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The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

**The Influence of Ishraq Program as Non- Formal Education
on Girls' Education in Upper Egypt**

**A thesis submitted to the Public Policy and Administration Department
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Public Administration**

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ABSTRACT

The American University in Cairo
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy
Department of Public Policy and Administration

The Influence of Ishraq Program as Non- Formal Education on Girls' Education in Upper Egypt

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Supervised by Prof. **Ibrahim Awad**

Despite national gains in school enrolment, health, and economic development, adolescent girls in Upper Egypt are facing critical gender gaps in schooling (Ishraq Program, 2013). The present research deals with how the Ishraq program, as non- formal education, has succeeded in advocating the education of adolescent girls in Upper Egypt and making their transition into formal schooling. Ishraq is a program running under an international NGO that is designed to address the educational problems in rural areas in Egypt where there are problems with schooling for young girls. Ishraq is a second chance for education that is providing necessary skills, such as literacy and life skills, reproductive health, livelihoods information, civic engagement, and sports. Ishraq provides an integrated skill-building package to be delivered in 24 months through the following categories: (1) literacy, (2) life skills, (3) sports, and (4) financial literacy in one of the five lowest-ranked governorates (Fayoum, Menya, Assiut, Qena, and Souhag), according to Human Development Index. The research gathered the primary data from the interviews and the secondary data or desk research from literature reviews, and data available online. The recent results by Ishraq report revealed that there are more than 3000 adolescent girls returning to school since the start of Ishraq in 2001 till June 2013. Moreover, the program contributed to sharing the information with their parents and neighborhoods encouraged other girls to join the program which also motivated parents to educate their girls. The Ishraq program contributed very positively towards improving literacy skills, health gains, and financial planning. The program is being assessed by the population council as one of reputable research organizations. Whereas the great challenge that is facing the program is scaling up Ishraq to a national level which causes the threats in overcoming community norms that hinder mainstreaming of Ishraq girls into formal schooling.

List of abbreviations:-

AEA	Adult Education Agency
AED	Academy for Educational Development
ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CCIMD	Center for Curriculum and Instructional Development
CDA	Community Development Association
CEDPA	Centre for Development and Population Activities
CHANGE2	Community Health and Nutrition, Gender and Education Support Program
COPE	Community Organized Primary Education
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education for all
EJA	Youth and Adult Education
EQUIP2	Educational Quality Improvement Project 2
GALAE	General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOFP	Ministry of Family and Population
MOY	Ministry of Youth
NCEEE	National Center for Examinations and Education Evaluation
NFE	Non- formal education
NGO	Non-governmental organization

OCS	One Classroom School
QUESTT	Quality Education Services Through Technology
SPARK	Skills, Participation, Access to Relevant Knowledge
TSC	Teachers' Advisory Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEF	World Economic Forum
WSC	World Summit for Children
ZCSS	Zambia Community Schools Secretariat

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I. Introduction

1. Barriers that face girls' education in Upper Egypt

Egyptians from all walks of life rose against a repressive regime calling for freedom, human dignity, social justice and a better economy. Education is taking a significant step toward eradicating illiteracy among woman and men.¹ UNICEF indicated in its latest report in 2013 that the illiteracy rate between youth aged from 15 to 24 has improved to 91% for males and 84% for females. However, there is still discrimination in education and access to workforce for young women in comparison to men in rural areas. Therefore, Ishraq has been introduced in Egypt in 2001 to address the discrimination and increase young girls' possibilities for skills development. "This program is working with parents, boys, and community leaders to allow girls greater freedom to seek education and enter the world of work."(UNESCO, 2013).

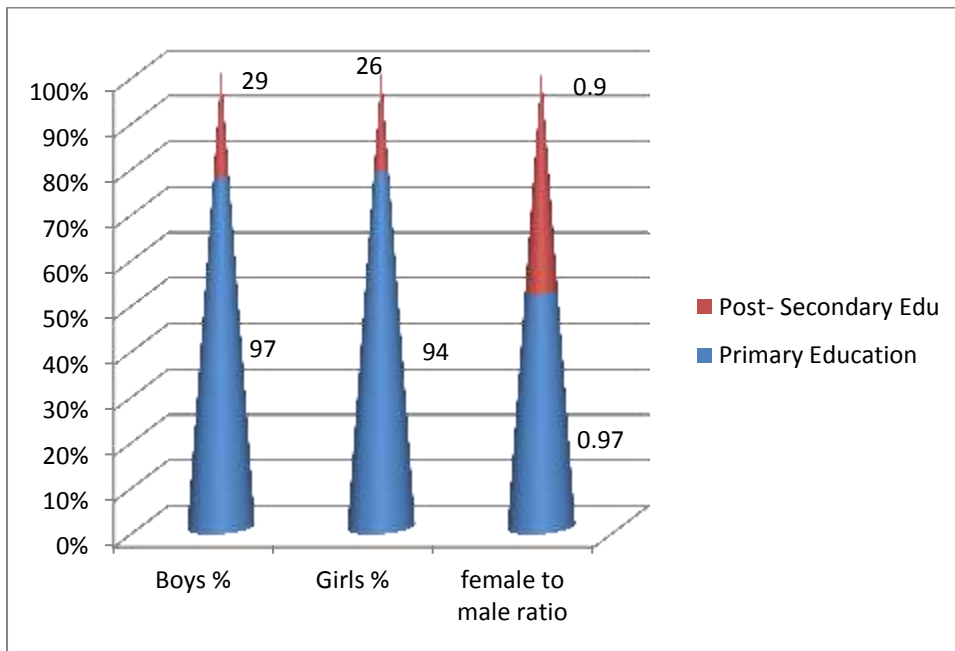
There are various problems facing girls in Upper Egypt. One of these problems is the education system. Many girls do not have access to schools for many reasons. First, some schools are far away from their home which is representing a great barrier to girls. Furthermore, there are many other barriers that face girls who are living in villages such as the family's demand for girl's assistance with younger children, household cleaning and other chores. Some parents in Upper Egypt believe that cost of schooling in which they are paying for notebooks, pencils, and school uniform is very high in spite of the official policy of "free" education. Many poor families with many children do not prefer to spend their money on the education of their girls. As a result, many rural families see no benefit behind schooling and therefore they perceive the importance of education for girls as insignificant.

¹ UNICEF report (2013) http://www.unicef.org/sowc2013/files/Table_5_Stat_Tables_SWCR2013_ENGLISH.pdf

The education system is facing a great problem from primary school to the higher education in Egypt. Moreover, there is an increasing gender gap in terms of educational opportunities, especially in poor areas in Egypt. The World Economic Forum (WEF, 2013), revealed that the enrollment in primary education for girls is 94 % while the enrollment rate of primary education for boys reaches 97%. The enrollment of girls in post-secondary education reaches to 26 % whereas the enrollment for boys reaches 29 %.

Graph1:-

The comparison between the enrollment of girls and boys in primary and post-secondary education in Upper Egypt:-



Source: World Economic Forum (2013).

Egypt Human development report (2010) revealed that the enrollment rates increases significantly over the last 20 years still Egypt has not reached universal primary education. Accordingly, Survey of Young People in Egypt,(SYPE, 2009) data showed that female constitute 82 % of those never enrolled in school, and 80% reside in rural areas. The study showed that 57 % who have never been to school are in Upper Egypt. Whereas SYPE data indicated that there are 10% of those girls aged 6-18 have never been to school who are living

in rural areas. Further, SYPE data showed that 17% of both rural girls and boys on the ages 18-29 drops out of school before finishing basic education. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2007) indicated that Egypt is facing a crucial problem, especially for the enrollment rates for girls in Upper Egypt, which does not match with national average rates. The quality of education tends to be in decline, which represents a great problem facing Egypt in the current situation.

Although the rates disclose a positive indicator of girls' enrolment in schools, the USAID report sheds light on how the girls in Upper Egypt's small and rural hamlets have limited or even poor access to education. According to the World Bank (2011), the enrollment of girls deteriorates when the distance to school exceeds one kilometer. Parents also consider school as "a foreign institution" which introduces girls to some changes in cultural values which are not acceptable to their culture and traditions (Hartwell, 1995).

Parents are fearful to send their daughters to schools due to long distance as girls in rural areas are usually having more household responsibilities and childcare duties. Thus, UNICEF designed NFE education or in other words a community school project to assist girls in remote areas in Egypt. The Egyptian Ministry of Education collaborated with UNICEF to launch the community school initiative in Upper Egypt in 1992 as one of the ways to enhance the quality of education through real community participation (Zaalouk, 2004, p. 35). The Egyptian Ministry of Education played an essential role in maintaining the project by paying teacher salaries, providing supplies, participating in staff training and school supervision, and issuing students official primary school certificates at the end of fifth grade. The role of UNICEF included provisions for management, supervision, and evaluation. The community schools work upon ensuring quality of education for rural girls through three different districts, such: Assuit, Sohag, and Qena (Zaalouk, 2004). Further, it assists them to be more educated, capable, and empowered. The UNICEF model stimulated

other organizations such as CARE to implement community school projects. Multiple donors have supported community schools in Egypt in collaboration with Ministry of Education and also have collaborated with multiple international and local organizations to promote the education of girls. These organizations are the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) (USAID, 2007).

A. The purpose of the study

This research is discussing the role of Ishraq program as non-formal education and how it has promoted and assisted adolescent girls' education in Upper Egypt. According to Khaled El-Sayed, Program Manager at Ishraq in Cairo, "Ishraq is a program for out-of-school adolescent girls to improve their life opportunities and mainstream them back into formal program." Educating girls and women is an important step in overcoming poverty and illiteracy. In fact, Non- Formal Education (NFE) assisted many girls in overcoming many problems and live a better life. This research will explore how Ishraq, with the help of international organizations and NGOs assisted many adolescent girls to enroll in formal education and eradicate illiteracy. According to UNICEF, one of the top priorities is to empower every adolescent girl with skills that are needed to contribute in building a brighter future for their societies. According to Nahla Tawab- the Country Director of the Population Council's Egypt office, "what distinguishes Ishraq from other projects is that it is a comprehensive program that includes literacy, life skills, financial education and sports." Thus, the program does not only provide girls with knowledge and skills, but it builds their self-confidence and self-esteem. Therefore, the aim of the study is to investigate Ishraq's

program of non-formal education on raising basic education standards for adolescent girls in Upper Egypt.

