principles; including the principles of girls' rights and gender equality.[212] UNICEF policy puts gender equality as a pre-request for the achievement of the MDGs and an integral part in the efforts to reduce poverty.

Furthermore, the UNICEF gender policy emphasizes the use of the participatory approach in UNICEF program interventions. The policy promotes the involvement of girls and boys in the identification of their needs, priorities, and the development of outcomes that could fulfill these needs.[213] The policy states that, "In adopting a participatory approach to programme development, we promote the involvement of both girls and boys in the definition of their own priorities, and the development results that could deliver these priorities."[214]

The policy states that gender equality considerations have to be reflected at each phase of the program cycle. These considerations are based on gender analysis of challenges and gaps, risks and opportunities, and using age and sex-disaggregated data.[215]

UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017:

Among the main instruments developed and adopted by UNICEF to address gender equality is the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017. The plan aims at realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged. The gender equality section is one of the main sections of the strategic plan. It emphasizes that gender equality is integral to the plan

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[211] Ibid, 5
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid, 10
[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid, 7

as a normative principle.[216] It also affirms that equality is a crucial right to every child; including girls. It also includes marginalized children facing any form of disadvantage such as poverty, ethnicity or disability. Most importantly, the strategic plan puts emphasis on the empowerment of girls and women. This includes recommendations to benefit from related results of UNICEF programmatic interventions such as girls' education and ending early marriage. [217]

The plan affirms that UNICEF's interventions should aim at increasing access to services and opportunities by girls and women. The plan puts inclusion and participation on the top of UNICEF's agenda and lays emphasis on the development of individuals' capacities, communities and governments. Enhancing the awareness of the community is also a fundamental part of the plan. Communication for development (C4D) is one of the main mechanisms UNICEF uses to improve the capacity of stakeholders and enhance community awareness. C4D is a crosscutting strategy that aims at promoting positive values and combating negative and harmful social norms. C4D works as an instrument seeking to bring about positive behavioral change to contribute to children's issues.[218] This, in turn, will mobilize the community to provide an enabling environment for girls' empowerment and participation, and create a constituency of advocates for girls' rights.

The UNICEF Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2014-2017:

The methodologies and approaches emphasizing gender-sensitive and gender-transformative actions stated in the Strategic Plan are reaffirmed in UNICEF Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2014-2017. The GAP refers to UNICEF mandate for improving gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women.

The programmatic framework of the GAP is built on dual approaches. The first emphasizes targeted programs, and the second addresses mainstreaming gender programs. The S4D project, which the study addresses in the empirical chapter that will follow, is

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[216] UNICEF, *The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017: Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged*, 11

[217] Ibid.

[218] Ibid, 11-12

considered among the targeted gender programs. Therefore, the following part focuses mainly on how the GAP outlines the targeted gender programs.

Essentially, the UNICEF GAP sets four cross-sectorial priorities for UNICEF targeted gender programs. These program priorities are: promoting gender-responsive adolescent health in emergency, advancing girls' secondary education, ending child marriage, and addressing gender-based violence in emergencies.[219] The gender-responsive adolescent health includes FGM/C as one of the violations against child rights that should be addressed by gender targeted programs. The GAP obligates UNICEF to create an enabling environment for better health results for adolescent girls and boys, and to generate demand for tackling the inherited social norms promoting gender inequalities and causing adolescent health risks.[220]

The GAP also sets forth ending child marriage as one of its four targeted priorities. In this respect, it elaborates on the consequences of girls' early marriage; including their deprivation from their childhood and education, limitation of opportunities, exposure to health risks; including pregnancy and delivery complications.[221] To help end child marriage, the GAP explicitly commits UNICEF to increase girls' opportunities to acquire education, life skills, health information and services. According to the GAP, life skills have proved to be a crucial factor to end early marriage. The GAP also emphasizes UNICEF's role to provide life skills in and out of schools.[222]

Among the targeted programs that UNICEF implemented to achieve gender equality and girls' empowerment are the community schools project and the S4D project. As the focus of the thesis is mainly on using sport as a tool to empower girls, and since the UNICEF S4D project to empower girls was implemented in community schools, the following part will give a quick orientation on the community schools project, then it elaborates on the UNICEF S4D project.

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[219] UNICEF, *UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2014-2017*, 8, 9
[220] Ibid, 8, 9
[221] Ibid, 11-12
[222] Ibid.

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Community-based Education (CBE):

The International discourse on poverty recognizes the role of gender-based inequalities. Consequently, policies and programs were formed to improve child survival and school attendance. These programs aim at providing livelihood opportunities and reproductive health services as a means for reaching women of reproductive stage. However, the international agenda has lagged behind in its consideration of a very important life transition – adolescence – as an essential time for girls' development. Programs addressing adolescent girls provide an opportunity that can make up for childhood deficits and introduce young women to a more healthy and empowered adulthood phase.

Likewise, in Egypt, nation-wide investments in the education and health sectors have been introduced. This contributed to narrowing down the gender gap in education to most young children. However, they come too late for those who dropped out from schools or never attended schools due to poverty and lack of equal opportunities.[223]

Furthermore, traditions and social norms are among the major barriers to girls' education. The UNICEF 2015 Regional Report on out of school children revealed that the practice of early marriage is one of the main reasons contributing to girls drop out in Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan and Yemen.[224] In Egypt, many policies and legislations were issued to support children who are at risk of dropping out of schools. The education system provides a number of services to help prevent children from dropping out of schools, or provide them with alternative education opportunities.

UNICEF was one of the main agencies supporting these polices and legislations. The community schools project was one of UNICEF's initiatives responding to the issue of access to education. The first phase of the project started in 1992 and targeted remote communities in rural Upper Egypt. Special focus was given to girls who had dropped out of schools.[225] With a wide partnership that included the Ministry of Education (MoE), non-government organizations, and international organizations such as UNICEF, the Canadian

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[223] Brady et el, *Providing New Opportunities to Adolescent Girls in Socially Conservative Settings: The Ishraq Program in rural Upper Egypt*, 1
[224] UNESCO & UNICEF, *Regional Report on Out-Of-School Children,* 89
[225] Ibid, 75

Development Agency (CIDA) and WFP, a pilot phase was initiated to establish 227 community schools.[226] The project adopted the participatory approach and worked on community mobilization and sensitization to reduce the gender gap and increase access to schools.[227]

The MoE established the 'one-classroom schools' in line with the same methods and modalities of the community schools project which UNICEF in collaboration with the MoE implemented in 1992. The project encouraged other international organizations such as CARE to address community-based education. Other national NGOs, such as Misr El- Khair, then took a crucial part in establishing, equipping and managing community schools.[228]

The UNICEF regional report on out of school children, 2015 states that the community schools project is one of the good small-scale practices of girls' inclusion in education. The report also recommends that other countries in the region should learn from Egypt's community schools project to retain girls and boys in schools.[229]

The main goal of the community-based education as stated in the MoE's 2014 National Strategic Plan for pre university education in Egypt 2014 is "providing high-quality education for those who have been deprived of education or dropped out of school; including children, especially girls, in the age group of (6-14), most particularly in disadvantaged areas in rural and urban regions, by means of one-class schools and community schools".[230] Therefore, the community schools project targets children based on two main criteria: children's age has to be in the age bracket of 6 to 14 years old as stated in the national strategic plan, and children being out of schools.[231]

The implementation methods of the community schools project depended on using trained females from the community as facilitators (teachers). The facilitators hold intermediate certificates and are trained based on the "active learning" methodology. [232] It

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[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Hussein, *Assessing Community Based Education in Upper Egypt: Failure and Success*, 45-49
[229] UNESCO & UNICEF, *Regional Report on Out-Of-School Children,* 75.
[230] Ministry of Education, *The National Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education Reform in Egypt (2014-2030) Education: Egypt's National Project: Together We Can*. Cairo: Ministry of Education, 2014.
[231] Hussein, *Assessing Community Based Education in Upper Egypt: Failure and Success*, 44
[232] Ibid, 73

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is worth noting that the community schools project seizes the support of the community. The community mainly donates the physical premises of the community schools. Partners, community leaders, and NGOs from local communities are also obliged to provide support to community schools; including monitoring and managing support.[233]

The community schools project core idea is the empowerment of girls through education. In this respect, Malak Zaalouk refers to the importance of the community- based education as a catalyst through which deeper social and educational transformation can occur.[234] Around 70% to 80% of the students of community schools are girls. The social and educational transformation Zaalouk refers to, can eventually contribute to the empowerment of the girls enrolled in community schools.

In community-based education, the schooling hours should be flexible to encourage girls' attendance. In regard to the educational content, decree number 328 of 1996 stipulates that the curriculum should be similar to public schools.[235] A community school includes different educational grades in one room. The students are divided into groups according to their educational level.[236] Based on decree number 445 of 2006, all students of community schools are allowed to join preparatory public schools and are exempted from the school fees.[237]

Sports and physical activities, as discussed earlier in this study, are means through which knowledge and skills can be conveyed with the aim of girls' empowerment. Sports and physical activities are overlooked in the community-based education. As a result, to target marginalized rural girls, the UNICEF S4D project considered community schools as the best avenue to communicate key life skills through sports and physical activities in order to contribute to the empowerment of rural marginalized girls.

