

The Role of the Non-Governmental Organizations in Early Childhood Development in Egypt: A Case Study of Educate Me Foundation in Giza Governorate

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Abstract: Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have played a key role in Egypt by providing a number of public services (Ibrahim, 2017). Also they have projects that support formal and non-formal education (Lewis, 2016). This study was aimed to provide a foundation for the role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Early Childhood Development (ECD) through identifying and examining the role of Educate Me Foundation in Giza Governorate as NGO working the field of ECD in Egypt as a case study. Additionally, it will try to investigate the relationship between NGOs and the Ministry of Education (MOE) and explore the challenges that face the NGOs during their implementing their work in the area of early childhood development. The researcher adopted the exploratory research design. Where he presented the literature review related to the same filed to identify the role of the NGOs in the ECD in different regions, also the researcher used the government reports. The paper is divided into three main parts. The first part presents the introduction of the role of NGOs in ECD, and the importance of the paper, and examines the literature on the role of NGOs in ECD, while the second part contains the challenges and the relationship with governmental bodies from a global perspective, and contains an analysis with a reflection on the Educate Me foundation. Finally, the third part contains the findings and conclusion alongside policy recommendations for the solution of the problem. The findings of the study show that Educate Me foundation had a significant role in the ECD, they achieved their progress with the limited financial resources and unstable relationship with MoE due to the regulations and bureaucracy. The study recommended that NGOs should develop open income-generating projects and self-financing instead of an external one. Besides seeking to change the culture of the MoE and its vision towards the existence of these organizations through seminars and conferences organized by NGOs in cooperation with government sector institutions.

Keywords: Non-Governmental Organizations, Early Childhood Development, Educate ME, Egypt

I. INTRODUCTION

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have a significant impact on many fields of development in developing countries. The impact includes public goods like health services, social services, and educational services to fulfill the traditional role of the government (Zaalouk, 2004). Concerning educational reforms at the international level, NGOs playing a major role in the fields of education, particularly through non-formal programs focusing on marginalized groups in remote areas in South Asia and Sub-

Sahara Africa (Felmua&Bandie, 2012). In its assessment of the reality of education in the Arab region, the World Bank report (2011) in learning for all: Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development mentioned that there has been a significant increase in the output of Early Childhood Education in the Arab world, data has even shown that significant progress has been made in gender.

The World Bank report sheds light on the important fact that despite this impressive progress, the regions of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are lagging behind other regions when it comes to indicators of important educational outcomes, including pre-school and national preschool enrollment rates (World Bank, 2011). With NGOs increasingly gaining prominence in Egypt, NGOs has been a significant rise in the provision of public services like healthcare, social assistance, education, etc. (Ibrahim, 2017). As a result of this, over the last thirty years, NGOs have worked extensively in local economic development (Lewis, 2016). They have established community schools to provide children in rural areas with pre-primary education in conservative communities like those in Upper Egypt (Palmer, 2007).

NGOs in Egypt participating in educational development have been a subject of many questions and researches; particularly about their role and impact in education and improvement of social status and harmony within societies. They carry the challenges of executing those objectives through meeting and fulfilling the requirements and needs of different members of society. Early childhood is the most critical stage of human development because the rates of return on investing in human capital are the highest at the preschool age (Heckman, 2000). In 2001, the Ministry of Education (MoE) announced its intention to develop a strategy to improve Child health and, education by increasing enrollment rates in preschool programs, and improving Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Egypt.

According to the World Bank report on strategic options for Early Childhood Education in Egypt (2002), the status of pre-school enrollment, and therefore the contribution of NGOs in ECD in Egypt were estimated at about fifty percent in private schools. Most programs were developed in the private sector and run by NGOs and religious schools. However, only 10%

of children aged 3-5 have had some form of ECD in marginalized areas compared to 62% of the children for a most advantaged area the low impact in marginalized areas is as a result of the governmental challenges such as resource constraint that inhibits the efficient implementation of various programs (Ibrahim, 2017).