1. **Research questions**

In my research, I will discuss these questions:-

- A. To what extent Ishraq program has succeeded in overcoming the barriers that are facing adolescent girls' education in Upper Egypt?
- B. How characteristics of NFE's programs contributed in overcoming the barriers that are facing girls' education in Upper Egypt?

2. **Hypotheses**

Following the discussion in the previous section, there are two main hypotheses for NFE in Upper Egypt:

H₁ Ishraq program has assisted in increasing and motivating adolescent girls to enroll in formal schooling under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

H₂ Characteristics of NFE's programs could defuse or respond to the barriers of the enrollments or illiteracy that face education of adolescent girls in Upper Egypt.

II. Literature review

1. What is Informal Education and Non-Formal Education

A. Informal Education

According to Zaki Dib (1988), the definition of informal education is the type of education that never corresponds to any organized and systematic view of education and also never considers the objectives and subjects usually included in traditional curricula. It was difficult to find the relation between non-formal education and informal education as there is something common between the two words which is “the informality” in receiving education. Whereas Guererro (2007), defined Informal education as “a lifelong process of learning by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences at home, at work, at play and from life itself.” Therefore, informal education never offers degrees or diplomas, so it is not considered a supplement for both formal nor for non-formal education. Informal education usually takes place in students’ houses, lectures in institutions, and visits to museums. The efficiency of informal learning seemingly depends greatly on key competencies, such as organizational and communicative abilities (Singh, 2010). Thus, the author perceived that there is no close relationship between informal education and non-formal education. For example, students’ visits to one of the museum is considered informal education; however, if this visit required a written report which includes an assessment by the teacher or tutor then it will fall either under formal education or non-formal education.

B. Non Formal Education

Non- formal education is defined as, “any organized, intentional, and clear effort to advance learning through non-school settings” (Taylor, 2006). Therefore, NFE has flexibility and gives learners suitable options, such as flexibility of timing of classes, hiring of teachers

based upon expertise, and attending of class is voluntary. Moreover La Belle (1984) defines NFE education as one of the ways that can take place out of school to provide specific learning experiences, which can take the form of agricultural, community development, consciousness raising, technical/vocational training, literacy, and basic education. The first definition of NFE education had been taken from Coombs and Ahmed since they reflected how this kind of education affects the daily life of people through obtaining knowledge, skills, attitudes, and also from daily experiences (La Belle, 1984). Whereas Taylor (2006) showed that NFE education is used by developing countries to serve specific shortage in formal education. Accordingly, some scholars reflected that NFE education was being used to face the failure of formal education in terms of its quality and goals which started in developing countries and then it had extended to developed countries (Kamil, 2007). According to Kamil (2007) NFE education has been seen as “one of the best forms of education and it is considered a subsystem of formal education.”

The classic definition of non- formal education (NFE) is formulated by Coombs and Ahmed. They define this type of education as “any organized activities outside the established formal system” (Coombs & et al, 1974). According to Singh (2010), there is a difference between formal and non- formal education since formal education usually takes place in schools or any academic places whereas NFE encompasses organized learning that takes place outside of school. Therefore, NFE was found highly effective in addressing insufficiencies of formal school in terms of retention and achievement rates, and flexibility and functionality (Pandey, 2005). Further, it assists those children who dropped out from schools and illiterate youths and adults. According to Shirur (2009), NFE is needed by all developing and developed countries for these reasons: its flexibility in meeting everyone’s needs, interests, and abilities, its ease to shift from learning to work and work to learning, its low costs, and it is life-oriented.

Non- formal education is one of the ways that is being used to attract those people who dropped out the schools under any kinds of circumstances. Therefore, NFE is more time focused, responsive to the needs, learner centered, less structured, and more flexible (Taylor, 2006). The greatest advantage of NFE is offering challenges that cannot be found in formal education. For instance, the flexibility of attending classes and variety of abilities and age among learners are important aspects. Furthermore, teachers are hired based upon their expertise and also they receive training. According to Brennan (1997), non- formal education plays a crucial role in developing a state and its benefit exceeds the formal education. Accordingly, formal education was defined as, “highly institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured education system,” typically found in public schools and higher education settings (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p.8). Therefore, there are three uses for introducing non- formal education as one of the methods that would assist in encouraging participants to register in formal schooling. First, the complementary method, which addresses the needs that are not conveniently met by the formal system. Second, the alternative method, which is used as one of the methods to recognize or change the structures and practices of local education. Whereas the third method is supplementary that is designed to address the needs of developing nations.

The process of learning in NFE is vitally important because it contributes to self-development, which is the crucial goal of all learning (Shirur, 2009). Although NFE is more flexible in terms of organization, schedule, and duration, it cannot be seen as an alternative education system nor a shortcut to rapid education, it is only “a second chance” to those who missed formal schooling (Pandey, 2005). Accordingly, some authors believe that Non- Formal education can be used as an alternative for formal schooling due to inefficiency related to this type of education; however, others think that there is nothing can replace formal schooling. According to Pandey (2005), there are several countries applying NFE

education which contributes to improving millions of lives around the world. For instance, Bangladesh applied NFE to address significant issues such as, education of children, adolescents, and adults with two objectives: 1) providing high quality of basic education with very low cost 2) providing basic education for illiterate adults, especially women with opportunities for developing reading and writing.

There are certain ways to make NFE education more successful: first change the attitude of people toward formal education as social value, change the recruitment system, change in the reward system which entails we should acquire people with skills not with certificates, and programs and activities should meet the needs of the society (Cabag, 1999). The difference between formal and NFE education is that NFE education assists in developing the social, emotional and mental aspects of person; on the contrary; the formal education which mainly can be measured upon the performance in the examination (Pandey, 2005).

Brazil was suffering from high illiteracy rates among its people; therefore, its government ran programs for youth and adult education which was called Youth and Adult Education (EJA). This program aimed to offer a “second chance” to those who had been unable to attend school at the proper age, which was afterward changed to be called “continuing lifelong education.” This program succeeded in reducing the problem of illiteracy. China adopted a policy to improve illiteracy level among its workers and farmers which aimed to enable neo-literates to survive and enhance their ability and employment. Moreover, it offers vocational/skills for adults to adapt to the needs of work and obtain job related skills and also provide compensatory education for adults who have never attended schools. Whereas NFE programs in Egypt have reflected the importance of combining work, learning, and local knowledge and its interventions have helped to improve the lives of working children in poor areas in Egypt (Singh, 2010). Shirur (2009) emphasized that NFE

succeeded in keeping the cost per unit very low for these reasons: First voluntary people from all sectors and also existing resources and the use of human material and institutional are available in the formal system. NFE has multiple advantages over the formal education since it is concerned with immediate and practical mission, it occurs outside schools, it is measured by the proof of knowledge not by certificates, it usually involves voluntary participation, less costly, and selection based upon verified ability rather than qualifications (Cabag, 1999).

Therefore, Non-formal education could take place in church or mosque or in any well-known institutions that people feel safe and comfortable while receiving education. These places offer adequate prices to specific people and deliver high quality of education. In sum, NFE education works as complementary and supplementary role to achieve Education for all (EFA) goals which encompass several countries, such as: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan (Pandey, 2005). All four authors (Pandy, Singh, Cabag, and Shirur) agreed that NFE education has more advantage over formal education in terms of its mission, period, cost, and its flexibility. Thus, the evaluation of these programs has shown improvements in the nutrition and health situation of children and their marginalized parents (Singh, 2010).

2. The relation between NFE education and community schools

Community schools are provided to the distant places that have no regular public schools and also suffer from chronic poverty. According to Hartwell (1995), community schools have been established around the world to address problems related to the education of girls in remote rural villages. Accordingly, these community schools are running under the supervision of the ministry of education and also other professional organizers to determine the schedule and all its associated costs. Teachers are being recruited based upon their expertise and their formal education from credited universities.

Teachers are usually young women recognized by their community as a role model. Community schools usually work upon establishing quality through innovative learning environment, which encompasses the use of children's writing and art in the classroom; active methods engaging children in group projects; and also the use of school councils. Several community schools are running through NGOs, whose role includes providing training materials, supervision, and management in collaboration with government agencies. On the other hand, community schools seek to put little burden on parents by offering financial aid to those parents who cannot afford to pay fees (Hartwell, 1995). Thus, there is a link between community schools and NFE in its flexibility of schedule, costs, and high quality, which confront with the system of formal education.

Taylor (2006) highlighted three tools that can be used to shape NFE education: setting, system, and process. The setting of NFE education is normally unofficial system; the system of NFE education is always varied in which it is often decentralized and unstructured; on the other hand, the process is more suitable as it could cope with changeable culture, and the objective of the program is achievable. NFE education had been introduced under the name of community schools to give alternative education for those people who dropped out schools under any kinds of circumstances. For example, Bangladesh adopted various new programs for school aged children under the name of NFE education and also numerous similar programs were launched in Africa and Asia, such as in the Philippines and Thailand (Taylor, 2006). The current community schools are working upon introducing more programs, such as youth development, health, and welfare that would assist in the problems or pressures that face illiterate people or people who dropped out of school (Dryfoos, 2005). Community schools have been applied to address problems related to the education of girls in remote rural villages, such as in Egypt, Baluchistan, and in northern Pakistan (Hartwell, 1995). According to Hartwell (1995), the first community school in Egypt was established in

1992 by UNICEF in collaboration with women's NGOs, local communities, and the government. Thus, community schools have demonstrated successful experiences across different countries, such as Pakistan, Guatemala, Egypt, Bangladesh, and Colombia, which have played a prominent role in advocating the education of girls in remote areas.