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[233] Amira Hussein, *Assessing Community Based Education in Upper Egypt: Failure and Success*, 16

[234] Malak Zaalouk, *the Pedagogy of Empowerment,* 162

[235] Amira Hussein, *Assessing Community Based Education in Upper Egypt: Failure and Success*, 52

[236] Ibid, 46

[237] Ibid, 55

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Sports and Girls' Empowerment: UNICEF S4D Project for Marginalized Rural Girls in Community Schools:

Background:

Sports and physical activities are a primary part of the culture of every nation. However, their deployment to promote gender equity and empower girls and women is often ignored because sport is not generally perceived as an appropriate or desirable type of recreation for girls and women in many communities.[238] In most rural areas, males dominate sports clubs and youth centres. The socio-cultural context play a main role in determining girls and women's access to, benefits from sport and limits of participation.

Many human rights instruments commit UNICEF to give priority to using sports as a channel through which it addresses inequities caused by social, political and economic factors; including gender discrimination. UNICEF promotes the participation of girls and young women in sport-related activities as a means to enrol girls in schools, combat stigma, discrimination and gender stereotyping. The inclusive approach is deeply rooted in UNICEF's work. This approach ensures that all children; including girls and marginalized groups, attain their rights; including the right to participate in sports.

The rationale of the UNICEF S4D project was to avail safe play space to marginalized girls in the selected rural districts in Assiut. It aimed to equip them with key life skills and values that can bring about positive change in their life spectrums. This is with the ultimate goal of enhancing their social, educational, and hence future economic opportunities. To achieve this, the curriculum of the training manuals that was used in the project included values and messages on life skills, gender related issues, active participate, basic rights, self-reliance, self-expression, self-worth, and self-esteem.[239]

The S4D project comes within the framework of the International Inspiration (II) Program, the International Legacy Program of the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic

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[238] United Nations. *Challenging the Gender Order: Opening Keynote Speech at the Fourth World Conference on Women and Sport*, 18
[239] Ibid.

Games. The International Inspiration Program embodied London Olympics 2012 promise to reach millions of children and young people all around the world with special focus on developing countries to enrich their lives through sport, physical activities and play. International Inspiration was a London 2012 program governed by an independent charitable foundation – the International Inspiration (II) Foundation in collaboration with the British Council and UNICEF, as well as other international partners.[240] Egypt was selected as the 20th country to implement the International Inspiration Program. The International Inspiration Program was implemented by the British Council and UINCEF in Egypt in collaboration with other governmental, national and civil society partners.

The UNICEF S4D project was designed, as part of the International Inspiration Program, to give rural marginalized child and adolescent girls a chance to enjoy their right to play and be equipped with essential life skills with the aim of empowering them.[241] The project aimed at fulfilling the gap created by the absence of opportunities provided to this marginalized segment of the population. It sought to address this lack of opportunities through simple and entertaining mechanisms. The principles of these mechanisms are constructed on the basis of the child right to education and play.

Accordingly, UNICEF, and the Assiut Childhood and Development Association (ACDA) joined forces to implement a program aiming at stimulating the use of sports and physical activities to promote life skills and empower girls. The project was implemented in collaboration with the Education Directorate in Assuit in 2013-2014.[242]

The project managed to reach out to 1,391 students in 50 community schools in three rural districts of Assiut governorate namely; Abnoub, Dairout and El Fath.[243] The project aimed to provide a model on the use of sports and physical activities as means to enhance knowledge and skills so as to empower girls. The following part features the project, its goals and objectives, and implementation methods.

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[240] UNICEF, *Sport for Development: Sport and Physical Activity with Life Skills Project Report*, 1- 2
[241] Ibid, 1-2
[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid, 2-3

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Project Objectives.

The main objective of the project is: adolescent girls in the target intervention areas are equipped with life skills through sports to be socially empowered. Promoting gender equality is a long-term process; therefore, the project's strategy specified long-term objectives aiming to achieve gender equality beyond the duration of the project. These include challenging traditional stereotyping and stigma against girls, and changing the way girls think about themselves and the way their families and respective communities perceive them.[244] The long-term objectives also included increasing girls' participation, expanding their social network and friends, improving girls' knowledge about their rights and their health, and providing role models.[245] Most importantly, the long term objectives aimed at mobilizing the targeted rural communities in Upper Egypt to set an enabling environment conducive to girls' rights; including the right to participate in physical and social activities.[246]

Geographical Scope and Target Groups:

The project aimed to reach students of 50 community schools, with special focus on rural girls (9 - 12 years old), in three districts of Assiut governorate namely; El Fath, Abnoub and Dairout. [247]

Partnerships:

The project was implemented by UNICEF Egypt in partnership with Assiut Childhood Development Association (ACDA) NGO in Assiut governorate, and the Ministry of Education (MoE) Directorate in Assiut governorate in the targeted rural districts under the title "Sport and Physical Activities with Life Skills for Rural Girls" Project.

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[244] UNICEF, *Sport and Physical Activity with Life Skills Project Document*, 4
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.
[247] UNICEF, *Sport for Development: Sport and Physical Activity with Life Skills Project Document,* 4

Training Needs Assessment:

A training needs assessment was conducted by the project prior to its implementation. The needs assessment used different qualitative methods; including in-depth interviews with officials from the Education Directorate in Assiut, and community schools' facilitators/teachers. It also included focus group discussions (FGDs) with groups of students of community schools and rural adolescent girls as well as parents.

The main findings of the participatory training needs assessment included the following:

The findings of the training needs assessment revealed that although education in Egypt is for free for every child, the annual school fee, even though it is a small amount of money, is not affordable for many parents especially in poor rural villages in Upper Egypt.[248] In addition, public schools are mostly distanced from the villages, and in many cases, parents do not allow their daughters to go to schools outside their province. Furthermore, the cost of transportation to and from school for children residing in remote villages represents a burden on the shoulders of the parents. These are the main reasons for which poor people send their sons and daughters to community and one-classroom schools existing in their respective communities.[249]

In addition, the training needs assessment revealed that one of the most critical problems facing the teachers of the community schools is the dropout of girls due to early marriage.[250] Furthermore, it showed that among the most serious problems children in rural Upper Egypt face are: nutrition, favoring boys to girls, child labor in the agricultural sector, revenge, living with animals at the same place (animal breeding), and lack of awareness on child rights.[251]

One of the main findings stipulated in the assessment report is that physical education is not part of the academic day in community schools. Officials from the community education department in the education directorate of Assiut governorate, as well as community schools' teachers believe that sports and physical activities are needed.

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[248] UNICEF & Aspire, *Sport and Physical Activity with Life Skills Project, Training Needs Assessment,* 17-18
[249] Ibid.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid.

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[252] Community school is a room donated by the community leaders with no playground. Hence, there are no spaces where the students can exercise and implement sports and physical activities, which required the S4D to tailor specific games that can be implemented in such limited spaces.[253]

Games and Key Life Skills Addressed by the Project:

Due to the limitation of the space available in the community schools, a number of games were specifically tailored for implementation in small spaces. Under the title "The Champions of Change", the manual included innovative simple physical activities and games. It included 20 sessions/games with an average of 15 – 20 minutes each. This took up the time allocated for physical activities in the targeted community schools from zero to 15 - 20 minutes twice a week. The games included core life skills and values; such as self-realization, the value of one-self, self-recognition, respect for the other, and respecting diversity, individuals' unique capabilities and abilities, rights and duties; including the right to dream of a better future, strengths and weaknesses, the ability to change and progress, creative thinking and problem solving, communication skills and self-expression, team building, and the ability to overcome challenges.[254] The following part sheds light on some of the games that addressed these skills.

For instance, to address the skill of self-recognition and the value of one-self, the manual included, among other games, a customized game that is similar to the handball game. Through this game, which is entitled "I Accept Myself without any Condition", the students are divided into two teams, each has a ball made of newspapers. The teams, then, try to score goals through passing the balls from a frame made of recycled cartoon boxes or any other suitable material available in the surrounding environment. The students are obliged to play while seated. The purpose of their being seated is to recognize that individuals have limitations and that they have to accept, deal with and overcome these limitations to achieve their goals. The game also helps create an understanding of how

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[252] Ibid, 18-19
[253] Ibid, 23-24
[254] UNICEF & Aspire, *Champions of Change Training Manual*.

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disabled persons feel; consequently, it also supports the concept of accepting the other and tolerating diversities.

The manual also includes a game promoting physical fitness. The purpose of this game is to show to the students how practicing these exercises may seem difficult at the beginning and how they, after a number of trials, can become able to easily practice them. This game, namely "I Have a Unique Character", emphasizes the importance of identifying personal capabilities, and capitalizing on them without giving up. Another game goes very much in line with this one is a game entitled "I have Capabilities and Abilities". In this game the students are divided into two teams. Each team stands in a circle where the team members hold one another's hands. The teacher throws a balloon up in the air towards the middle of the circle and the students are required to keep it in the air for 30 seconds while they remain holding one another's hands. This game also sheds light on the importance of each person's role and ability to achieve a collective goal.

"I Have Dreams and Ambitions", was another game addressed in the manual. The game is quite similar to the volleyball game. In this game a cloth sheet is put on a small net, which suits the size of a community school, as a restriction. The teams try to score, while the cloth sheet restrains their visions. This game sheds light on the importance of achieving a dream despite the challenges and the constraints that may face a person in her/his way to attain the goal.