Although previous reports in development such as the World Bank (2002, 2011) claimed that NGOs results in ECD programs are equal or higher than those of the government education system with regard to the rate of enrollment in preschools, the accomplishment of primary education, and quality of consequences amongst children who contributed. These NGOs have not been able to achieve their full potential due to the interference of the government institutions, especially the relevant Ministry of Education (MoE). However, there is a significant role played by NGOs in ECD in Egypt.

After 25th of January 2011, the relationship between the MoE and local NGOs appeared to be very intricacy, as the government tried to apply rules of control of the former regime, while NGOs tried to break the cycle. After the campaign and the trial against foreign funding in 2012, the relationship between the government and international NGOs also declined (El Agati, 2013). Consequently, it is important to investigate the relationship between MoE and NGOs to develop a solution to the problem. Therefore, this study aims to provide a foundation for NGOs' role in ECD through the analysis of Educate Me Foundation as a case which achieved a significant role in ECD in Giza Governorate. Additionally, it will investigate the relationship between NGOs and the MoE and explore the challenges that face the NGOs during the implementation of their programs in the area of ECD. This paper will add to the organization of knowledge of existing literature related to the role of NGOs in ECD. Furthermore, this study will be a guide to the researchers, policymakers, and NGOs who are working in the field of Education especially ECD.

1.1. The Research Questions

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the researcher attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the major activities of NGOs in Early Childhood Development in Egypt?
2. What were the challenges that educateme faced in implementing its vision and strategy in the field?
3. What decisions of the MoE affect the role of NGOs in attaining the objectives of Early Childhood development in Egypt?

1.2 The Research Methodology

The researcher adopted the exploratory research design. Where he presented the literature review related to the same filed to identify the role of the NGOs in the ECD in different regions, also the researcher used governmental and international organizations reports.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Early Childhood Development (ECD)

NGOs are more malleable and pioneering than governments when fulfilling their different curricula and educational strategies (Lewis, 2016). A similar study conducted by Sakya (2000) showed that the intervention of local NGOs within their communities has reaped more benefits than the government for many reasons. One example relates to structural complications such as multiple bureaucratic procedures and political interference in the implementation of development schemes such as ECD programs. In the same context, Lewis (2009) showed that NGOs are better successful in mobilizing society to encourage and strengthen community participation in building a more innovative educational program for the children. This is because of the great involvement by NGOs in understanding the social and cultural realities of the communities than the government. As a result, NGOs are able to build stronger relationships with local communities than government officials, thereby improving their performance and accountability as compared to government interventions. Regular follow-ups conducted by these NGOs also make a measurement of results more convenient.

NGOs have played a major role in ECD globally. The role is different from region to region according to the needs of the society. The study conducted by El-Kogali and Karafft (2015) showed that NGOs have added an appreciated influence and enrich experience to ECD in many developing countries. In fact, NGOs have a remarkable record in providing the financial incentives to households, capacity building to the society or individuals, nutrition and health care programs to children, and provision of infrastructure in needed areas. Financial aid provided by NGOs plays a major role in marginalized areas according to a study conducted by Anzar (2002) about the NGOs sector in Pakistan. Anzar's findings reveal that NGOs in Pakistan have clearly contributed to reducing the costs of private school requirements in slums and have achieved successes in establishing private schools for females. A similar study by Avolio-Toly (2010) showed that NGOs providing financial incentives to the households in the rural areas of Sub- Sahara Africa to allow the children to attend the programs providing by the NGOs. Also, international NGOs focus on financial aid to children in marginalized areas; Alaraji (2016) emphasized that Save the Children as an international institution, has an interest in the basic education stage, and a large part in preschools, especially those who have not been able to attend preschool because they are not available in the country and includes a financial burden when enrolling.