3. Defining Education for all (EFA) and its relation to NFE

The Jomtien Education for all (EFA) conference was held in 1990 with commitment to provide basic education for all children, youth, and adults. (UNESCO, 2011).EFA considers the education as fundamental in building knowledgeable society and essential for human development (UNESCO, 2011). Great achievements have been achieved by EFA in terms of access to pre-primary education across the countries. EFA is working toward building societies that are capable to achieve rights, empowerment and development. Accordingly, "EFA Agenda beyond 2015 should carefully consider the limited and inequitable opportunities on offer in many countries for post primary hence the need to place more attention on finding the best mix of academic and technical/vocational programs and on developing pathways through secondary education to higher education and/or the world of work." (UNESCO, 2011).

According to USAID (2002), poorest people, residents of remote areas and girls are facing problems in having access to schools or the lowest quality schools by state-funded education systems. Therefore, complementary models and approaches have been introduced to meet the challenges of those people who have no access to education or having a problem in enrolling in schools. For example, there is a well-known complementary model in Bangladesh which is called BRAC. This model has graduated 2.5million children from its rural schools over the past 18 years. A recent evaluation found out that the quality of education in Bangladesh and pupils' performance in complementary schools with BRAC was superior in comparison to government and private schools (Chowdhury, 2001). In Zambia

many of 2,000 community schools which target HIV/AIDS orphans, now serve 25,000 children. Whereas Egypt's community schools, started in 1992 in four villages in Assiut, which have spread to more than 1,000 schools and serves more than 25,000 children. These approaches were introduced to face constraints and achieve higher rates of access, completion, equity, and performance in formal education systems.

Table 1: Complementary Education models

Country/Area	Program	Services and Outcomes
Rural Colombia	Escuela Nueva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20,000 schools; 1 million pupils • high rates of completion and learning
Bangladesh	BRAC Nonformal Primary Education (NFPE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35,000 schools; 1 million pupils • high rates of completion and learning
Balochistan	Girls' Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,200 new schools; 84 percent net enrolment • number of girls going on to junior secondary schools tripled
Ghana	Schools for Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within 5 years, spread to 767 communities; 36,000 pupils • 95 percent complete the 9-month program; 80 percent go on to formal schools
Upper Egypt	Community Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • serves 200 communities • 70 percent girls; 90 percent completion rate
Ethiopia	Complementary Schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 350 sites; 30,000 pupils • high rates of access, completion, and achievement
Mali	Community Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,600 schools; 50,000 pupils • 50 percent completion to grade 6; performance equivalent to government schools
Uganda	COPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 centers; 5,000 pupils • 3-year program brings pupils to grade 5 equivalency
Malawi	Village-Based Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 schools; 11,300 pupils • good retention and learning
Honduras	Educadores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,800 interactive radio instruction (IRI) centers; 370,000 learners to grade 7 • 75 percent rate of success
Zambia	IRI Learning Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 centers; 30,000 using IRI for grades 1–5 • 10 percent dropout rate; learning achievement satisfactory

Source: Equip 2 (2004).

4. The link between EFA and NFE

EFA agenda is working on providing the best opportunities to improve the basic educational performance. Formal education has been subjected to many changes, such as community involvement, decentralization, and resourcing of education, formal and non-formal. Multiple non-formal education programs are run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often in collaboration with international funding agencies. Therefore, ministries of education are becoming interested in initiating and administrating non-formal education as

part of speeding of EFA goals (UNESCO, 2006). Meanwhile, NFE succeeded in offering temporary compensation for those who cannot make it to the schools in a short period. Therefore, the definition of NFE is associated with dropouts, failures, and marginal groups. “The Jomtien Conference of 1990 was a motivator but the realization of the need for action in response to the growing number of out-of-school children and youths was the real catalyst for action.” (Thompson, 2001).

There are number of out-of-school children who had no access to formal schooling or have dropped out due to academic and financial reasons. Therefore, there was a need for non-formal, alternative or complementary approaches which are outside the framework of the formal education system to provide access, and improve equality in educational opportunities. Significant developments have taken place in the non-formal education (NFE) and alternative approaches have been introduced as alternative to basic education. Therefore, NFE is characterized by its flexibility, utilization of diversity, transparency, open learning, and release the creativity of its potential learners which is referred to community schools or non- formal education. NFE plays a crucial role in achieving EFA goals due to its low cost mechanisms, increasing adult literacy, promotion skill development, and participation in income generating activities (UNESCO, 2005).

5. Types of Community Schools or non- formal education in Egypt

According to Zaalouk (2006), the community school or non- formal education in Egypt started in 1992 in Upper Egypt. The community school had been used as one of the ways to reform education in Egypt. This kind of initiative took place in collaboration with MOE, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the World Bank. The Ministry of Education plays a crucial role in providing school books and guides, providing children with a meal in school and also paying the salaries of teachers. On the other hand, the role of UNICEF encompassed monitoring

management in partnership with NGOs, providing training for teachers as well as providing all necessary equipment that is needed for the class. Diverse partnerships took part in running community schools in collaboration with MOE. For instance, National Center for Examinations and Education Evaluation (NCEEE) and the Center for Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development. The history for community schools dated back to the Jomtien Education for all (EFA) world conference in March 1990, which emphasized upon providing basic primary education.

In the meantime, many other forums called upon equal opportunity of education for all, such as World Summit for Children (WSC) in 1990 and the World Summit for Social development (WSSD) in 1995. Thus, the purpose of community schools is providing education to those girls who have been deprived from attending schools in three governorates in Upper Egypt, such as Assuit, Sohag, and Qena (Ministry of Education, 2003). According to Sabri (2007), the main priority of non- formal education is to decrease illiteracy especially in Upper Egypt among youth, women, and rural inhabitants and poor districts. Thus, this kind of education tried to follow the below steps to raise certain level of literacy in Upper Egypt:

1. Maintaining certain level of coordination and cooperation between state and non-state agencies.
2. Providing educational services close to the places where the learners are living to avoid increase of drop out or withdrawals from school.

Multiple initiatives took place to support and advocate the education of girls in Upper Egypt and therefore below are the categorization of community schools or in other words non- formal schools in Egypt.

A) One Classroom School (OCS)

They had started in 1993 after the community schools reflected successful impact on increasing number of enrollments of children in schools. The main goal of OCS is to combat some of the social and traditional obstacles that face girls' access to formal education. This type of school is targeting girls whose ages range from 8 to 14 years. Moreover, this type of school is based upon "one room" and multi-grading classrooms, where girls are encouraged to be creative and self-directed in their approach to learning. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has collaborated with Academy for Educational Development (AED) for launching LearnLink Egypt Education Project in 1997 (Miller, 2001). LearnLink began its work with different agencies, such as the Center for Curriculum and Instructional Development (CCIMD), a unit within the Egyptian Ministry of Education (MOE) to establish One Classroom Schools in the three governorates of Behaira, Beni-Suef, and Minya and other small schools (Miller, 2001). The One-Classroom Schools is based upon different grades levels and only girls are permitted to attend. Further, OCS give tests which are governmental test that guarantee to move from one level to more advanced grade level.

B) Girl- friendly schools

This type of school was established after the success of community schools and one classroom schools. The main goal of these schools was to eliminate the gender gap in basic education in specific areas in Upper Egypt and to ensure increased girls enrollment and initiation to lifelong learning. This type of program was implemented by National Council for Childhood and Motherhood in collaboration with seven regional NGOs and it was financed by UN group of agencies. The targeted areas were 7 governorates to include: Sohag, Assiut, Minya, BeniSuef, Giza, Fayoum, and Beheria. Girl-friendly schools launched in 2002, with the aim to decrease the enrolment gender gap in basic education of girls aged 6-13 in those mentioned seven governorates (Sabri, 2007). Girl-friendly schools started to increase its

phase in 2008, with the aim to cover completely the targeted areas by 2011, under the title of “no Egyptian girl will be out-of-school.” The project is being supported financially and technically by United Nations and by 2005 the project offered 440 schools in seven governorates with total enrollment of 11.319 students which 75% are girls (Sabri, 2007).

C) Ishraq: Bringing Marginalized Rural Girls into Safe Learning in Upper Egypt.

The purpose of the program is to improve the educational, health, and social opportunities for disadvantaged girls in rural Upper Egypt. The Ishraq program has five major project objectives:

1. Create safe public spaces for girls
2. Influence social norms concerning girls’ life opportunities empowerment, such as:
 - a) Reducing girls’ social isolation and vulnerability to gender-based violence;
 - b) Developing peer networks;
 - c) And participating in different activities as a group.
3. Emphasize girl-friendly spaces by providing technical and managerial capacities in youth centers, NGOs, and youth executives.
4. Promote accountability and credibility.
5. Encourage decision-making at the national level to adopt girl friendly policies.

6. ²Ministry of Education- the strategic plan (2014- 2030)

Despite the success of educational policies in avoiding dropouts, still the education system needs to be improved. Accordingly, the total number of dropouts at primary education between 2010/2011 reached to 28,841 students. The illiteracy rate in Egypt in August 2012 reached to 28% in the age group 15-35 totaling 17 million people with the observation that two-thirds of the numbers are female illiterates. Therefore, the percentage of illiteracy among males reached to 22% and 37% among females, and about 64% of the illiterate in rural areas. The increasing rates of illiteracy in rural areas due to poverty as well as social and culture constraints.

Accordingly, number of community schools had been developed to serve disadvantaged areas and provide “A second chance” to non-enrolled students in primary schools across the governorates. These types of schools have advantages over other schools that they provide suitable opportunities for girls, low density, in addition to providing some kind of benefits for pupils and their families, which represents an appropriate solution for solving the problem of dropping outs from schools. The first community school was established by UNICEF in 1992 to include 417 schools, comprising 4249 boys and 7169 girls. Then One Classroom School included 3162 schools, encompassing 6356 boys and 54914 girls and also Girl Friendly Schools included 945 schools, encompassing 4041 students and 19162 girls.