Another game is entitled "I Have Strengths and Weaknesses". In this game the students are divided into two teams where each team is requested to reach the end line walking once on one leg and once hopping like a rabbit. Through this game, the students recognize that they are good at one style and not good at the other. The game signifies the importance of accepting the fact that human beings are different and that each has her/his strengths and weaknesses.

To illustrate that everyone has rights and duties, a game entitled "I Have Rights and Duties", is integrated in the manual. In this game, the students pass the ball using simple basketball techniques. Each student's duty is to throw the ball to her/his colleague in a right way. On the other hand, each student's right is to have the ball properly thrown from her/his

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colleague. Through this simple game the students learn that they have rights, but in return they have to fulfill their duties.

To stress the importance of adjusting the way of thinking and acting to achieve goals, a game namely; "I Can Change Myself" was also integrated in the manual. The game aims at stimulating the idea of changing the way the students think and move to score. A big circle is drawn on the floor and inside it is a small circle where a basket is put upside down in the center. The attacking team stands on the lines of the big circle trying to hit the basket with a ball. The defending team stands on the borders of the small circle trying to constrain the attacking team from scoring. Through this simple game, each member of the two teams learns that they have to think, move and change positions to achieve their goals.

Creative thinking is also one of the skills included in the manual. One of the games comes under the title "I am Creative", to stress the importance of creative thinking and problem solving. In this game, a bucket full of balls made of papers or newspapers is put in the middle of a circle. The bucket is tied with ropes. The teams are requested to stand on the borders of a square drawn on the floor. The teams are, then, required to carry and move the bucket from its circle to the other circles, which is called "safe space", using these ropes. They are not allowed to touch the bucket, and they are requested to keep the papers it contains safe until it is carried and moved, by the ropes, to the other circle. Through this game, the students learn how to think differently to achieve goals and also how to balance their movements and hence their actions to reach their goals.

"I Can Express Myself" is another game emphasizing the importance of self-expression. In this game, the students are divided into teams. Each team choses one student to represent it. The teacher tells the team's representative to pretend to be a rabbit, a turtle, a fish, or a snake for example. The team's representative is not allowed to speak while performing physical movements imitating these animals. The team is requested to identify the animal, which its representative imitates. Through these easy and entertaining physical movements, the teams learn that they can communicate using different communications methods. They also come to recognize the importance of body language to communicate.

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Furthermore, the manual signifies the importance of team building. "I am an Active Team Member" is a game through which the students learn how to be active team members where each member has a role to fulfill to achieve a common goal. The game utilizes the small space available in a community school and uses the school equipment; such as the chairs and the desks, to make a maze using ropes. Each team member is required to hold one another's hand and step through the ropes until they go the end of the maze. Through this game, the students come to know how important their being one team is, and how hanging on to one another's hand can help those who struggle to step through the maze continue their way without falling.

Another game aims to utilize the material available in the surrounding environment and the school's limited space. "I Can Overcome Challenges", is the title of a game that uses a straw mat to emphasize the importance of thinking and acting differently to overcome challenges. In this game, each team stands on a straw mat and tries to flip it upside down without stepping out of it or touching the floor. Flipping the mat without stepping out of it is considered a challenge that the students have to overcome using different techniques and physical movements. During the game, the students learn how to rearticulate their thinking and reposition themselves to overcome this challenge

It is worth noting that the manual paid special attention to children with disabilities and their right to inclusion in the games of the project. It referred to the changes needed in each type of disability i.e. physical, visual, or deaf and mute. It also provided important tips to increase the difficulty of the games to be suitable for the older age group. This was mainly because of the variation in the ages of the students attending the same community school.

Conclusively, this chapter illustrates that gender equality is deeply rooted in UNICEF strategies and policies. Both the community schools project and the S4D project aimed at responding to UNICEF commitment towards gender equality and girls' empowerment. To further examine this, the fieldwork, which will be presented in the following chapter, provides an analysis of the impact of UNICEF S4D project on the target group. This is to assess whether the project managed to achieve its main objectives or not.

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The assessment is also to evaluate the programmatic aspects of the project in light of the human rights instruments that were presented in this chapter as well as the preceding chapters.

CHAPTER VI

GIRLS EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SPORTS:

Assessment of UNICEF S4D Project

This chapter provides an assessment of the UNICEF S4D project presented in the previous chapter. The assessment is divided into two main parts; the first part assesses the project's impact on the target group in light of the empowerment theory model addressed by Zimmerman and discussed in the theoretical framework of the thesis. These components are: the intrapersonal, the interactional and the behavioral empowerment. The second part focuses on the programmatic aspects of the project. This part aims to assess how the project responds to the requirements of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) good programming practices.

I. Assessment of the Impact of the S4D Project on the Target Group:

The first part of the assessment of the S4D project presents the findings of the fieldwork that was implemented on two stages. The first stage aims at analyzing the impact of the UNICEF S4D project which was implemented in partnership with ACDA NGO, and the Ministry of Education Directorate in Assiut under the title "Sport and Physical Activities with Life Skills for Rural Girls" Project. Within this stage the results of the pretest and posttest, which was implemented before and after the implementation of the S4D manual in the targeted 50 community schools during the academic year 2013-2014, will be analyzed. A total of 1,391 students (941 females and 450 males) from the 50 targeted community schools participated in the pretest and posttest. The results of the pretest and posttest were deduced from the database of UNICEF S4D project that is administrated by the implementing partner NGO, ACDA, within the project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework. The pretest and posttest were developed by Aspire.[255]

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[255] Aspire is a firm contracted by UNICEF to develop the manual and undertake the training workshops

It is important to refer to the limitation of the analysis of the results of the pretest and posttest. The results are deduced from the project's database administrated by ACDA. The reports that were generated from the database are not disaggregated by sex. Therefore, the results of the analysis of the pretest and posttest are inclusive of all students including girls and boys. However, the majority of the community schools' students (70% to 80%) are girls, which infers that the results of the analysis of the pretest and posttest are more than 70% representative of girls.

It is also worth to note the duration between applying the pretest and the posttest, which is almost one academic term. During this duration, it is probably that the increase in the students' knowledge and skills is attributed to the implementation of the sports and physical activities with life skills program and also to other factors including education itself.

The second stage of the fieldwork was carried out within the framework of this study. Through this fieldwork, the findings and the results of the focus group discussions (FGDs) and the semi-structured interviews, which were conducted by the author of the study in October and November 2016, will be presented. This stage of the fieldwork is mainly to measure the impact of the project on the target group, and to verify the results of the pretest and posttest. In this stage, four semi-structured interviews were conducted with the concerned staff from ACDA, the implementing partner NGO. Additionally, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the heads of the Community-based Education of MoE Directorate in Abnoub and El Fath rural districts in Assiut. The interviews aimed to deduce lessons learned, challenges, and recommendations to promote the use of sports with life skills as a means to empower girls. Furthermore, three focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with a sample of 38 students (31 females and 7 males), from the targeted community schools in Abnoub and El-Fath rural districts. In addition, two FGDs were conducted with a sample of 12 teachers from Abnoub and El Fath rural districts. In this stage of the fieldwork, human-interest stories were collected from the field and are presented to reflect the change in the students' skills and knowledge, which the S4D project brought about. The stories also give an idea on the biasness, mistreatment and social subjectivity which rural girls are exposed to.

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The assessment of the fieldwork of the two aforementioned stages is undertaken on the basis of the three main components of the empowerment theory, addressed by Zimmerman, which was tackled in the literature review and the theoretical framework chapter, which are; the intrapersonal, the interactional, and the behavioral empowerment.

1- Intrapersonal Empowerment:

The pretest and posttest encompassed many questions addressing the intrapersonal component of empowerment. Questions on key life skills such as self-worth, self-acceptance, self-perception, self-expression, self-ability to overcome challenges, as well as communication skills, were included in the pretest and posttest.

The results of the pretest and post test showed that 82% of the students who participated in the pretest reported that they had the ability to recognize the value of themselves, while 97% reported that in the posttest. This represents an increase of 15% in the level of knowledge and skills in relation to self-worth.[256]

The girls, who participated in the FGDs, as all the rest of the participants, reported that the S4D project contributed to their sense of self-worth and further confirmed the increase in their level of knowledge and skills. They stated that they used to believe that their male counterparts are better than them; something that is deeply rooted in the culture of their community and internalized in their thinking and beliefs. The idea of having equal rights and being an important part of the community was stressed in the manual of the S4D project. Many of the girls who participated in the FGDs gave examples explaining how they applied skills related to self-worth.[257] More details on this skill are provided later in the human-interest stories part.