Despite the fact that, NGOs provide capacity building programs in areas of need. In Pakistan Anzar's findings mentioned that NGOs have also helped to improve and develop public schools in terms of teacher's training to better perform their work. Also, these programs provided services to

children's education centers in private schools based on the priority of early education development. Similarly, a study conducted by Manli (2007) in China on the role and activities of NGOs in the development of ECD. In the study, the results show success in knowledge utilization using advanced training and high levels of satisfaction due to individual development. On the other hand, faculty members made observations about the challenges they face in terms of the low level of training programs caused by lack of networking and uncertainty about the dependence on the social role within the program. Maclure (2000) showed that NGOs can also build the capacity of government and local communities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

According to UNESCO (2009), several successful case studies at the international level show that local NGOs implemented various programs through a partnership with international NGOs to effectively reach disadvantaged children and improve the value of preschool education in disadvantaged regions. Avolio-Toly (2010) reported that most of these programs fall into five categories: infrastructural changes in educational buildings, female education, children at risk, community-led education projects, and non-formal education projects. Children who were included in these projects were in preschool level, belonged to inaccessible communities such as those in rural areas, suffered from physical disabilities, were orphans or living within conflict zones. Ibrahim (2017) illustrated that in marginalized areas, NGOs work to provide educational services to young girls, combat truancy, improve the infrastructure of schools dedicated to disadvantaged communities, and provide special literacy and numeracy programs for those who drop out of school.

The additional role provided by the NGOs they share in the infrastructure to provide a suitable place for the children. Nkuna (1999) stated that the NGOs that work in ECD in South Africa were established not only for the purpose of providing employment to their members, but also to provide safe playing centers for the children, the study mentioned the role of ECD centers in building educational foundation with Outcomes Based Approach to assist them to survive in an environment dominated by social problems in South Africa. In the same area of interest. Chunlan's study (2006), stated that NGOs in India, in cooperation with youth development institutions, have experimented with the twenty-first century to develop Early Childhood Education by improving the infrastructure of the schools and kindergartens.

1.3.2 The challenges that face NGOs working in ECD.

The NGOs working in ECD around the globe have faced several challenges. According to World Bank (2011), the NGOs in the MENA focus only on literacy and numeracy without attention to the quality of outcome, in addition to the lack of curriculum or measurement to measure the impact of ECD. Nevertheless, El-Kogali and Karafft study (2015) stated that the strategies employed by NGOs in the MENA were not

well-thought-out strategies and this reflected the difficulties they might encounter in their performance and work, such as lack of funds, or the training of volunteers and staff. In reality, the majority of these NGOs, face a financial dilemma, lack of financial resources on the one hand, and ongoing erosion on the other. The financial distress of the associations is reflected in the value and quantity of the services delivered (Krafft, 2015). The adoption of contemporary methods of performance adds up, and it leads in their subordination to the government. (Nkuna, 1999) stated that the NGOs that work in ECD in South Africa faced financial problems that affected the implementation of the programs and she gives many examples of how the NGOs could not overcome those financial problems.

The culture of the society and institutions is a significant factor in the failure or success of any project. Alaraji (2016) mentioned that culture gives credibility and trust to the NGOs to work in society. Nigussie (2018) conducted a study in Ethiopia on the assessment of socio-cultural constraints on success in education. The findings of this study show that there are numerous sociocultural problems which are hindering preschool education in Ethiopia. Parents and communities have negative thinking on education and they consider preschool education as wasting family resources, especially since parents need children for household work. There are some other factors like long distances to educational institutions that have also been proven to limit enrollment in preschool education.

1.3.3 The relationship between the government and NGOs working in the field of ECD.

Several international case studies have documented the relationship between the government and NGOs. Some of them described it as a relationship of conflict and clash, others described it as an exchange, and a cooperative relationship to implement ECD projects, especially in marginalized areas with disadvantaged children (USAID, 2007). Jaganathan (1999) emphasized that NGOs cooperated with the Indian government to complete preschool system and improve the quality of early education. The NGO's methodologies were used to raise the responsibility of the education system by increasing parental contribution and teacher attending rates. This approach has shown equally successful results with marginalized children in a study conducted by Zambian scholar, Kalemba (2013) in 1998; the Zambian Government acknowledged the idea of community schools and has worked extensively with local NGOs to consolidate ECD. Communities have begun to establish their own schools either because there are no public schools nearby, or because families are unable to pay for public schools. The HIV epidemic was another reason for the introduction of Zambian community schools. Community schools offered better options for these orphaned children, as compared to public schools that failed in this endeavor. Avolio-Toly (2010) noted that local NGOs working with governments design and implement agendas in line with national priorities and goals

for government in education. However, they faced different sorts of challenges related to permissions and regulations.