Therefore, the Ministry of Education has applied these various strategies to address the dropouts from schools:

- Increasing the awareness in rural areas in regards to the importance of education, especially for girls.

² <http://portal.moe.gov.eg/ABOUTMINISTRY/Pages/plan2014.aspx>

- Addressing the economic and social conditions that hinder families from sending their children as well as security factors that resulted in refusing to send their children to schools, especially girls.
- Resolving the increasing gap between urban and rural areas in terms of education, which has a serious reflection in increasing rates of illiteracy.

7. The review of international and non-governmental organizations programs in supporting non-formal education/community schools

Several international organizations and NGOs have played a crucial role in supporting community schools around the world. For instance, in the Zambia, the first community school was established in 1992(USAID, 2008). The main goal of community schools in Zambia is to assist those pupils who were not able to access government schools as a result of long distance, fees, and age restrictions. Multiple public schools faced with failure regarding services that should be provided by the government which included in supplying textbooks, infrastructure, and training teachers. Therefore, the role of NGOs is very essential as it plays a crucial role in supporting government to supply the needed service, to make up the shortfall (Grandvaux, Yoder, 2002).Community schools in Zambia used a specific curriculum called skills, Participation, Access to Relevant Knowledge (SPARK) that includes basic and practical skills that contributes to enhancing the skills of students (USAID, 2008). In Zambia, the sole organization Zambia Community Schools Secretariat (ZCSS) that was used for advocacy, coordination, material support, and facilitation to community schools which collapsed and this made it difficult to respond to the increasing number of students (USAID, 2008).

USAID supported community schools when ZCSS's collapsed through three projects in collaboration with MOE which are 1) the Community Health and Nutrition, Gender and Education Support Program (CHANGES2), 2) the Educational Quality Improvement Project

2 (EQUIP2) and 3) the Quality Education Services through Technology (QUESTT) (USAID, 2008). The aim of the three projects that initiated in Zambia by USAID is supporting community schools to build its capacity building and also improving the quality of teaching and learning. According to Grandvaux & Yoder (2002) cost of applying to community schools are less than public schools. However, the cost of running community schools is very high to be covered by government. Accordingly, costs that are related to running community schools are usually covered by communities and Non-governmental organization, which is considered important step to the overall success of community school programs. Community schools in Kenya initiated between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s to assist those children in slums areas who dropped out from the schools as a result of increasing costs of government schools (UNESCO, 2004). Most community schools are housed in temporary structures in the slum areas of Nairobi; therefore, NGOs played an essential role in enhancing the structure conditions of many buildings.

Various community schools across Kenya suffer from bad conditions since most of the classes have buildings which are made from iron sheets and most of the furniture and equipment are in very bad conditions which affect badly on the learners. Hence, various international organization and NGOs assisted in providing with the necessary facilities to put up with the bad conditions of community schools in Kenya (UNESCO, 2004). Many public schools faced with failure regarding services that should be provided by the government which included in supplying textbooks, infrastructure, and training teachers. Therefore, the role of NGOs and international organizations is essential as they are assisting in supporting government to supply the needed service, to make up the shortfall (Grandvaux, Yoder, 2002).

8. Successful stories of selected countries applied Non-Formal Education

This literature search on success stories on non-formal education programs in some selected countries. The idea of NFE education has been introduced in India in the early seventies under the collaboration of UNESCO seminar, but it has been accepted thirty years after the seminar (Lukose, 2010). The ministry of education in India described NFE education as one of the ways that should be provided only to meet the educational needs of children who dropped out of the schools to assist them in improving their work, earning, health, and family life. Many countries have applied NFE education as one of the ways to assist those people who dropped out of school. For instance, in Sri Lanka, the government and other agencies are conducting non formal education for rural and community development. In China, it was decided to conduct non formal education for its flexibility. According to Singh (2009), there were three types of NFE education in rural areas: first give skilled people in China access to computer where they can use it in their work. The second is training will be for short periods; however, education will be for long periods. The third model is non-school information distribution activities, which can be included in use of T. V., radio, books, and magazines.

Five countries applied non formal education as one of the ways to improve the education level especially for women and girls, such as India, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, and Thailand (Pennells, 1998). Pennells argued that NFE education in the five suggested countries have successfully applied it as a result of these reasons: status, good management, and available resources. Tanzania had adopted a very successful NFE education program, which represented in adult education centers, teacher-training programs by applying mass media. They used popular textiles to print their literacy themes and also local dancing groups and jazz bands to promote the movement through music. According to Lukose (2010), there was a national willingness to get rid of illiteracy. In Japan, they used social education as one

of the ways to apply NFE education which encompasses of physical education and exercise mainly for youths and adults. According to Pennells (1998), NFE education has been proven successful in Nepal; on the contrary, in India since less than 0.5% of rural girls aged 10-19 take part in NFE or adult education, and also surveys indicated that no more than two/ four women per thousand participate. Therefore, India tried to adopt updated and creative approaches to develop its non-formal education, for example residential condensed education programs which designed to create self-assured women teachers and Operation Blackboard which launched in 1987 to encourage selection of a second teacher in single-teacher schools (Mbunda, 1977). The NFE education in Nepal has motivated girls to improve their village life and have self-esteem. The Philippine government called for sticking to Education for All (EFA) campaign to eradicate illiteracy and promote functional literacy for all people. Accordingly, the Office of the President of the Republic of the Philippines renamed the Department of Education, DepEd's Bureau of Non formal Education to the Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS). The Philippine government in 2004 decided to "transform all non-formal and informal education to Alternative Learning System (ALS) to yield more EFA benefits which can lead to increasing functional literacy among the marginalized groups of learners (Guererro, 2007).

Afghanistan and non-formal education

In Afghanistan the word non- formal education is synonymous word to "functional literacy." The functional literacy related to life skills and livelihood activities. Life skills referred to the skills and knowledge that are related to health improvement and hygiene, literacy, tolerance, and child development. Further, training was given in specific areas, such as carpentry, plumbing, agriculture, animal husbandry, handicrafts, and tailoring. Similar programs of non- formal education have been established in the form of community-based, home-based, and accelerated learning programs for youth and "complementary" programs for

adults (Deyo, 2007). Accordingly, accelerated learning programs offered by national and international NGOs, cover the primary school curriculum. Therefore, a student in a shorter time would complete primary school in the formal schools, which thus assisting an over-age child or youth to “catch up” to his or her grade level and allow the transition to the formal school.

How the Non- Formal Education is being governed in Afghanistan:

According to Article 43 of Afghanistan’s constitution, “Education is the right of all Afghan citizens and it is provided free of charge by the state covering up to the level of Bachelor’s Degree” (Ministry of Education, 2004:1). Article 44 sheds light on the needs of women by working on developing and implementing programs that respond to eliminating illiteracy. The Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) provides the framework for policy development and allocation of resources and programs. The Afghan National Development Strategy “lays out the Government’s vision and investment priorities for meeting its commitments in the Afghan Compact and Afghanistan’s Millennium Development Goals” (Ministry of Finance, 2006, p. 4).

The Afghan compact included three critical pillars: 1) security 2) governance rule of law and human rights 3) economic and social development. Therefore, under the pillar of economic and social development, had set “goals, outcomes, benchmarks, and timeframes” in six priority sectors: infrastructure and natural resources; education, cultural, media and sport; health and nutrition; agriculture and rural development; social protection; and enabling private sector development. Afghanistan is trying to achieve the Millennium Development Goal; therefore, Afghanistan is trying to ensure that every boys and girl will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling to be consistent with achieving the universal primary education by 2020. Accordingly, Afghanistan’s target for the MDG concerning

gender equality and the empowerment of women is the elimination of “gender disparity in all levels of education no later than 2020.” They are trying to measure this by following the ratio of literate females to males (15-24-years old).

Official bodies in Charge of Supervision NFE in Afghanistan

The Non- Formal Education is running under the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs, and Disabled oversee large-scale this type of education. The Ministry of Education has two branches supervised by the Deputy Minister who is responsible for the formal education (primary and secondary) and the literacy department. Therefore, the branch of the formal education is working directly with the donors and non- governmental organizations. Whereas the literacy department is responsible for providing guidance and overseeing the NGOs adult literacy initiatives. Moreover, the Literacy Department is also responsible for vocational education and complementary schooling, which prepare students for formal schooling.” (KRI International Corp, 2007: I-2).

Main Sources of Funding in Afghanistan

The government makes its own funding from two sources: first, internal funding which is channeled through the government and external budget which is channeled from donors. Moreover, the funding for ministries comes from operating budget and the national development budget whereas operating budget covers the costs of salaries, maintenance, and operations. Accordingly, the Literacy Department of the Ministry of Education received the funds from the operating budget.

Table 2: The non- formal education in Afghanistan and its funding from the following international organizations and bilateral agencies:

Functional/Adult Literacy Education	UNESCO, JICA, USAID, UNICEF, World Food Program
Life Skills	UNESCO, JICA, CIDA, DfID, Denmark, EC, World Bank/IDA, Norway, USAID, ADB
Technical and Vocational Education	GTZ, India, DFID, JICA, Canada, UNESCO, EC, Korea, Ireland, UNICEF, World Food Program, USAID
Agriculture and Alternative Livelihoods	DfID, USAID, JICA, EU, FAO, ADB
Equivalency Education (age 15+ only)	No donor identified in research for this document. Funding from Government of Afghanistan operating budget.

How the Non- formal education is being evaluated in Afghanistan

There are several ministries responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Afghan National Development Strategy. Therefore, each ministry is using the National Skills Development and Market Linkages Program as one of the ways to evaluate adult literacy classes which are provided by the Literacy Department of the Ministry of Education. Testing under NFE is decentralized which every facilitator prepares her or his own exam, and then supervisors support the facilitators in the development of the exams. The policies of NFE programs are being overviewed under the supervision of the Ministry of Education; Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation & Development; the Ministry of Labor, Martyrs, Social Affairs, and the Disabled; the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Counternarcotic; and the

Ministry of Public Health. The programs areas that are covered are as follows: equivalency education; functional literacy education; functional literacy and livelihoods education; technical and vocational education; agriculture and alternative livelihoods; life skills and civil society building. Thus, the ministries work on providing guidance, financial resources, and oversight to the NFE activities through monitoring NGOs and UN agencies. This type of education has contributed to increasing the number of students who are registered in formal schooling.