With regard to self-perception, 67% of the students who participated in the pretest and 85% of those who participated in the posttest reported that they had the ability to improve themselves. This represents an increase of 19% in the students' knowledge and skills in relation to self-perception.[258] Additionally, to assess self-perception, the pretest and posttest included questions on assessing oneself. The test revealed that 68% of the

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[256] ACDA, S4D project database
[257] FGDs by author with girls of El Sawalem village in Abnoub district, November 2, 2016
[258] ACDA, S4D project database

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students participated in the pretest recognized that they are humans with strengths and weaknesses, while 85% reported their realization of their strengths and weaknesses in the posttest. An increase of 17% in the knowledge and skills of the students is, therefore, detected.[259] Additionally, the FGDs revealed that girls' sense of self-perception has increased. The girl participants stated that it was crucial to know their weaknesses so as to work on improving themselves. They also stated that it is important to identify the strengths to capitalize on them.[260]

ACDA Project Manager gives an example on how the S4D project contributed to changing girls' perception about themselves. She refers to one of the community schools in which the project was implemented. The majority of the girls enrolled in the school were obese.[261] This problem, which is mainly due to their bad nutrition systems and the lack of awareness on healthy life style, affected their perceptions about themselves. It was embarrassing for them to do any physical exercises. The project provided safe spaces inside the targeted community schools in which the girls exercised their right to play. "The girls were eventually able to unleash their physical potentials," said the Project Manager of ACDA.[262]

In relation to the students' perception of their right to have a better future, 86% of the participants in the pretest stated that they had the right to dream of a better future. This percentage increased in the posttest to 95%, which signifies an increase of 9% in the students' awareness of the importance of drawing future paths.[263] Despite the difference indicated in the pretest and posttest is minimal (9%), the FGDs showed that the majority of the girls came to recognize their own right to dream of a better future as a result of their participation in the project. Among the examples given by the girls who participated in the FGDs is that one of the girls aspires to be a psychiatric. She mentions that the weaknesses and strengthens game is the one that triggered her dream to be a psychiatric. Through this game, she came to know that weaknesses can hinder the development of individuals and

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[259] ACDA, S4D project database
[260] FGDs by author with girls of El Sawalem village in Abnoub district, November 2, 2016
[261] Interview by author with ACDA Project Manager, October 16, 2016
[262] Interview by author with ACDA Project Manager, October 16, 2016
[263] ACDA, S4D project database

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that her aspiration is to help people overcome their weaknesses.[264] Another girl wants to be a doctor to help children with disability. She states that this comes as a result of her participation in a game that addressed the issue of disability. She says that a number of the children in her community are disabled, and she wants to help solve this problem through providing medical services at an affordable cost.[265] Another girl mentions that the rights and duties game inspired her to be a lawyer defending women's rights.[266] More details on these examples are given in the human-interest stories' part that will be presented later in this chapter.

Self-expression was also measured through another set of questions in the pretest and posttest. The results of the pretest and the posttest showed that 73% of the students who participated in the pretest, and 93% of the students who participated in the posttest reported that self-expression is crucial to maintain healthy lifestyle. This represents an increase of 20%.[267] A relevant skill to self-expression is communication. In this respect, 80% of the students participated in the pretest and 95% of the students participated in the posttest reported their enhanced knowledge of communication methods; such as, verbal and non-verbal communication. The difference between the percentage of the pretest and posttest denotes a 15% increase in the students' knowledge around communication skills.[268]

The Head of the Community-based Education in Abnoub district of Assiut Education Directorate reaffirmed this fact. He stated that it is difficult to find young girls who can express themselves in the same way the beneficiaries of the S4D project do. He added that girls in these conservative communities cannot articulate themselves and express their needs. He referred to forced early marriage as an alarming problem facing girls in rural communities: "I saw many cases where the girl was forced to leave the school at the age of 13 or 14 to get married". [269] In objection to the deprivation of girls from

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[264] FGDs by author with girls of El Sawalem village in Abnoub district, November 2, 2016
[265] Ibid.
[266] Ibid.
[267] ACDA, S4D project database
[268] ACDA, S4D project database
[269] Interview by author with the Head of Community Based Education of Abnoub District, November 2, 2016

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education, he stressed the need to stimulate girls' ability to express themselves and claim their rights to continue their education.

Furthermore, the teachers who participated in the FGDs in Abnoub district also affirmed that the batch of students with whom the S4D project was implemented is different in the attitudes and skills than the previous one. They noted, "We can definitely see a difference between this batch of students and the preceding one".[270] ACDA's Project Manager also endorsed this conclusion. According to her, the discussions that took place after the implementation of the games/sessions of the S4D manual were of a great importance. These discussions helped break the barriers between the teachers and the students, and provided an avenue for the students to express themselves, discuss their issues, and voice their concerns. This also contributed to building a solid ground of trust between the students and their teachers that, in turn, paved the road for discussing other issues that were considered a taboo.[271]

Awareness of self-ability to overcome challenges was also among the skills the S4D project addressed. The pretest and posttest indicated that 64% of the students who participated in the pretest and 90% of those who participated in the posttest reported that they had the ability to overcome challenges. A notable improvement of 26% in the knowledge and skills around the ability to overcome challenges is; therefore, detected.[272] The girls who participated in the FGDs reaffirmed this increase. The majority of them referred to a game in the S4D manual entitled "I Can Overcome Challenges" as one of the most important games in the manual. The examples mentioned by the girls included their ability to discuss their needs with their parents and teachers. For example, one of the girls was afraid that her father might beat her if she requested to see her mother.[273] Another was actually beaten by her father as a punishment because he saw her playing with her cousin whereas girls' play is perceived as shameful.[274] Additionally, some of the girls stated that after they had graduated from the primary stage in the community school, they joined

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[270] FGDs by author with teachers of community schools of El Sawalem village in Abnoub district, November 2, 2016
[271] Interview by author with ACDA Project Manager, October 16, 2016
[272] ACDA, S4D project database
[273] FGDs by author with girls of Beni Zeid village in El Fath district, November 2, 2016
[274] FGDs by author with girls of El Sawalem village in Abnoub district, November 2, 2016
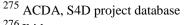
preparatory public schools. In their new schools, they faced mistreatment by their teachers, in general, and PE teachers, in specific, who tend to prefer their male counterparts. Skills around the ability to face challenges and express one-self were stressed in the S4D manual. Consequently, they were able to address these challenges and discuss them with the perpetrators. These examples are expounded in more details later in the human-interest stories part.

2- Interactional Empowerment:

As discussed earlier in this study, the interactional empowerment addresses the transactions among individuals and their surrounding environments, which enable individuals to successfully benefit from, and influence social and/or political resources and systems. It also includes the analytical thinking and problem solving skills, which are key to improving active engagement and participation. Additionally, the interactional component of empowerment stresses upon the importance of knowledge about the resources needed to achieve goals.

Problem solving and creative thinking were among the skills included in the program and measured by the pretest and posttest. The test revealed that 66% of the students who participated in the pretest and 86% of those who participated in the posttest believed that unconventional thinking is one of the means towards creative thinking and problem solving. This shows an increase of 20% in the knowledge and skills in relation to creative thinking.[275]

Furthermore, the pretest and posttest addressed the students' awareness about the surrounding environment. The results of the test showed that 93% of the students who participated in the pretest and 98% of the students who participated in the posttest reported that they care about having a clean environment. However, the difference between the pretest and post results signifies a slight change of 5%,[276] it represents high awareness of the surrounding environment before and after the project.

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[275] ACDA, S4D project database
[276] Ibid.

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Another indicator measured the perception of being part of the community versus being able to live in isolation from it. The pretest and posttest showed that, among the surveyed students, 80% of those who participated in the pretest, and 85% of those who participated in the posttest questionnaire reported that they cannot live in isolation from their communities. This indicator also represents a slight change of 5%.[277]

Additionally, the pretest and posttest included some questions that aimed to measure decision-making skills. In this regard, 75% of the students who participated in the pretest, and 92% of the students who participated in the posttest reported that they had the ability to take the right decision. Consequently, the S4D project contributed to an increase of 17% in the level of knowledge and skills in relation to decision-making.[278]

As education is a crucial factor of empowerment, the project focused on enhancing school retention through introducing a package of sports and recreational activities in community schools. The school, in this context, is perceived as one of the resources available in the surrounding environment, which was referred to in Zimmerman's definition of interactional empowerment. According to Zimmerman, one should benefit from and influence the resources available in his/her surrounding community. Community schools are indeed among the resources that children can benefit from and education is undeniably among the main factors that can promote individuals' empowerment. In this respect, the Project Manager of ACDA, refers to the increased school attendance and retention as one of the main achievements of the project. According to her, community schools are mainly established in rural settings where the vast majority of the population works in the agricultural sector.[279] The harvest season was one of the reasons causing school absenteeism. In this season, children do not go to school because they, either help their families in cropping, or work for others to earn money. The Project Manager of ACDA denoted that introducing sport and physical activities for the first time in community schools was the main reason for which many children became more attached to their schools. She adds that it was noted that the school attendance rates in the targeted

[277] Ibid.

[278] ACDA, S4D project database

[279] Interview by author with ACDA Project Manager, October 16, 2016

community schools were higher compared to the previous seasons preceding the implementation of the project.[280]

3- Behavioural Empowerment:

The pretest and posttest did not capture the behavioral component of the empowerment theory. This is justifiable as the behavioral component entails, by definition, the impact of the intrapersonal and interactional empowerment on the targeted groups, and includes community initiatives and services beyond the training sessions that were provided within the framework of the S4D project. Consequently the behavioral component was not captured by the pretest and posttest as they were applied during the implementation of the project. In this case, a summative project evaluation, which the S4D project lacks, could have provided an analysis of the impact of the project on the target group beyond the fences of the targeted community schools, and hence reflected the behavioral component of the empowerment theory.