On the other hand, some studies mentioned that the relationship between NGOs and the government is shaken and face many challenges. According to McClure's (2000) study, the role of NGOs was to strengthen the resistance against the government's domination of education, particularly in MENA countries. Education was one of the roles of the government because it is an effective means of enforcing the state and strengthening its legitimacy. Therefore, NGOs have emerged to modify and renew such ideas, which has caused a strategic change in state policy and imposed structural adjustment programs. Institutional development, as Stromquist (1998) mentioned in his study is another type of challenge that faces the NGOs related to the relationship with the governmental bodies and the regulations that controlled their work in the field of Education especially Early Childhood development.

II. ANALYSIS OF NGOs' ROLE IN ECD IN EGYPT.

2.1.1 *The Role of NGOs in ECD in Egypt.*

The main role of the NGOs in Egypt appears clearly in the marginalized and disadvantaged areas where people lack public services like health and education besides, the households have a low income. World Bank report (2002) showed that there is a strong relationship between GDP per capita and total enrollment rate in preschools in Egypt, whereas, the underprivileged regions in Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt have the lowest enrollment rates. Charges and household costs for kindergartens are too high for the poor because preschool fees are higher than other levels of education, the cost of uniforms and other supplies could also be unreasonable; there are also disparities between preschool enrollment rates for girls and boys (Krafft, 2015). NGOs include charities that can contribute to schools by supplying them with volunteers, money, or materials. These materials include school uniforms for poor children, stationery, and meals while direct cash can be used to pay for household and education of poor students in Upper Egypt (El Baradei, 2004).

The role of NGOs through projects that support ECD in Egypt is illustrated by three main areas: **Firstly**, NGOs support the educational function such as raising the efficiency of the educational process, technological support, and literacy. NGOs help in selecting teachers, pay their salaries, and provide them with land or buildings. Furthermore, NGOs' monitoring and evaluation programs have helped in the process of scheduling and programming. Marginalized children who participated in these programs received alternative benefits beyond education such as health care, daily meals, and educational games. **Secondly**, NGOs support the profession of education through the provision of seminars, lectures and conferences, and the care of people with special requirements and emphasize the idea of integration. **Thirdly**, NGOs promote the relationship between the school, and families by addressing the problem of dropout to increase

health, cultural, social, and environmental consciousness, and to provide social assistance such as daily clothes, school uniforms, daily nutrition, textbooks, etc. The interest of NGOs in educating the poor in Upper Egypt is widely prevalent. Large charities have established pre-primary and primary schools (El Baradei and Amin, 2010).

Local NGOs also worked to understand the different needs of their communities and train their local committees. Strong local NGOs usually from the basis of a strong civil society and support the contribution of local NGOs to educational programs, which will enable sustainability (Fielmua&Bandie, 2012). A group of NGOs have also implemented a project to raise the efficiency of the educational process in 100 public schools in a number of governorates, which targeted teachers and officials of these schools, provided computers, and held courses for them (Adly, 2009).

2.1.2 *The Challenges of NGOs working in ECD in Egypt.*

Local NGOs in Egypt still have a lot of challenges related to capacity building of their teams, and financial resources. The changes in the NGOs regulations that limited their sources of the fund have impacted negatively their effectiveness (Krafft, 2015).

"After decades of totalitarian rule in Egypt, local NGOs were left with poor managerial and organizational capacities, low membership and participation, lack of sustainable financing strategies, resistance by local communities, and constant harassment by the local authorities. These NGOs did not have adequate administrative and technical capacity to implement the concept of strategic planning or to apply performance appraisal to their organizations and staff" (Ghoneim& El Baradei, 2013, pp.5-18).