Nigeria and non- formal education

Nigeria adopted formal and Non-formal education to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which is providing basic education to its citizens. Therefore, to test the effectiveness of non- formal education, the study examines the efficiency of this education on a life skills achievement test. The test examined a sample of 876 learners and the competency level in life-skills was below the national benchmark (50%). The study found out that the rural learners were more competent than urban dwellers and young learners were more competent than old learners. Accordingly, the main purpose of adopting non- formal education is eradicating illiteracy by 2015. Nigeria defines the non- formal education as “a second chance education targeting children, youths and adults who have either dropped out of school before achieving permanent literacy or have never been to school due to a number of factors.” These factors are classified as the following :1) poverty and early marriage for girls in the northern part of Nigeria 2) and drop out of schools by boys in some parts of the Eastern States in order to engage in economic activities (Adewale, 2006).

The main purpose of non-formal education is to provide opportunities to disadvantaged children, youth and adults to catch up on basic education and mainstream into the formal system. Non-formal education in Nigeria is faced with different obstacles, such as

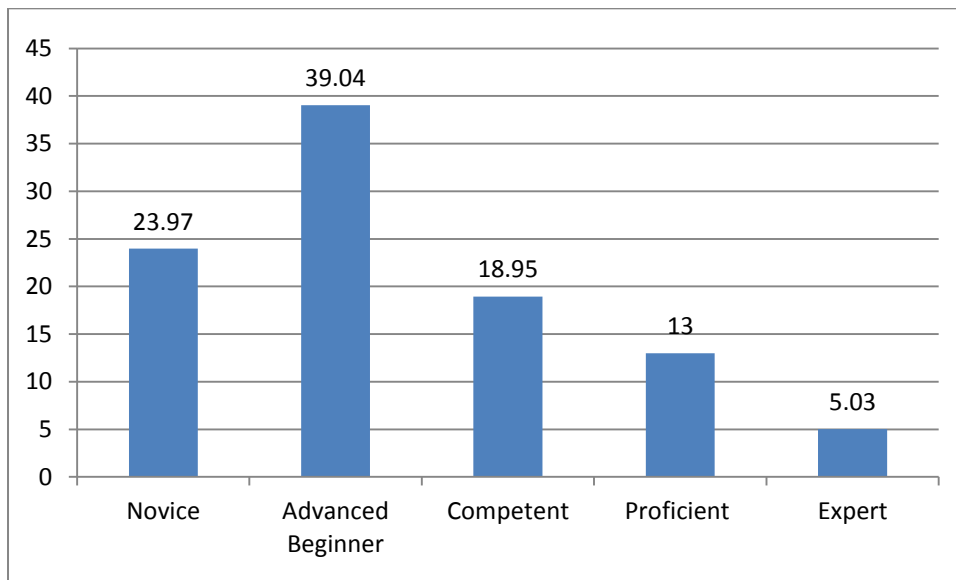
ineffective mobilization and coordination, lack of a reliable and current database on learner achievement, poor funding, shortage of materials and inadequate logistic support for monitoring of non-formal program (Adewale, 2006).

According to WHO (1993), life skills are the abilities and positive behaviors that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The common examples of life skills are self-management skills, decision-making and critical thinking skills, and communication skills. Whereas, the life-skills can be defined as “educations that develops knowledge and skills related to social and health issues e.g. social 1) studies, 2) health and hygiene, 3) general knowledge, 4) and science and technology”(Adewale,2009). Therefore, the life skills test was designed to assess learners’ basic competencies in these four components.

Table 3: Level and type of competency level of the NFE learners in Nigeria

Level of competency	Type of competency	Number and percentage of NFE learners	
		N	%
Less than 25%	Novice	210	23.97
25%°–49%	Advanced Beginner	342	39.04
50%	Competent	166	18.95
51%–75%	Proficient	114	13.0
76%–100%	Expert	44	5.03
Total		876	100

Table 4: competency of NFE learners in Nigeria after attending the program



Source: Adewale, J. (April 2009). Effectiveness of non-formal education programs in Nigeria: How competent are the learners in life skills? *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 49(1), 1-19.

The above schedule and the graph reflected the level and type of competency level of the NFE learners. Therefore, many of the learners were novice and the majority of them graduated from being novices to advanced beginners. Whereas, half of the learners were either novices or advanced beginners and very few of them were proficient or expert.

Non formal education contributed in advancing beginners level, but it does not reach to the experts. These deficiencies were as a result of using English language as one of the ways in instruction. The result on sex analysis is not conclusive about which of the sexes is better and there was no significant difference was found between males and females. However, under the group performance, boys were better, and under individual performance, girls were better. Moreover, the analysis indicated that learners in rural areas performed better than learners in urban areas. Learners in urban areas are involved in some commercial activities which allow less time to be devoted to their work. Finally, younger learners can

easily perform very well than older learners and the research found out that non- formal education contributed to some extent to improve the level of the illiteracy to the learners.

Kenya and Non – Formal Education

Definition of categories of schools in Kenya

In Kenya, there are two types of schools that that are recognized as public or government and private schools. In recent years, the non-formal centers were established which take the form of community schools. Kenya defined non- formal education as a type of education that offers education to out-of-school children and youth who for various reasons have no access to the formal education system. Whereas it defines community schools as schools established by the communities financed and administered by the communities themselves. Some community schools are funded by outside sponsors such as churches and other NGOs. Communities are also responsible for paying teachers' salaries, teaching learning materials and other recurrent costs (Onsomu & et al, 2004).

Kenya is committed to achieve Education for All (EFA) goals for all the school going age population by 2015. Accordingly, the main goals included improving access and quality to all level of education. Therefore, Kenya sought implementing community school as one of the ways to improve education system to assist out-of-school children and youth who for various reasons in enrolling in formal schooling.

Official bodies in Charge of Supervision NFE in Kenya

Community schools in Kenya are running under the supervision of community leaders, parents and in some cases NGOs. However, at the beginning stage the community schools are organized through the community-based organizations, which own the land on which the schools are built. These schools are sometimes used as a rehabilitation centers for vulnerable groups. The range of the ages that this type of education is provided is ranging from 8-years-old to 20 years and over. Most of the community school in Kenya started between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s as a result of increasing number of children in the slums areas of Nairobi and high costs of tuitions in government schools (Onsomu & et al, 2004). Community schools are registered as community-based organizations, and rehabilitation centers under the Department for Adult Education and the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. Very few of community schools are registered with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). The community schools that are registered with the MoEST are generally benefited from the supervisory services of this ministry which provides them with a few Teachers' Advisory Centre (TSC) teachers who are paid by the government.

Community schools in Kenya are not being recognized as formal schools, yet students have to sit for the national examination organized by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology which allows learners from community primary schools to register through the nearest public government schools. Further, the graduates from community schools, who successfully pass the national examination, can be admitted into government secondary schools. Most of the community schools are accommodated in temporary structures in the slum areas with the exceptions to some of the schools who are getting donations made by NGOs.

Bangladesh and Non-Formal Education

After Bangladesh achieved its independence in 1971, its education system faced a little progress toward the universalization of primary education which resulted in raising the illiteracy rate. Therefore, Bangladesh applied the obligatory system of primary education in 1993 all over the country. Schools in Bangladesh are divided into formal education and non-formal education. The formal education takes the form of government schools and private schools whereas the Non-Formal Education is run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The non-formal education program of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) is the largest one, which covers more than 1.1 million children (Chowdhury et al. 1996; BRAC 1995). Many international organizations played a crucial role in protecting children against drop out as a result of poverty, such as Food for Education (FFE) program. Moreover, NGOs are also working on increasing the enrollment of children in school to meet with the goal set by World Conference of Education for All. The program that is being used under non-formal education is BRAC which is prepared for children of 8-10 years old. The target children of this program are children from poor families and who have never been to school or dropped out from formal education (Sabur, 2007).

BRAC's education program that is being used as non-formal education in Bangladesh has many advantages. Class size is only 33, parent-teacher meetings are held regularly, school hours are set with the advice of the parents, a decentralized management and supervision of school is regular. On the contrary, the formal education, in formal schools, the class size is almost double, parent-teacher meetings are rarely held, and management and supervision of school is very weak. Accordingly, some recent studies reflected that non-formal education in Bangladesh contributed in increasing the pupils' enrollment, especially in primary education. Accordingly, the non-formal education achieved high percentage in terms of enrollment of children in BRAC School; on the contrary, the formal education failed in

achieving the minimum criteria of enrollment of children in the basic education. The main curriculum of BRAC focused upon developing four skills: 1) life skills 2) reading skills 3) writing skills 4) and numeracy skills. Formal education and BRAC program achieved the same level of efficiency in terms of reading and numeracy which reflected the equal strength in both educational systems. However, in life skills and writing skills the BRAC children were significantly more skilled than in the formal system.

Thus, this study has shown that non- formal education has succeeded in several countries over the formal education in controlling the management and supervision, community participation, pupils' attendance, and teachers quality and classroom culture. The four cases that were addressed in this literature review attempted to achieve non- formal education in a way that serves its objective in each country. For instance, in Afghanistan, the purpose of applying non- formal education is to acquire knowledge related to life skills and livelihood activities. In Nigeria, the non- formal education was provided to meet with MDGs in providing basic education to its citizens. In Kenya, the non- formal education is offered to out- of –school children and youth. Whereas the non- formal education in Bangladesh is addressing the raising of illiteracy rate among its citizens.

I. Methodology

The methodology that has been adopted in this qualitative study includes interviews with a program manager and country director at Ishraq program in Cairo. For this research I gathered the primary data from the interviews and the secondary data or desk research from literature reviews, and data available online. I also reviewed secondary data/literatures of International organizations' documents, such as Curricula and statistics to understand the profile of NFE education and Ishraq program in Egypt. The types of questions that were introduced in the form of interviews with people who are running the program of Ishraq in order to get more information about the program.