Therefore, to reflect this impact, the following part sheds light on the main features of the behavioral component of empowerment through presenting a number of human-interest stories collected as part of the fieldwork implemented within the framework of this thesis. Although the stories address individual experiences of girls who stand out to claim their rights, and/or help the community, the S4D project lacks the structural aspects of the behavioral component of empowerment. The project did not provide the means through which girls can plan and implement community-based services, or adolescent-led initiatives.

The following section presents a number of human-interest stories deduced from the fieldwork that was conducted within the framework of the study. This includes stories, quotes, and comments drawn from the FGDs conducted with the students and the teachers of the community schools and the semi-structured interviews conducted with officials from the MoE Community-based Education Department in Abnoub and El-Fath rural districts, as well as staff from the partner NGO, ACDA. The participants of the FGDs graduated

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[280] Ibid.

from the primary stage from El Sawlem 3, 4, and 5 community schools in El Sawalem village in Abnoub rural district, and Beni Zeid community school in Beni Zeid village in El Fath rural district. These schools were among the 50 community schools in which the S4D project was implemented in 2013-2014. They graduated from the primary stage in the targeted community schools in 2015, and are currently enrolled in preparatory public schools.

"I have rights and duties", Wafaa the future lawyer and women's rights advocate[281]

"In our conservative community, males are often more privileged than females", says 16-year-old; Wafaa, a female graduate student of El Sawalem community school. "I remember all the games of the manual", she denoted. She continued saying that among the most important games she learned was the one on rights and duties.[282] "Through a simple game I came to realize that I am a human being who has rights to claim and duties to fulfill," she explained.[283]

According to the teacher of the community school where Wafaa was enrolled, Wafaa is a women's rights advocate by nature. The teacher explained that in rural communities the rights angle does not exist in the girls' life spectrums.[284] She added that the project managed to polish their skills in a simple, creative and entertaining way, and taught them that every person has rights and duties.[285]

"Through the games, rights and duties have become a value that is internalized in my thinking and acting", Wafaa said proudly, then she described a situation where she was brave enough to claim her right to be dealt with in an equal manner to her male counterparts.[286] In the preparatory public school where she is currently enrolled, a male Arabic teacher preferred male students and recited Quran and Hadeeth excerpts to support his preference.[287] She recalled the value of the rights and duties and courageously discussed

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[281] Wafaa is an alias name.
[282] FGDs by author with girls of El Sawalem village in Abnoub district, November 2, 2016
[283] Ibid.
[284] FGDs by author with the teachers of the community schools of El Sawalem village in Abnoub district, November 2, 2016
[285] Ibid.
[286] FGDs by author with girls of El Sawalem village in Abnoub district, November 2, 2016.
[287] Ibid.

the teacher's negative attitude towards girls. "Being different is essential to complement one another, and this does not mean that girls are of a less value", Wafaa explained to her Arabic teacher.[288] Although the teacher still holds a negative attitude towards girls, Wafaa determinately said that, "at least, he now knows that there are right claimers in the class."[289]

Two other games captured Wafaa's attention and encouraged her to be an active member in her community; namely "A Community I live in", and "My Role in the Community". These games focus on self-realization within the community context and the significant role one can play as an active member in the community.[290] Wafaa brought the values of these games into practice. She got a box and put it in the street where her house is. She, then, advocated for collecting money to make a community fund to support those who face financial difficulties.[291] "It is better not to wait for solutions to come from the elders. Sometimes, you have to be proactive and take the lead", she stated.[292]

The girl participants in the FGDs were asked about their points of view on the issue of early marriage. All the participants objected to early marriage and affirmed that early marriage is a destroying factor of girls' health and wellbeing.[293] Wafaa concluded her remarks with her wish to be a lawyer who defends women's rights. "I do not want to get married before I finish my university studies. Many girls in my community got married at the age of 15, or less, and hence, they had to dropout of schools. I want to continue my education and be a lawyer to defend girls' and women's rights," she proclaimed enthusiastically. [294]

The Right to Participate in Sports: "why cannot girls in my community play?"

Hanaa, a 16-year-old girl from El Sawalem village in Abnoub district, highlighted the impact of the S4D project on enhancing her skills. [295] She mentioned that she enjoyed

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288 Ibid.
289 Ibid.
290 Ibid.
291 Ibid.
292 Ibid.
293 Ibid.
294 Ibid.
295 Hanaa is an alias name

coming to school because "we have lots of fun together here." [296] She lamented that she never had the time to play, "I have to help my mother with the daily chores". [297]

Hanaa recalled her bad experience with her father when her father beat her for playing with her cousin. However, after participating in the S4D project, Hanaa was able to discuss with her father her right to play. "Why cannot girls play? And if playing is for boys only why the Ministry of Education included PE classes in public schools for girls and boys?" she asked him. "Now I teach my brothers and sisters the games I learned through the project," Hanaa affirmed. [298]

Hanaa carries the belief in her right to play with her to the preparatory public school where she is currently enrolled. She explained that the PE teacher does not allow girls to participate in the PE classes although the school has two playgrounds; one for girls and another for boys. She took the initiative to teach her female peers, in the preparatory schools where she is currently enrolled, the games she learned through the S4D project during the so-called PE classes. Despite the fact that she was proactive and took the initiative to perform the role of the PE teacher, the teacher mistreated Hanaa for taking such action. "Do you think you are still young to play and participate in sports? You are not allowed to play here", the PE teacher mockingly criticized Hanaa. She recalled her experience with her father and how she managed to convince him with her right to play and proudly replied, "This playground is for girls. And it is our right to benefit from it. Actually each place in the school is our property".[299]

Hanaa's perception is that, as long as there are female-only spaces, girls' participation in sports is crucial to enhance their skills. This thinking goes very much in line with the radical feminism thinking, which was addressed in the theoretical framework of the thesis. Radical feminism supports separatism, female-only sports and women-only spaces in order to get rid of males' potential abuse and violence.

One of the community schools teachers in El Sawalem village explained the change the project brought about in the lives of the students. She remarked that before the sports

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[296] FGDs by author with girls of Beni Zeid village in El Fath district, November 2, 2016
[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid.
[299] Ibid.

project, girls did not know that play was a right. She added that girls used to perceive sports as a disgraceful matter, and this is mainly due to the prevailing conservative culture. This conservative culture holds that girls do not have the right to play and that it is shameful to see girls jumping or running.[300] The project managed to draw girls' attention to the importance of play. "Play is a right that affects girls' physical and psychological wellbeing. We ourselves had fun taking part in the sports project," the teacher added.[301]

"I can express my needs"

It takes a person, at least, an hour driving from the city of Assiut to reach Beni Zeid village. The village is located in El-Fath district in Assiut. A typical poor village characterized with limited health, educational, and social services. Marwa is a 15-year-old girl who lives in Beni Zeid village where patriarchal systems prevail, and where it is not acceptable for a girl to expresses her needs. [302]

Marwa recalled how the project helped her express her needs. She narrated her tragic experience of her parents' divorce and the subsequent move to live with her stepmother. "I cannot even say I need to see my mother. My father will beat me," she recalled with tears [303]

Her teacher explained that it is difficult for girls to say that they want something. Girls' needs are mostly overlooked in this conservative community. The games of the S4D project managed to break the barriers between the teachers of the community schools and the students. "A community school teacher is also a social worker," said ACDA's Project Manager.[304] After playing together, Marwa was assured that her teacher would listen to her and help her solve her problem. The teacher preferred not to give her a direct solution, but rather explain it through one of the games in the manual. Through the game entitled "I have

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[300] FGDs by author with the teachers of the community schools of El Swalem village in Abnoub district, November 2, 2016
[301] Ibid.
[302] Marwa is an alias name.
[303] FGDs by author with girls of Beni Zeid village in El Fath district, November 2, 2016
[304] Interview by author with ACDA Project Manager, October 16, 2016

needs", the teacher was able to explain to Marwa that it is healthy to express her needs, and that she has to be courageous enough to voice these needs. [305]

A reflection session was held after the implementation of each game. During that session, the teacher discussed the lessons learned and their impact on the students' lives. Marwa stated that after taking part in the games and the discussions that followed, she was able to speak out and was, finally, courageous enough to express her needs. "Yes, I need my mother", she explicitly told her father. Marwa does not fear voicing her needs anymore.

Gender Inequality from a Duty Bearers Lens:

The participants in the interviews were asked about the level of acceptance of the idea of the project in these conservative communities. All participants referred to the S4D project as the first of its kind in community schools. They also praised the important role the teachers, who are the main actors of the implementation of the S4D manual with the students, played in mobilizing the students to participate in the sports and physical activities addressed in the project's manual. They also played a crucial role in paving the road for their participation through taking the initiatives to discuss girls' participation in sports with their families. "The female teachers are from the same communities, they are well-known and trust-worthy among their communities, and this paved the road for the introduction of the sports and physical activities project in the targeted community schools", said the Project Manager of ACDA NGO.