Some of the challenges are due to several factors such as the centralization, bureaucracy of government processes. In addition to the inability of the associations to achieve financial independence and their partial subordination by the government, they have to find a balance between providing vital services with the predominance of the governmental security mentality in dealing with civil activity in general (Abdel Majid, 2009). Despite this fact, there have been some voices calling to decentralize the process of decision-making on the education process and give the priority to the local NGOs to participate in ECD, but the government continues to dominate through the centralization policy in the system of education.

Consequently, the performance of NGOs remains dependent on the government's willingness to grant them power at the national level (Hitti, 2006). Having said that, the government has stimulated the establishment of NGOs; however, it has not institutionalized their active participation within the development context of Egypt (Alaraji, 2016). In addition to the shortage of financial resources and the bureaucracy, other challenges face the local NGOs in the field of ECD, related to the lack of infrastructure and education facilities, qualified

teachers and the difficulty in the societies because of the mentality of the households and their doubts from this NGOs (Adly, 2009).

2.1.3. National Strategy of Ministry of Education (MOE) in ECD in Egypt.

The national strategy aims at achieving ECD for the child. ECD according to the strategy begins before the cradle through care for the pregnant mother until the age of eight. This comprehensive approach takes into account every stage of the characteristics of the child's growth, and the requirements of his or her contemporary society and cultural

heritage; it is not limited to school education but extend to a wider circle employed by the efforts of mothers and fathers and teachers as well all community institutions (MoE, 2013a). Egypt's desire to coordinate ECD is reflected in the establishment of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) in 1989. It was formed as a result of good intervention by the president, in the form of an independent body headed by the Prime Minister which included representatives from the ministries of education, health, and social affairs, and other relevant national bodies (El Baradei & El Baradei, 2004).

Table (1) Early Childhood Coordination Mechanism in Egypt

Name	Location	Membership	Functions
National Council for Childhood and Motherhood	Independent, but headed by the prime minister	Ministers of Social Affairs, Health, Culture, Education, Employment and Training, Planning, Information, and Youth, professionals	To prepare policy plans related to children and mothers as part of the National Development Plan, and to implement good practices for replication

Source: (MoE, 2008).

The Government of Egypt announced in 2001 its goal of identifying progress towards improving children's education and health by improving the enrollment rates in preschool programs and enhancing ECD. The challenge will be to prioritize the expansion of kindergarten to achieve these goals (El Baradei & Amin, 2010). The Egyptian government through the MoE has contributed to cultivating ECD through the formulation of a committee to introduce ideas, studies, and opinions in regards to this stage of policy. Furthermore, a number of schools and classes are included in this level of education which have been established and provided with the required needs, equipment, and facilities (Habiba, 2017). Consequently, the number of children and teachers in this stage has increased and has reached 3227 and 5736 respectively in 1999/2000 (MoE, 2003).

Since 2003, the reports of the MoE's National Strategic Plan reveal this shift and point to the government's position on improving the value of pre-primary education and meeting the prerequisites of children. In the national report entitled "Developing Education in Egypt" delivered by the MoE in 2008, the idea of providing quality education for all students in Egypt was strongly emphasized as a basic human right (MoE, 2010).

Marginalized children have always been a source of concern for Egypt's policymakers. In partnership with donors and major international organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and USAID, the Egyptian government introduced several effective informal educational agendas during the 1990s targeting disadvantaged children in Upper Egypt (Krafft,

2015). However, there was no cooperation between the MoE and NGOs during this period.

The increase of early childhood enrollment coincides with the projections of the five-year plan (2007-2012) to include the early childhood as a part of free compulsory education through the program of Egypt's ECD (MoE, 2013a). Recently, there is a new trend in Egypt, as well as other Arab countries, for establishment centers of resource and training in order to improve the quality of ECCE service provisions.