II. Data Analysis

In this section, there will be deep analysis about the Ishraq program and how it is a successful program in addressing the issues that face adolescent girls in Upper Egypt. Additional analysis of some interviews will be introduced through this research. I will review Ishraq program as there is no sufficient information regarding the other programs and also no access to valid and updated website for Girl Friendly Schools and One Classroom School. Tawab, Country Director of the Population Council at Egypt office made a little comparison between the three programs: 1) Ishraq 2) Girl Friendly Schools 3) One Classroom School.

a. Ishraq - It targets girls, boys, families, and communities. The program is offering a comprehensive package of learning, skills development, and sports for girls

b. Girl Friendly Schools - targets girls only, school has flexible hours, same curriculum as MOE.

c. One Classroom School - same as above as Girl Friendly school.

Kahled El-Sayed, Ishraq Program Manager has also made a distinction between three programs, firstly, he considers Ishraq- a two year program for out of school girls in the age between 12-15 by using Ishraq curriculum; however, he mentions that he has insufficient information about Girl Friendly Schools and One Classroom School

Ishraq program referred in its updated article in 2013 that Egypt is having great progress toward improvements of school enrollment over the past decades. Nonetheless, adolescent girls in Upper Egypt are facing low enrollment or dropping out the schools after one or two years. Studies showed that girls who have never enrolled or who have dropped out of school are at higher risk for early marriage, early pregnancy, poor health outcomes, and poverty. Thus, Ishraq program is shedding the light on adolescence girls as they represent a critical transition point for out of school girls.

1. What is Ishraq program?

Ishraq is an Arabic name for “Sunrise,” the program targets 12 to 15 year-old out of school girls, which was launched in 2001 by Population Council in collaboration with CEDPA, Save the Children, Caritas, and local non-governmental organizations. According to Nahla Tawab, Country Director of the Population Council in Egypt, the initial phase international NGOs conceptualized the program, developed training curricula and were heavily involved in program implementation and evaluation. In the scaling-up phase, role of international NGOs was reduced to building capacity of local NGOs and Ministry of Youth officials while providing them with technical assistance to implement Ishraq while funds were provided by international organizations. In the next phase, the program has a plan to help local NGOs and Community Development Associations implement Ishraq using local resources. Accordingly, Khaled El-Sayed, Ishraq Program Manager, referred to the role of NGOs as they are in charge of implementation at the grass root level and their names are as

follows: Friends of Environment and Development Association (FEDA) and ROAA NGOs in Qena, Woman Association for Health Improvement (WAHI) and HADEYA and WAHI NGOs in Sohag, FED and El-Shabat El-Muslimat NGOs in Fayoum. The program is running in collaboration with partnerships between international NGOs, government institutions, and local NGOs.

2. The purpose of the program: Vision and mission.

The main mission of the program is: Providing safe spaces for out of school girls to learn, grow, and play

Vision: No girls are left behind; all girls should be in school.

The program combined traditional tested program elements (literacy, life skills, and nutrition) with more innovative ones (sports and financial education). Classes were held in youth centers, traditionally male-only spaces. However, the program targets both boys and girls, yet the focus of the program is targeting out of school adolescent girls. Accordingly, Ishraq curriculum for girls includes; literacy and numeracy, life skills, financial education and sports. Whereas the boys' curriculum includes a life skills curriculum and it assists them in creating an enabling environment in their communities. According to Tawab, major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are going to face Ishraq in the short run and in the long run are as follows:

- 1. Strengths: Comprehensive program.**
- 2. Weaknesses: Might be too long for some girls to enroll for two full years.**
- 3. Opportunities: Scaling up Ishraq to a national level.**

4. Threats: Community norms hinder mainstreaming of Ishraq girls into formal schooling

Therefore, El-Sayed, Program Manager of Ishraq, mentioned that the weaknesses points referred to by Tawab in the above sentences cannot be solved and this issue will affect the quality of the graduate in the long run. In response to Tawab's feedback about the challenges, Elsayed said that his program started to train a cadre from the Ministry of Youth on how to replicate Ishraq on their own. Accordingly, in facing the threats, Elsayed mentioned that community norms were addressed by a massive awareness program for community residents.

3. The key donors of Ishraq and the role of management and supervision :

Ishraq has been funded by several donors including Dutch Embassy, Department for International Development (DFID), and Exxon Mobil. However, the Dutch Embassy is the main donor for Ishraq in the current scale up phase and their role is limited to funding. According to El Sayed, the most difficult part of Ishraq is managing the partnership issue as the program is a partnership between government entities, international and local NGOs and local communities. Thus, the issue is providing available opportunities and venues for each partner to accommodate their inputs, play their role and orchestrate among the different partners. The program was funded by the Netherlands Embassy the first level of management was provided by three project officers, one based in each governorate.

Project officers supervised NGOs and provided them with technical assistance and facilitative supervision. The above Project officers met in Cairo once a month to report on their achievements, results and challenges to the project manager. The latter that was based in Cairo, provided feedback and made periodic visits to the field. The project manager reported to Country director who provided overall guidance to the program and liaised with high level government officials and donors. For national scale-up, the project coordinated efforts with

the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and partnered with the Ministry of Youth (MOY) in building the capacity of cadres from the Ministry, NGOs, and youth centers. In the post-training, they have replicated and provided technical assistance to 50 new Ishraq classes, four of which were pilots in non-Ishraq villages.

4. Details of Ishraq program

According to Ishraq report 2013, there was extensive research done by the Population Council (1997&2010) that had said that “adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable.” Despite national gains in school enrolment, health, and economic development, adolescent girls face critical gender gaps in schooling. A 2010 index by the World Economic Forum, Egypt ranked 125 out of 130 countries in increasing magnitude of gender-based disparities measured in four key areas 1)educational attainment 2)economic participation and opportunity,3) health and survival, and 4)political empowerment” (Roudi-Fahimi, El Feki, and Tsai, 2011). Girls in Upper Egypt are facing problems in terms of 1) restrictive socio-cultural norms, 2) limited mobility leading to social isolation, 3) a lack of peer networks, 4) and fewer opportunities to fully participate in public spaces.

Chosen area: According to the Human Development Index (UNDP and INPE 2010) those four problems that face adolescent girls in Upper Egypt are widespread in the five lowest-ranked governorates (Fayoum, Menya, Assiut, Qena, and Souhag).

Curriculum: Ishraq is focused on three main components 1) literacy, 2) life skills, 3) and sports. Therefore, the program is using Caritas which is based upon exchanging discussions between teachers and girls and also includes Arabic grammar and vocabulary as well as basic mathematics. Besides, CEDPA’s New Horizons life skills curricula, which focuses upon building communication, negotiation, decision-making, health, hygiene, and nutrition.

Moreover, there is a sports component by learning the basic elements of physical fitness through traditional games.

Key Partners: Ishraq program worked very closely with local NGOs, the Egyptian Ministry of Youth (MoY), the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), and the former Ministry of Family and Population (MOFP). Moreover, the program worked with local entities at the governorate and village levels which include a youth center. The main responsibility of the local NGOs is 1) implementing, 2) coordinating, 3) and managing Ishraq program activities. Whereas the responsibility of the youth centers was to provide a “safe space” for girls, which included community activities, helping issue birth certificates and identification cards for girls and assisting in facilitating girls’ entry into formal schools once they passed the General Authority for Literacy and Adult Education (GALAE) government literacy exam.

Eligibility Criteria:

The ‘First-come, first served’ basis is one of the methods that were being used to select the eligible girls. Then, an orientation was conveyed for girls’ parents, which was held before the start of the program, and two groups of 30 girls each were formed in each village. This project was targeting girls at early adolescence as at this stage girls could still enroll in into formal schooling and avoid early marriage. The upper limit age to enroll is 15 and the lower limit age is 12 to give them the time to complete the program and sit for the exam (GALAE). They can then be enrolled in the formal schooling. This age was selected to differentiate between other literacy programs that set the age between 6 to 11.

Ishraq's progress

The program has gone through four phases since the launch of the program in 2001 1) pilot phase, 2) expansion, 3) scale-up, 4) and the graduates phase.

1) The pilot phase (2001-2003):

The duration of the program was in the beginning for 30 months (equivalent to two years and half) then the period has been shortened to be for 20 months (1year and half). Classes were held in a very flexible environment where it matched with the other responsibilities that students had. Classes normally took place at youth centers in the morning for four hours for four days a week.

2) Second phase: the Expansion Phase (2004-2007)

The program has expanded into additional five villages in Minya and additional five villages in Beni-Suef. Further, the duration has shortened from 30 to 24 months and then 20 months in order to give girls time to sit for GALAE exam which qualifies them to enter the formal schools, obtain their birth certificates, and register for school. Accordingly, the Ishraq program worked on adding more components into its program besides literacy, such as life skills and sports which increased the enrollment of girls into the program.

3) Third phase: Scale-up Phase (2008-2013)

According to Ishraq's updated article (2013), the scaling-up phase was implemented by the Population Council in collaboration with Caritas, Teaming for Development, Egyptian Food Bank, and six local NGOs in Fayoum, Souhag, and Qena. Ishraq expanded to 30 villages in an effort toward making it official program at the national level. The purpose of the scale-up was 1) fostering safe spaces for girls, 2) creating technical and managerial

capacity of youth centers, local NGOs, and youth directorates, 3) replicating the program for rural girls, 4) stimulating accountability standards at the national level.

The financial education and nutrition were the two additional programs that were added to the curriculum. The program adapted Microfinance Opportunities' generic curriculum focusing on budgeting and savings. The nutrition component was added as an incentive for girls and their families to enroll and attend classes regularly. Ishraq program comprised of village committee, governorate, and national levels to promote continuous support to the program. The village committee made up of parents, religious leaders and other influential people whose tasks were concerned with raising awareness of the importance of education toward girls and assisting girls in taking part in local village services, such as health, social and economic services(banking, post office, school.. etc). The governorate committee made up of undersecretaries from different ministries met every three months to provide support to Ishraq program (e.g birth certificates, medical check-ups). Meantime, at the national level the Ministry of Youth and the ex- Ministry of Family and Population signed "memos of understanding" to align Ishraq activities with the existing girls' education programs as a step toward sustainability.