The participants in the interviews stressed the need to scale-up the approaches that were developed by the project. "There is an urgent necessity to mainstream the approaches of the S4D module to empower girls and help combat harmful practices and negative social norms", said the Head of the Community-based Education of Abnoub.[306]

The issue of self-expression and the recognition that everyone has needs extends to one of the most critical problems rural girls face; such as, early marriage. The ACDA Project Manager explained how difficult it is to convince parents to postpone the marriage

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[305] FGDs by author with teachers of Beni Zeid village in El Fath district, November 2, 2016
[306] Interview by author with the Head of Community Based Education of Abnoub District, November 2, 2016

of their young daughters until, at least, they finish their basic education. She recalled a situation where the NGO tried to interfere to prevent a 14-year-old girl from a forced early marriage. "We managed to postpone it for two years only, at least, she finished her primary education," the Project Manager sorrowfully added.[307] Unfortunately, parents and guardians do not consider girls' needs. They believe they know what is best for them, and from their perspective, getting married is more important than education. "To combat this, we need to empower girls to be proactive and able to claim their rights instead of perceiving them as passive recipients of the services that target them," ACDA's Project Manager added.[308]

Within this context, the Executive Director of ACDA NGO in Assiut pointed out the role of such programs in creating demands. She referred to issues like FGM/C and forced early marriage as critical issues that cannot be handled by NGOs interventions only.[309] She added that there is still a need to create the demand before addressing the supply side. Consequently, development interventions should focus on girls' empowerment to create this demand.[310]

It is also worth noting that one of the main sessions in the community schools' academic day is the corner session, where the teachers can implement activities with the students. ACDA Project Manager explained that this session was usually unplanned.[311] The S4D project provided a concrete structure and curricula for this session. The sports and physical activities with life skills manual developed by the project is now used as the curriculum of the corner session.[312] With an average of two sessions per week, each lasts for 15 – 20 minutes; the project takes up the time allocated for physical activities in the targeted community schools from zero to 30 – 40 minutes per week. However, this is applied only in the 50 schools targeted by the project. The Head of the Community-based Education of Abnoub District, affirmed the need to mainstream the intervention. He added

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[307] Ibid.
[308] Interview by author with ACDA Project Manager, October 16, 2016
[309] Interview by author with ACDA Executive Director, October 16, 2016
[310] Ibid.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Interview by author with ACDA Project Manager, October 16, 2016

that he communicated this, in writing, to the leadership in the Education Directorate of Assiut governorate. [313]

The partner NGO also reaffirmed this statement. The Executive Director of ACDA added that, "targeting 50 schools with the sports and physical activities with life skills project was not enough".[314] Other community schools in other districts were keen to take part in the project. There is, indeed, a demand to scale-up, and mainstream the manuals and the approaches developed by the project. To respond to this demand, ACDA coordinated training sessions beyond the project's support for those who did not take part in the TOT workshops supported by UNICEF project. In these training sessions, the teachers who were trained by the project trained other community schools from other districts in Assiut. However, she referred to the need to train more teachers by professional trainers, and not only through those who were previously trained by the project in 2013-2014.[315]

The government and the NGO partners also outlined the lack of recreational tools and equipment. "Even if ACDA was able to expand the use of the manual through providing training opportunities to the teachers who were not targeted by the project, there is a need to provide them with sports tools and equipment like the 50 community schools targeted by the project," said the Head of the MoE Community-based Education of Abnoub District.[316]

The S4D project targeted 50 community schools and trained 100 female teachers working in these targeted schools, who, then, implemented the S4D manual with 1,391 students. According to the Executive Director of ACDA, beyond the direct objectives of the project, some indirect results were achieved. For examples, the teachers who took part in the training of trainers (TOT) workshops were also given the opportunity to discover their potentials.[317] Consequently, the female-only safe play space, which was referred to in the radical feminism theory discussed in the theoretical framework of the study, was also

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[313] Interview by author with the Head of Community Based Education of Abnoub District, November 2, 2016
[314] Interview by author with ACDA Project Manager, October 16, 2016
[315] Ibid.
[316] Interview by author with the Head of Community Based Education of Abnoub District, November 2, 2016
[317] Interview by author with ACDA Executive Director, October 16, 2016

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provided to the teachers during the TOT workshops. The training workshops provided them with the theoretical background, as well as a safe space to actually practice the games of the manual, which they were required to implement with the students later in their respective community schools.[318]

Furthermore, the S4D manual was implemented beyond the project. Some of the students implemented the games with their peers in the community outside the boundaries of the school. This entails a wider outreach that the project's M&E framework could not capture.[319]

Finally, the S4D impact on the target group was instrumental in bringing about the right to play and learn new life skills in one package. Some core life skills were communicated to and practiced by the girl beneficiaries of the project, which indeed helped mobilize, among other, their self-esteem, self-reliance, self-expression and self-worth that were addressed earlier in the theoretical framework of this study. However, the S4D project lacks the structural aspects of the behavioral component of empowerment, which was addressed by Zimmerman in theoretical framework of this study. This missing crucial component would have helped bring the skills into action in a more coherent manner. This shortfall is addressed in details in the following part and in the last chapter of the study which proposes some recommendations and policy implications to promote the use of sports as a right and a tool for girl's empowerment.

Furthermore, these stories respond to Hargreaves argument, which was discussed in the discourse on feminism and sports addressed earlier in the theoretical framework chapter. This argument holds that stories can be an aid for change as they reflect arguments,[320] and hence, they can create a discourse on issues that are considered a taboo. They can also reflect the human face of these issues and uncover underlying causes, which cannot be reflected through the analysis of the data deduced from databases.

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[318] Ibid.

[319] Interview by author with ACDA Executive Director, October 16, 2016

[320] Michael Burke, *Sport and Traditions of Feminist Theory*, 277

II. Assessment of the Programmatic Aspects of the S4D Project: Applying the elements of the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) for Good Programming Practices:

This part assesses the S4D Project from a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) perspective. A UN Program for Reform initiated the HRBA in 1997 when the UN Secretary-General called for mainstreaming human rights into all UN development interventions. Accordingly, a number of UN agencies started to adopt a human rights-based approach to their development interventions. Adopting the HRBA requires the operationalization of good programming practices. This operationalization requires certain elements to ensure the adoption of the HRBA. These elements are discussed in the human rights instruments, which were addressed in chapter III and chapter VI of the study. The following part provides a programmatic assessment of the S4D project in light of the requirements of the HRBA good programming practices.

I. Situation Analysis:

In order to define the human rights of the rights-holders towards which the duty-bearers are held responsible for fulfilling, the HRBA states that programs should assess and evaluate the situation. This is in addition to identifying the underlying causes of the non-attainment of these rights.[321] In response to this element, the project conducted an assessment of the training needs of the rights-holders prior to its implementation. As explained in the previous chapter, the needs assessment adopted the participatory approach and engaged the stakeholders and the rights holders.

However, the needs assessment that was conducted was at the training level not the project level. In this needs assessment, stakeholders were consulted to only inform the content of the training manual. No consultations were conducted to design the project's activities, methods, and approaches. This resulted in some shortfalls in identifying other

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[321] United Nations Practitioners' Portal on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming, *HRBA Portal,* http://hrbaportal.org/the-human-rights-based-approach-to-development-cooperation-towards-a-common-understanding-among-un-agencies

important programmatic aspects. For example, despite that the project aimed at challenging the social norms, creating a positive narrative, and a supportive environment for girls' participation, no promotional and communication material were developed within the framework of the project. Furthermore, no activities engaging community members were implemented except for the end of project celebration. Both the promotional material and the community engagement activities, such as sport camps, could have helped enhance the community awareness around girls' issues. Consequently, a proper needs assessment could have informed the project activities to address this crucial promotional and communication aspect.

II. Participation, Partnerships, and Implementation Approaches:

The HRBA states that active participation is considered an objective in itself and a means through which good programming practices are implemented. It also stresses that people should be perceived as key players in their own development, rather than inactive recipients of services. The active participation approach also involves both the top-down and the bottom-up approaches to be used in synergy.[322]

One of the main assets of the project is that it depended on a local partner NGO based in Assiut, ACDA. Furthermore, the implementation of the manual depended on the teachers of the targeted community schools. Those teachers were from the same communities and were the main actors in the implementation of the S4D manual. Nonetheless, the S4D project tended to address the girl beneficiaries as recipients rather than active participants in their own development. No clear activities in the S4D project addressed the issue of engaging girls as key actors in their own development. For example, the project did not have activities to promote the engagement of girls in community services or adolescent-led initiatives beyond the fences of the school. The peer education approach is crucial in this respect. This approach, which was not integrated in the project activities, can enable girls to convey the knowledge and skills they gained through the S4D project to their peers in the community. Additionally, despite that identifying a role model

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[322] United Nations Practitioners' Portal on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming, *HRBA Portal,* http://hrbaportal.org/the-human-rights-based-approach-to-development-cooperation-towards-a-common-understanding-among-un-agencies

was stated in the project's objectives, no activities in the project were designed to identify role models from the girl beneficiaries.