Table (2) Schools, Classes & students by Sector Pre-Primary stage 2016/2017

Educational Stage	الوحدة : بالعدد						المرحلة التعليمية
	القطاع الخاص Private Sector			القطاع الحكومي Governmental Sector			
	تلاميذ Students	فصول Class Rooms	مدارس Schools	تلاميذ Students	فصول Class Rooms	مدارس Schools	
Pre-Primary	311 173	10 467	2 295	932 879	24 638	8 955	ما قبل الابتدائي

Source: (CAPMS, 2018)

Table (2) shows that enrollment in the governmental sector is more than the enrollment in private sectors. To improve quality at this stage, the schools have canceled the old ways of teaching at this level of young age previously dependent on books, homework, and examinations. They were instead replaced with teaching cards and teaching activities. In addition, this approach has provided an opportunity for marginalized children who stand to benefit the most from this education to broaden their access to the public sector and not

through monopolizing education systems of private institutions (Krafft, 2015).

2.1.4 *The Relationship between MoE and NGOs in Egypt*

The conception of local NGOs has been common and popular in Egyptian society for decades. After 1998, legislators in Egypt organized the legal and financial framework to shape the relationship between NGOs and the government (Habiba, 2017). According to the government's point of view, these rules are a great chance for the local NGOs to work within the society while, Mundy, K., and L. Murphy (2001) claim that these steps are a way of guiding and controlling the NGOs activities and work under the power of the state. The MoE established a section for NGOs in 1998 to strengthen the relationship between NGOs and MoE in Egypt. The actions of NGOs working in community education agendas were therefore under the supervision of the General Directorate of NGOs in the MoE (Pollock, 2013).

In 2000, the Ministry issued a decree allowing NGOs to participate in school boards of representatives.

"Between 1999 and 2005, MoE implemented 1212 educational projects by building partnerships with 619 NGOs to serve 19,000 students in public schools. After 2005, many local NGOs helped implement community schools in rural areas to help marginalized children in Upper Egypt. Through interviews with government officials from the MoE, concluded that these NGOs have no right to participate in any agenda with the MoE" (Sayed, 2006, p.5).

The reason for this disposition by MoE officials is a problem about the perception of the members of the MoE and its culture about the concept of NGOs and their work in addition to the centralization of MoE prevent the directorate of education in every governorate to work or assist the NGOs in the area without any permission from MoE itself (Alaraji, 2016). In 2002, the government delivered the law NO. 84, which settled more freedom to local NGOs to increase funds, work freely and not be resolved by judicial resolution. The reasons for uncertainty about local NGOs were, first, that some large local non-governmental organizations had been established to receive funds from exterior donors without undertaking any concrete activities. The second reason for concern is the influence of donors on the agendas of local NGOs and the possibility of exploiting certain political interests (Pollock, 2013).

Law No. 84 of 2002 persisted in force after the 2011 uprising. Under this law, the MoE is entitled to reject any NGO registration if its activities threaten national security, discriminate against any group, or violate social suitability. MoE has the power to dissolve or force severe penalties on a non-governmental organization (Pollock, 2013). "After January 25, 2011, the relationship between the MoE and local NGOs appeared to be very significant, as the government tried to enforce rules of control over the former regime, while NGOs tried to break the circle. After the campaign and trial

against foreign funding in 2012 the relationship between the government and international NGOs has declined "(El Agati, 2013, p.13).

In 2017, The parliament approved the draft Law No. 70, which has a lot of concerns for NGOs working in development in Egypt, the law contains a number of articles that restrict the work of these organizations, and defines funding from external parties and impose a number of security measures that constitute the right to reject the authorities of these organizations, till now the position of the role of MoE is still unclear under this law, which is a threat to the existence and survival of NGOs.