Table 5: Participant Literacy Outcomes (Scale-up Phase-2008-2013)

Participant Literacy Outcomes (Scale-up phase- 2008-2013)	
Number of girls who enrolled in Ishraq	2.119
Number of girls who regularly attended Ishraq classes until completion	1.815
Number of girls who sat for the AEA exam for literacy	1.645
Number of girls who passed the AEA exam	1.443
Number of girls who entered school	754
Number of girls who dropped put to get married	41

Source: The Ishraq Final Report (2013)

4) Fourth phase: the Ishraq graduates phase (2011-2013).

Girls who graduated from Ishraq program faced three obstacles to enter formal schooling, such as financial, academic, and social obstacles. Therefore, the population council in collaboration with Nahdet Misr Foundation, a local NGO, and some of the former promoters established clubs for graduate girls to assist them financially by providing private tutoring to assist their transition to formal schooling in two villages in Menya and four villages in BeniSuef. Since the launch of Ishraq in 2001, the numbers of the graduates have been consistently rising; therefore, Ishraq worked on developing its capacity by introducing legal rights training to help graduates to obtain an official identification card and give value to their citizenship. Besides, providing some business skills training and encouraging graduates to open individual savings accounts

Recent Ishraq's achievements

The Ishraq program worked on three significant changes in the following levels: 1) individual, 2) community, 3) and institutional. Accordingly, the programs succeeded in reaching 3,321 girls and 1,775 boys in 54 villages across five governorates. Further, Ishraq achieved significant progress in preparing girls to pass the Adult Education Agency (AEA) which qualified girls to enter or re-enter formal schools. Many girls had improved in writing, reading, comprehension, and multiplication through this program in comparison to other girls who are not participants. As a result, 88 percent of Ishraq participants could write their sister's name vs. 36 percent of non-participants. At the individual level, Ishraq was capable to improve girls' literacy, develop life skills and increase self-confidence which contributed positively to girls' character and gained social support. On the other hand, at the community level, the Ishraq worked closely with parents through home visits to change traditional gender

norms. It also created safe environment where girls were capable to learn, play, and socialize.

Several parents demonstrated their support toward holding the youth center as a place for Ishraq girls to gather. Moreover, the education of girls contributed in assisting their family members in reading street names, signs, and doctor's prescription. Therefore, parents show successful progress in educating their girls, which encouraged other parents to send their girls to Ishraq. Whereas, at the institutional level, active engagement of governors on the governorate committee are crucial to efficient implementation and support from other governorate and district-level agencies. Therefore, Ishraq succeeded in encouraging many girls to enter formal schooling due to the involvement of local communities (parents and other community leaders) which is the key toward effective implementation and sustainability of the program. Moreover, the program succeeded setting flexible hours and schedule to avoid high absenteeism and drop-outs. Accordingly, program staff developed a seasonal calendar in order to adjust it for seasonal absences which resulted in increasing attendance by 80 to 90 percent during the scale-up phase.

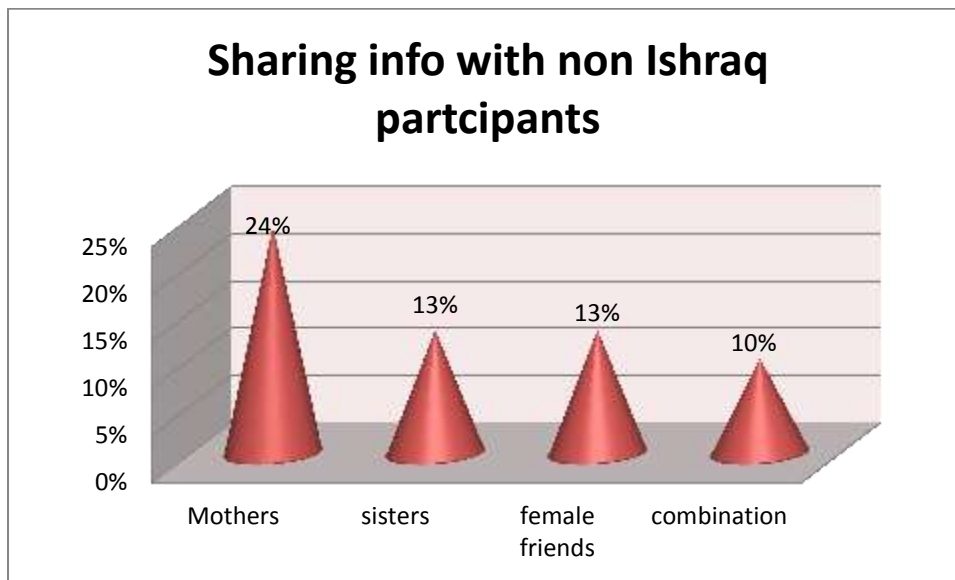
³Outcomes of Ishraq program on adolescent girls

On the whole, the Ishraq program is found to have positive impacts on girls' outcomes (ElBadawy, 2013). Both Tawab and El Sayed, believe that "the key to getting more Egyptian girls into the education system is to create a more encouraging atmosphere for them to go to school." There were larger impacts on the following outcomes: Literacy skills, future plans to get higher education, reducing the gender gap in terms of education, and participation in decision-making. Ishraq also succeeded in enhancing specific skills to girls, such as financial literacy skills, general life skills, and providing reproductive health knowledge. First, Ishraq effects could potentially have an impact to nonparticipants in Ishraq villages through contact

³ The analysis and results presented in the paper have been shared from ERF 19th annual conference by Asmaa Elbadawy (March, 2013).

of Ishraq girls with other girls. According to ElBadawy (2013), the data that have been collected reflected the following, 60% percent of Ishraq girls shared information they learned with others in the villages. Information was primarily shared with mothers (24%), sisters (13%) and (female) friends (13%). Another 10% of these girls shared information with the combination of mother, sisters and friends.

Graph 2



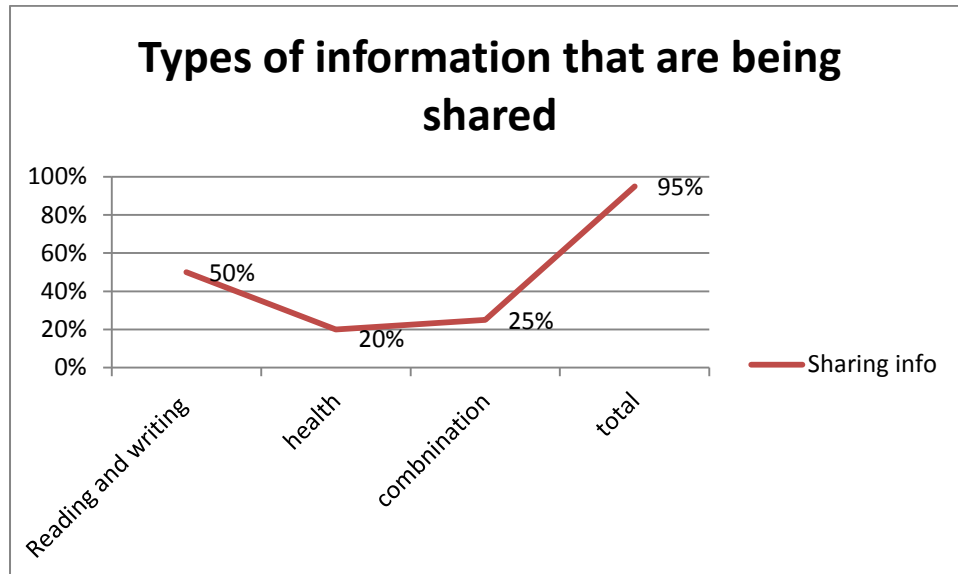
Source: Elbadawy, A. (2013). Evaluating the Impact of Ishraq: A Second Chance Program for Out-of- School Rural

Adolescent Girls in Upper Egypt. In *Economic development and the rise of Islamists parties* (pp. 1-60). AFESD,, Kuwait: ERF 19th ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

About half of girls sharing information communicated with others on reading and writing. Close to fifth shared health-related information and more than a quarter shared both information on reading and writing, and information on health. There are almost 5% who are not known as to whether they are sharing the information with others or not. The Ishraq program has a significant impact on girls are literacy skills, access to the Youth Centers (YC), future plans, and participation in decision-making. For instance, Ishraq girls perform much better on reading and comprehension, which represented in 88%. As for numeracy

skills, over half of Ishraq girls are able to solve the multiplication problem on which they were tested.