Creating a sense of ownership at the local level was also highlighted in the HRBA.[323] After UNICEF's support of the project phased out in 2014, the partner NGO adopted the project's modules. ACDA continued implementing the manuals beyond the project's support in a number of the community schools functioning under its supervision.[324]Moreover, the HRBA also stresses the importance of building strategic partnerships at different levels.[325] The S4D project established strategic partnerships that included UN represented in UNICEF, NGOs represented in ACDA, as well as the government represented in the MoE Directorate in Assiut. The model of having both government and NGO partners in the project is key to ensure the acceptance of the S4D project by the community; especially that the project was implemented in very conservative rural communities which are not easy to access. However, the manual and the approaches developed by the project were not adopted and mainstreamed by the government partners, the MoE.

Accordingly, the S4D project did not thoroughly address the issue of sustainability and scalability of its modules and approaches beyond the duration and funding support of UNICEF. Although the project had long-term objectives, it did not focus on mainstreaming the S4D approaches at a wider scale. The implementation of the project focused on the bottom-up approach and did pay much attention to the top-down approach. No synthesis of approaches was embraced in the project's implementation strategy so as to benefit from the assets of the two approaches. This is addressed in more details in the policy implications presented in the following chapter.

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[323] Ibid.

[324] Interview by author with ACDA Project Manager, October 16, 2016

[325] United Nations Practitioners' Portal on Human Rights Based Approach to Programming, *HRBA Portal,* http://hrbaportal.org/the-human-rights-based-approach-to-development-cooperation-towards-a-common-understanding-among-un-agencies

III.   <u>Program M&E framework is built on Human Rights Principles:</u>

The HRBA stipulates that programs M&E framework should be built on the basis of the human rights principles at the outcome level, and the processes level, as well. It also stresses that programs should have measurable objectives, targets and indicators to measure the success towards attaining the rights.[326]

The S4D project developed an M&E framework, which included M&E tools, including the pretest and posttest. The pretest and posttest aimed to measure the level of students' knowledge and skills before and after their participation in the program. The main objective of the M&E tools was to assess how the project's curriculum and methodologies corresponded to the goals of the project.

Nonetheless, the pretest and posttest, in a way, tends to measure perception rather than actual knowledge. Most of the questions ask if the students "think" they possessed the skills addressed in the S4D manual. Furthermore, no end of project evaluation was conducted to measure efficiency, effectiveness, and impact; thus making it difficult to deduce lessons learned to guide and inform future interventions by the implementing partners.

IV.   <u>Programs should be Guided by International Human Rights Instruments:</u>

This requirement of the good programming practice stipulates that programs should be guided by the recommendations of the human rights instruments.[327] The fieldwork revealed that the S4D project responds to the UNICEF 2010 Gender Policy and the 2014-2017 Gender Action Plan, which were presented earlier. Furthermore, the project also responds to the main human rights instruments addressing gender equality; such as the CRC, the CEDAW, and the UNICEF Gender Policy.

However, no specific impact in the project's plan, other than girls' empowerment at large, was specified. For example, the project did not establish direct linkage between girls' empowerment endeavors on the one hand, and specific issues challenging girls in rural settings; such as FGM/C and early marriage, on the other hand. The fieldwork

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[326] Ibid.
[327] Ibid.

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conducted within the framework of this study revealed that these issues were randomly addressed within the wrap up discussions that followed the implementation of the games.

V.   <u>Addressing Disparities and Empowering Marginalized Groups:</u>

The HRBA states that strategies and approaches to good synergy practices should be empowering and programs should aim at decreasing regional and gender disparities. Furthermore, it stresses that programs should focus on the most marginalized, impoverished, and disadvantaged groups. [328] Hence, empowering girls was the main goal of the S4D project. Therefore, messages around self-esteem, self-actualizations, decision-making, and other interpersonal skills were communicated to the students of the targeted community schools. Furthermore, the HRBA stated that programs should aim to decrease gaps and disparities; including regional and gender inequalities. It also stressed that programs should focus on the most marginalized, impoverished, and disadvantaged groups. In this respect, the main target group of the S4D project was marginalized rural girls of community schools. The objective of the project was to provide those girls with opportunities to enjoy their rights to play and learn, and enhance their school attendance and participation.

The fieldwork revealed that the project contributed to enhancing girls' core life skills, which contributed to their empowerment. However, because the project was implemented only in 50 community schools and did not put much emphasis on mainstreaming and scaling up the S4D model at a wider scale through MoE, these empowerment efforts remained at the level of a pilot project. Also, empowerment requires creating an enabling environment to allow participation and decision-making power to occur. The S4D project, did not give much attention to community engagement to secure its acceptance of girls' participation at a winder scale.

Finally, as referred to earlier in this chapter, the S4D project managed to enhance the skills of the student beneficiaries, and addressed many aspects of the intrapersonal and interactional components of the empowerment theory. However, it did not thoroughly

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[328] Ibid.

address the behavioral component of the empowerment theory, which suggests capitalizing the potential of the beneficiaries through designing and implementing community service activities. The project addressed the issue of empowerment within a specific context, the school, and assumed girls' empowerment would roll out to other life prospects. To achieve this assumption, clear activities should have been designed to explore girls' capabilities beyond the school, which the project lacked. In this respect, the inclusion of peer education and adolescent-led initiatives modules could have helped explore girls' capacities within a wider context; the community. Furthermore, no activities were implemented to engage the community as a main actor in determining girls' status. Nonetheless, the literature review and the results of the fieldwork confirm that the right to education and the right to play are key to achieve empowerment. ACDA's Executive Director, mentioned that the project has indeed helped empower and retain girls in education, and added that education is by definition a means of girls' empowerment. Additionally, the Head of the Community-based Education in Abnub District, also referred to the importance of introducing sports with life skills as a means to combat early marriage which is one of the main reasons of girls drop out of education. However, to further capitalize on the benefits of sports as a right and a crosscutting strategy to achieve other rights, the following chapter provides some recommendations and policy implications to inform future S4D interventions.

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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Gender stereotyping, harmful social norms and traditions usually cause feelings of inadequacy, powerlessness, and lack of self-confidence. With limited opportunities provided to girls, in general, and rural girls, in particular, including limitation of mobility and exclusion from education and employment, girls and women often lack self-esteem.[329]

Efforts aiming to empower girls and women entail enhancing their skills and abilities so as to be able to make strategic choices about their lives; especially in contexts where these abilities were previously restricted. A fundamental aspect of empowerment is self-esteem, self-reliance and self-efficacy, which are also major outcomes of sports.[330]

These key life skills were addressed in chapter II of the study, which outlined the theoretical framework of the thesis. Zimmerman model of empowerment stresses the importance of intrapersonal, interactional and behavioral empowerment, which are key to bring about the aforementioned skills. As noted earlier, quite a few studies concluded that there is a linkage between sports and physical activities, on one hand, and self-esteem, on the other hand, in all age groups.[331] Self-recognition, self-worth, self-empowerment and self-perception are also among the benefits of sports.

The theoretical framework tackled in chapter II also addressed how sports were considered as an arena for the feminism discourse. For instance, liberal feminism calls for gender equality in every aspect; including sports, addresses the similarities between the two sexes, and questions why these similarities did not result in equality. While, on the other hand, radical feminism addresses the difference between the two sexes and calls for celebrating women's particularities. It also calls for women-only space and female-identified sports. This thinking, as referred to earlier, goes very much in line with the social

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[329] United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace, *Sport and Gender: Empowering Girls and Women*, 143
[330] Ibid.
[331] Ibid, 143-144

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norms and traditions of patriarchal conservative communities prevailing in Upper Egypt and rural communities. Postmodernism addresses the myths that other feminism and sports theories caused and calls for deconstructing some gender terms and stereotypes. Within the postmodernism discourse, Hargreaves puts much emphasize on the importance of stories, "We have to remind ourselves that stories can be used as an aid for change, stories can persuade others of beliefs and notions of value, they can act as arguments, and they can influence public opinion. But to nurture such a potential we should link personal, individual, 'different' accounts to wider social circumstances."[332] Therefore, Hargreaves argument was the base upon which a number of human-interest stories were collected during the fieldwork that was undertaken within the framework of this thesis. In sum, liberal feminism, radical feminism, and postmodernism feminism and sports are among the main theories addressed in the theoretical framework of the study. They provide a discourse that provokes myths, inequalities and call for challenging the "normal", and hence "social norms". All these theories along with the empowerment theory of Zimmerman provided the main pillars of the thesis and its empirical work.

Furthermore, chapter III addressed the importance of the sports as a right and also a crosscutting strategy through which other rights can be addressed. This chapter aimed at shedding light on sports' position among the different rights at large and girls' rights in particular. It also focused on how sports are perceived as a global right that needs to be integrated in development interventions for the benefit it can bring.

Whereas girls in Egypt face some challenges, rural girls residing in Upper Egypt face further challenges. This argument was the main theme discussed in chapter IV. Issues; such as dropout of education and school never-attendance, unemployment, participation and civic engagement, gender-based violence, FGM/C, as well as freedom of mobility and participation in sports and physical activities, are among the main challenges facing girls in general and rural girls in Upper Egypt in particular. This chapter attempted to answer the following question: "Why the thesis addressed rural girls?"