2.1.5 *The Relationship between NGOs and International Donors in Egypt.*

International donors consider NGOs a more convenient and efficient partner than governments when implementing different curricula and projects. These projects always complement the services provided by the government (Kahler, 2000). NGOs were effectively established to neutralize and control their influence despite the terms of circumstances for assistance from exterior donors such as the World Bank and the EU. The reasons for the growth and expansion of NGOs vary in Egypt and abroad. The first is the change in the attitudes of international donors by the early 1990s after the end of the Cold War. Donors began to consider developing countries governments as ineffective partners with poor capacity, lack of transparency and less efficient implementation of projects funded by international donors (Kahler, 2000). The second reason is that these local NGOs are tools for communication between international donors and local communities to support local development plans in the education sector and in other areas (El Agati, 2013). And the role of international institutions such as UNESCO, UNICEF, are introducing new concepts and approaches in dealing with the issue of education in all its forms, especially the concept of partnership in the arena of education.

Table (3) Egyptian NGOs and Their Funding and Projects in ECD 2014

Theme	Funding	Target Audience	No.of projects	No.of NGOs
Support the learning function of school	86029360	2183985	851	368
Support the educational function of school	37456849	469353	455	192
Support school-Community relation	27767441	650016	571	293
Total	151253650	3213354	1857	853

Source: Arab Republic of Egypt, Strategic Options for Early Childhood Development, World Bank, September 2012.

Table 3 above shows the number of projects and financial support to NGOs that work in ECD but still, the number is limited due to the regulations of fund imposed by MoE.

2.2 Educate Me Foundation role in redefining ECD in Egypt

Educate Me Foundation was registered in 2010 as NGO that aspires to redefine education in Egypt. Educate me adopted holistic, student-centered methodologies and implemented pedagogies based on facilitating students' acquisition of 21st century skills. In 2015, the Educate Me team took their first step towards transferring their unique journey of learning to establish a community school in order to examine the teaching-learning model at the elementary stage. Another step was also taken towards developing a comprehensive training and professional development program for facilitators aiming to empower them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for them to become social agents of change in their communities. The ultimate purpose of Educate ME's intervention is to contribute towards the development of self-actualized individuals.

Educate Me has increased the size and quality of preschool programs in recent years. Previously, preschool programs were only available in the private sector for richer children. EM has also made improvements to the Preschool Program, providing self-help facilitators, nutrition programs, parental and community involvement, and holistic approaches. Poor children still face many barriers to preschool enrollment.

2.2.1. Statement of Vision.

Through combining both holistic and student-centered approaches for the purpose of developing self-actualized individuals, Educate Me identifies its vision as follows: "Towards a world where we are all accountable for one another's Self-actualization" In order to achieve this vision, Educate Me developed an intervention framework built around 3 main pathways. The 4th pathway, Parents and Community, is engaged and involved as a supportive pathway that is essential for success in the other 3 domains. Figure (1) below illustrates this intervention model.

Figure (1) Educate ME's Intervention Model



2.2.2 Strategic Goals.

Based on the Figure above, Educate ME's strategic goals are as follows:

1. Empowering children at the elementary stage towards achieving self-actualization.
2. Empowering facilitators through a program aimed at building their capacities in adapting curricula and practicing holistic, student-centered pedagogy.
3. Providing a model of change in education based on a growth-promoting learning environment that has success indicators in the Egyptian context to be scaled.

2.2.3 Educate ME's Theory of Change

There is little argument that the quality of any nation's future success and progress is contingent upon the healthy and positive development of its younger generations. As iterated in multitudes of research and literature, as well as evidenced throughout human history, children of today children are citizens of tomorrow, parents, and professionals. The science of ECD is not a new field and has been shaped by various cultural norms, religious beliefs, and, more recently, extensive research. Although there continue to be intense discussions as to whether genetics or external factors have the largest impact on a child's development, decades of rigorous research in neurobiology, psychology and human capital development and education confirm that both internal and external attributes have a significant effect on a child's development and well-being (NSCDC, 2007).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1976), microsystem has the most immediate and direct impact on a person's learning and development. This holistic approach to human development is strongly aligned with the holistic and student-centered approaches to education mentioned above, both of which form the foundational drive behind Educate ME's theory of change. It is this microsystem that Educates ME's educational and development intervention is hoping to impact through 4 main pathways of change:

1. Holistic Curriculum.
2. Self-actualized Facilitators.
3. Enabling Organizational Culture.
4. Parent & Community Engagement (supportive pathway).