Graph 3



Source: Elbadawy, A. (2013). Evaluating the Impact of Ishraq: A Second Chance Program for Out-of- School Rural

Adolescent Girls in Upper Egypt. In *Economic development and the rise of Islamists parties* (pp. 1-60). AFESD,, Kuwait:

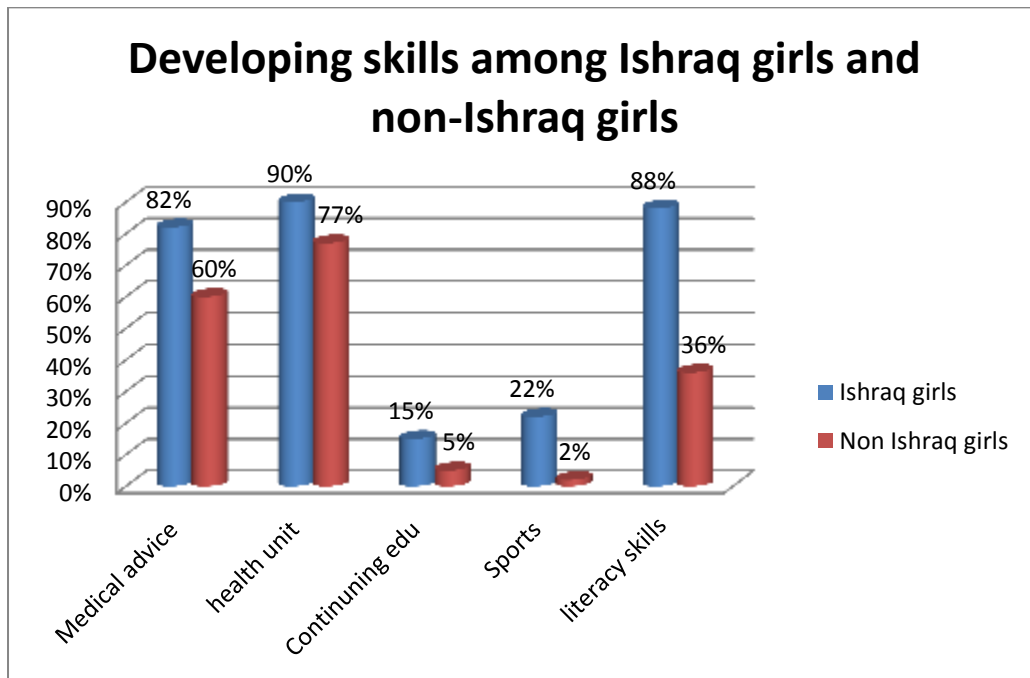
ERF 19th ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

Second, Ishraq participation indicated that the attendance and drop out can be changed based upon specific family reasons. For example, “girls whose parents: want them to marry early, rely on income from their paid work, have a greater need for their help in domestic chores, and have less commitment to their education, could be more likely to drop out before the completion of the program.” (ElBadawy, 2013).With regard to health related outcomes, Ishraq girls are more likely to report seeking medical advice from a health professional when sick (82% compared to 60%), they are more likely to know the health unit location (90% compared to 77%), they are more likely to have a health card (5% compared to 1%). Participation in Ishraq has a strong impact on forming life plans involving education

about a third of Ishraq girls plan to continue education in the future while only 5% of non-Ishraq girls.

Ishraq girls showed great tendency toward practicing in sports at youth center (YC). Around 20% of Ishraq girls went to the YC unaccompanied by family members in the week. Almost half of Ishraq girls thought the YC is a safe place to play sports if there is an opportunity to do so, whereas only 2% non-Ishraq girls thought so. In addition, 22% of Ishraq girls are supportive of sports, in the sense that all their responses to attitudes towards girl playing sports are positive. Ishraq contributed positively toward enhancing girls' literacy skills, access to youth center (YC), encouraging them to have plans to continue their education in the future, and participation in decision making. The impact of Ishraq program on adolescent and non Ishraq girls can be illustrated below in graph 3.

Graph 4



Source: Elbadawy, A. (2013). Evaluating the Impact of Ishraq: A Second Chance Program for Out-of- School Rural Adolescent Girls in Upper Egypt. In *Economic development and the rise of Islamists parties* (pp. 1-60). AFESD,, Kuwait: ERF 19th ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

In terms of planning and keeping track of their spending, Ishraq girls are performing better on the rest of outcomes related to financial literacy skills: they are more likely to save money for emergency (17% compared to non Ishraq girls 10%), Ishraq girls know how to borrow in case of emergency (51% compared to 34%), they are more likely to know where the post office is (66% compared to 35%) and they are more likely to have a post office account (3% compared to 1%). (Elbadawy, 2013).

Ishraq project is non- formal education and it contributes toward rejoining formal schooling:

Ishraq is a second chance, non- formal education program that is taking place in rural Upper Egypt, targeting out of school adolescent girls who are 12- 15 years old. According to the previous analysis, Ishraq has to be classified as non- formal education since it is not followed by an organized and systematic view of education. Further, the target of Ishraq program was assisting adolescent girls to register in formal schooling. On the other hand, it cannot be classified as informal education because the main purpose of informal education is giving a practical view of how things are being done in real life, yet cannot offer any degree or diplomas. Informal education is not supplemental in either non-formal or formal education. Therefore, the informal education is related to the daily life experience which starts by being part of youth and community organization. There are several examples of informal education, such as learning about history, the first thing the person starts to do is reading around the topics, buying some specific books or magazines, and taking tours to the selected places.

Non- formal education cannot be an idea that the person can come up with, which can be developed by following non-systematic or organized way. The efficiency of non-formal education is related to self- development, which serves the crucial goal of learning as well as meeting the educational goals of learning. For instance, some countries have

used this type of education (Non- formal education) to improve the work, health, earning and family life by offering this type of education to those who dropped out of school under any kinds of circumstances. Accordingly, NFE is more focused, responsive to the needs, learner centered, less structured, and more flexible (Taylor, 2006). On the other hand, the efficiency of informal education is highly depended upon organizational and communicative abilities.

Recommendations:

All adolescent girls should have access to education whether it is informal or non- formal education. Egypt should be one of those countries that seek to achieve MDGs, which is “no girl will be left out of school.” Accordingly, there should be effective plan that should be implemented through applying these following strategies:-

- Designing policies to reduce barriers that face girls, such as developing awareness campaigns, training programmes, mentoring, coaching, and providing professional advice to parents regarding the importance of education to girls.
- Implementing initiatives and programmes aimed at addressing parents’ financial problems, and also working on fostering their awareness in dealing with financial issues and overcoming gender gaps.
- Strengthening accountability mechanisms for establishing NGOs that seek to assist those girls who are out of the schools in Upper Egypt and mainstreaming initiatives across and within government bodies.
- Ensuring that all NGOs that are running to advocate the education of girls are adequately monitored by government.

- Recognizing non-formal and informal learning as one of the most important means for ‘lifelong learning for all,’ which would lead to meeting the economic and social problems that we face in 21st century.
- Enhancing the role of religious leaders by increasing the awareness of parents by recognizing how their girls are valuable members of the family and how they could contribute positively to their families and society.

III. Conclusion

Ishraq is a non- formal education that is running under the international non-governmental organization (NGO) of Population Council to address disadvantaged girls from childhood to adulthood in rural areas. The Population Council took immediate action to empower girls' lives by providing them by education, which resulted in adopting the idea of Ishraq (Sunrise). Ishraq accomplished a great success in registering more than 3000 adolescent girls in schools, which inspired others to continue their education and join Ishraq program. Further, Ishraq has succeeded in convincing parents to send their daughters to youth sports centers in the villages. Most of the classes at Ishraq during the beginning of its launch were devoted to young men. As it is always common in these areas (rural areas) that parents are concerned about their girls and they prefer to keep them at home where they can control them and protect them from any harm. The program exerted efforts to apply different methods to get through to the girls' families. For instance, they employed prominent figures to convince parents about the importance of educating their girls and teachers to go door to door to persuade parents.

The religious leaders and institutes played a crucial role in advocating the girls' education and encouraging girls to join the Ishraq program. Ishraq worked very closely with local and international NGOs to offer education to girls who dropped out of school or never attended schools. The Ishraq program has faced many challenges in persuading the families of the girls to join the program to continue their education, which "was considered a taboo for girls to leave the house;" however, Ishraq succeeded in changing the lives of 3.321 girls in 54 of the most disadvantaged villages in Egypt. Therefore, Ishraq program succeeded in achieving significant efforts in building community participation, increasing the awareness of legal rights of girls, and addressing economic needs of girls. However, Ishraq is still facing obstacles in shortening the program to accommodate all the needs of the girls to less than two

years. Furthermore, the program is facing difficulties in sustaining its own resources and therefore it is trying to handle it by using local Community Development Association (CDA) so that in each village one CDA would be able to implement Ishraq local resources, so no girl would be left out of school. In the meantime, Ishraq predicts that it will face obstacles in overcoming community norms in rural areas where it would hinder mainstreaming Ishraq girls into formal schooling. Finally, education is a way to success and contributing to gender equality, non-discrimination, and to development. Therefore, educating adolescent girls will result in creating successful nations and strong leaders who can lead and build great nations.

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Annex

Questions:-

1. Could you please give a quick brief about yourself including your exact occupation?
This is an optional question; however, please refer to me how you need me to use your citation in my research e.g high senior manager at Ishraq...etc
2. In one word, how can you describe Ishraq and what make Ishraq is the most successful one if we want to compare it to other projects?? Is Ishraq is being recognized by the ministry of education (MOE)?
3. What are the major strengths, weaknesses, challenges and threats that face Ishraq?
 - a. Strengths
 - b. Weaknesses
 - c. Challenges
 - d. Threats
 - e. Mission
 - f. Vision
4. What is the main difference between Ishraq, Girl Friendly Schools, and One Classroom School as all of them have one mission that they are working on promoting the education of girls in Upper Egypt??
5. Can you kindly refer to the prominent role that international organizations are playing in advancing the role of Ishraq?? Please give examples of International Organizations?
6. What is the prominent role that NGOs is playing in promoting Ishraq and can you kindly list names??
7. Please refer to me how the management and supervision is playing a crucial role in controlling this project and how you are capable to face the cost and finance?
8. Can you kindly give me a link that shows the real statistics / enrollment of girls in these schools and how it has changed since the establishment of Ishraq in 2001 until now??
9. Is only Ishraq directs its activities to promote the education of girls without focusing on boys? And are there any other activities other than education?
10. Can we consider Ishraq as non-profit organization and are you trying to use international organizations and NGOS as one of the ways to asses and monitor your activities?

11. As per my interview with the Director of Population Council in Egypt, she mentioned that the weaknesses that is going to face Ishraq is the long period of enrollment e.g full two years as well as the challenges is scaling up Ishraq to a national level and threats is community norms hinder mainstreaming of Ishraq girls into formal schooling. What is the proper plan to face weaknesses, challenges, and threats??

12. Many international organization e.g Dutch Embassy, DFID,&Exxon Mobil are playing a prominent role in funding Ishraq, what exactly their role? Can you kindly refer if there is any role for other international organizations, such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and USAID??