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[332] As cited in United Nations Office of Sport for Development and Peace, *Sport and Gender: Empowering Girls and Women*, 105

In response to this question, chapter V provided an outline on UNICEF Egypt response. This included an outline of UNICEF – as the main UN agency responsible for children in general and girls in particular - gender equality strategic framework; including UNICEF gender strategies, policies, and action plans. This chapter also addressed two gender-targeted programs implemented by UNICEF namely; the Community School project and the Sports for Development project. The Community Schools project was addressed as one of UNICEF gender targeted programs and also to shed light on the environment in which the Sports for Development project was implemented.

Assessing the Sports for Development project was, then, presented in chapter VI, which represented the empirical part of the thesis. This chapter assessed the UNICEF S4D project in light of the theoretical framework of the thesis. It focused on the empowerment theory of Zimmerman and its main components and presented some human-interest stories to illustrate how these components were effective in bringing about girls' empowerment. This also goes in line with Hargreaves argument on how important stories are to attain the required change. Furthermore, this chapter provided a programmatic assessment of the S4D project. The programmatic assessment was undertaken in light of the requirements of the human rights-based approach (HRBA) for good programming practices.

It is worth mentioning that among the research limitations is that the results of the pretest and the posttest represent the students at large. The reports generated from the S4D project's database did not include gender-disaggregated data. However, and as referred to earlier, around 70% to 80% of the students of community schools are girls, which makes the results presented in the empirical part of the study around 70% representative of girls. It is also important to note that we cannot claim that girls' empowerment is exclusively the impact of the sports and physical activities with life skills project. These girls are enrolled in community schools as a second chance to make up for the education they lacked. Education is in itself a means of empowerment. However, we cannot deny the importance of sports as a stimulus of life skills; including self-reliance, self-esteem and self-efficacy, which are key to bring about empowerment. We cannot also deny the fact that the S4D project was the first of its kind in community schools, which have no physical activities of whatsoever.

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The community-based education is mainly targeting girls who either dropped out or never attended schools due to the inexistence of nearby schools. The importance of physical education was overlooked in the structure of the community-based education due to space limitation. Furthermore, many assessments were conducted to evaluate the community-based education. Among the main findings of these assessments is the unattractiveness of community schools due to the lack of sports, physical activities and facilities. This contributed to increasing the dropout rates among children of community schools.[333] This confirms that the right to play was disregarded in the community-based education.

In this respect, the results of this study provide evidence that life skills communicated through sports are one of the approaches that can contribute to girls' empowerment and also school retention. The S4D project provided a space for girls to play and be equipped with life skills. The majority of the girls who participated in the FGDs reported their enhanced ability to claim their rights, discuss their needs, and express themselves as a result of their participation in the S4D project. In the FGDs, girls were asked whether they prefer the use of a different method other than sports to communicate life skills. All the girls responded with consensus that sports and physical activities are the most desired means to convey life skills.

Finally, and as mentioned earlier, the right to play is a right through which other rights can be addressed. Life skills and sports are indeed among the innovative approaches that can contribute to girls' empowerment. Nonetheless, community schools remain distanced from fulfilling this right. In this regards, the following section provides some recommendations and policy implications to expand the use of sports as a means to empowerment.

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[333] Amira Hussein, *Assessing Community Based Education in Upper Egypt: Failure and Success*, 76

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Recommendations and Policy Implications:

I. Scale-up and Strategy Development:

One of the main recommendations to UNICEF is that future S4D interventions should aim to have an impact way beyond the direct beneficiaries through promoting the use of the approaches that were developed by the project through the MoE networks of schools. The MoE is undeniably one of the main channels to expand the benefits of sports as a tool to communicate key life skills and empower girls. The staff of the partner NGO and the government officials who participated in the interviews recommended mainstreaming the modules of the project.

Furthermore, it is recommended to establish strategic partnership with the faculty of Physical Education (PE). Undergraduate students of faculty of PE have a graduation prerequisite practical course through which they actually teach PE in public schools. Community schools are excluded from this because of the inexistence of playgrounds. The S4D project brought about simple and innovative approaches of sports and physical activities tailored to utilize the limited spaces available in community schools. The faculty of PE can adopt these approaches so to include community schools in their scope of coverage and their graduation prerequisite course plans.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the project did not have communication and promotional activities. Therefore, another policy implication is to develop and implement a communication strategy for the protection and empowerment of girls. The strategy should focus on changing perceptions of girls' roles in the family and the community. It also should promote the use of sports and play as a right and as a modality through which skills and values are communicated. This should include advocacy and sports events and camps.

Additionally, in line with SDG number 5, access to life skills and social inclusion should prioritize the use of enabling technology, information and communications technology, in particular, including social media. The general perception in the Arab world is that social media are conducive to tools helping people connect together and shorten distances between them; they are also seen as instant platforms to get news and information, as well as receive aid in learning new things.[334] Building on this perception,

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[334] TNS. *Arab Social Media Report, 2015*, 6

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the communication strategy should also address the use of social media as a key component of the proposed communication strategy. This is because media can influence girls' aspirations and behaviors around their livelihoods, open the door to greater participation in society and ensure that girls' issues move higher up the public agenda.

The proposed strategy should include messages, games, graphs, and videos around girls' rights and should also encompass sports as a crucial stimulus of skills. It should also include modalities and approaches to further the engagement of the community to provide supportive constituency for girls' participation in sports and physical activities, which will eventually bring about participation at a wider scale.

Crucially, it is recommended to adopt a synthesis of approaches combining the bottom-up and the top-down approaches. This recommended implementation approach takes into account the advantages of the bottom-up approach so as to emphasize networking; partnership and participation of the community; meanwhile it also puts much emphasis on the top-down contemplations within the system. As a result, one of the main recommendations to UNICEF is that future S4D interventions should aim to have an impact way beyond the direct beneficiaries through promoting the use of the approaches that were developed by the project through the MoE network of schools. The MoE is undeniably one of the main channels to expand the benefits of sports as a tool to communicate key life skills and empower girls.

II. Establish Linkages with Existing Adolescents' Empowerment Programs:

UNICEF implements two programs namely; the Civic Engagement Program, and the Skills Development Program in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS). They aim at equipping adolescents and youth with life, employability, entrepreneurial, and citizenship skills.

Therefore, it is recommended to establish linkages between the S4D interventions, on the one hand, and those two programs, on the other hand. Through this linkage, students of community schools can be referred to youth centres to also benefit from their services. Thus, the youth centres will provide an alternate spacious safe space for girls of community

schools who are deprived from their right to play due to the lack of sports and physical activities and facilities in community schools.

Furthermore, the MoYS implements a project entitled: "Women and Girls Program" which teaches adolescents, and particularly girls, different life skills through sports. The project is also implemented at youth centres. Therefore, linking up students of community schools, as well as marginalized rural girls with the MoYS programs should eventually capitalize on the benefits of sports. It is, therefore, recommended that UNICEF provides technical support to the MoYS to incorporate key issues facing girls into the existing curriculum of the "Women and Girls Program".

III. From the Community Schools to the Community - Peer Education, Child and Adolescent-led Initiatives:

According to Gullan, a community service activities implemented within the framework of the empowerment theory should contribute to positive identity development.[335] He argued that the three components of the empowerment theory, the intrapersonal, the interactional and the behavioral components could be further strengthened through community service activities. Therefore, it is recommended that future S4D interventions be complemented with community services activities.

To achieve this, opportunities should be availed to students to allow their decision-making power at each phase of the planning, design and implementation of community service activities. The innovative approaches developed by the S4D project should guide these community service activities. For instance, these community services should include sport camps to engage the community and mobilize it around girls' rights.

Some of the beneficiaries of the project took the initiative and implemented the S4D manual with their peers in the community. This, indeed, contributed to their being active actors in their communities. Community participation can promote self-esteem and social networks[336] and, eventually contribute to girls' empowerment.

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[335] L. Gullan, Rebecca, Thomas J. Power, and Stephen S. Leff, *the Role of Empowerment in a School-Based Community Service Program with Inner-City, Minority,* 667-669
[336] Ibid.

Therefore, it is recommended that UNICEF systemizes these peer education initiatives through providing students with peer education tainting opportunities. The rationale behind peer education is that peers can be a trusted and credible source of information. The peer education approach is also used as a means to empower girls to work with other groups at their age. This, in turn, should result in strengthening their self-confidence so as to be active actors rather than passive recipients of set messages. This approach along with other training opportunities on designing and implementing adolescent-led initiatives goes in line with the behavioral component of the empowerment theory.

Conclusively, we cannot claim that sports and physical activities with life skills programs can exclusively address the issue of girls' empowerment. Gender inequality is the result of multiple interlinked immediate, underlying and structural causes, which in turn makes girls' empowerment a long-term process that needs a cluster of development interventions. However, the thesis supports the claim that sports must be a universal right since it is also utilized as a crosscutting strategy to address other rights. Ultimately, this thesis provided evidence on how sports can bring about self-esteem, self-reliance and self-efficacy, which can indeed contribute to individuals' empowerment.

Needless to say, S4D is an innovative approach that can contribute to girls' empowerment. Unfortunately, however, the S4D approach has been overlooked by development organizations. This is the case, even though many theories; including feminism and sports, and empowerment theories, along with international conventions, addressed the importance of sports to empower girls and women, In general, development organizations tend to put much emphasis on complex approaches and neglect such simple and entertaining programmatic approaches. Therefore, there is still a need to capitalize on these approaches and expand the use of sports to empower girls.

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