2.2.4 The activities of Educate Me Foundation in the ECD.

Educate Me has a unique strategy to support the educational function in their preschool in Talbiya area in Giza. Educate Me works to raise the effectiveness of the educational development, environmental services, technological assistance, literacy, and capacity building program for the preschool facilitators, marginalized children who participated in these programs received alternative benefits beyond education. Also support Educate Me to give attention to the

relationship between school and also the family by allowing parents participation in the preschool activities, in addition to the monthly meeting to promote social, health, cultural and environmental awareness and to provide social assistance. Educate me also provide school uniforms, daily nutrition program, textbooks, and other support. All the activities in Educate Me Foundation fall under evaluation and monitoring program to improve the performance and measure the outcomes and the achievements.

2.2.5 Challenges that face educateMe in the field.

In the post-2011 Revolution period, there was a sudden decline in the relationship between the government in Egypt and international donors, which affected the functioning of Educate Me Foundation, as it depended entirely on funds provided by the latter to achieve its targets. It had gone down after the campaign and the prosecution against the foreign finance issue in 2012, affecting the fund and creating a financial problem. The relationship between the Ministry of Education and Educate Me was critical, as the government sought to reinstate the restrictions of the previous system while NGOs tried to breakdown this malicious cycle. In 2015 Educate Me registered their community school in order to examine the teaching-learning model at the elementary stage. But the community school program faced a lot of problems in the permissions and registration due to the bureaucracy and centralization of MOE.

III. FINDINGS/ RESULTS

The concept of local NGOs has been acknowledged by Egyptian society for decades, thereby benefitting the needs and requirements of various social groups. Since 1998, many regulations have been enacted to regulate the financial framework and legal of local NGOs with the government. After reading Egyptian and international researches, it appears that local NGOs still need to build capacity, financial resources, and a larger area for the government to participate more actively in the development context. Despite national and international pressures to decentralize the decision-making procedure in the education system and raise the contribution of local NGOs in ECD, the MOE continues to use central power over the education system. Consequently, the responsibilities undertaken by local NGOs are still restricted by the reluctance of the Government to delegate power to local levels. In other words, the government has encouraged the establishment of NGOs but has not institutionalized its dynamic sharing in the development context of Egypt. After the January 2011, the relationship between the government and local NGOs seemed to be serious, as the government and the MOE were trying to reinvigorate the limiting rules of the former rule, while NGOs tried to break this spiteful sphere.

The accomplishments of those NGOs differ but they have to be in harmony with the policy and the strategic plan of MOE (Sidhom, 2004). Based on the limited studies specifically on the role of local NGOs in early childhood in Egypt, it was

found that most of the studies aimed to identify the role of NGOs in the process of change and sustainability education in general. At the same time, the achievements by NGOs in ECD is rarely acknowledged in fact, attention has primarily been given to the quantity of education and not the quality in ECD. However, most studies indicate limited consideration to the role played by NGOs in supporting ECD in the Arab region and Egypt in particular, with their focus on development and sustainability in different sectors. Researchers need to be more familiar with NGOs' roles. It is also vital to note that NGOs need the provision of societies for their survival and continuity, what is hopeful is that they are playing their roles better and more clearly. The results of the study showed that the Educate Me foundation had a significant role in the ECD in Giza, they achieved their progress within the limited financial resources and unstable relationship with MOE due to the regulations and bureaucracy. The Educate Me foundation faces the same problems related to the governmental bureaucracy, routine and the intervention of the government in their programs in addition to the financial dilemma that threatens Educate Me in completing their programs. Despite the success of the MOE strategy, especially in the enrollment rates, but still do not have the ability to cover all marginalized areas in the different Governorates. Also, the MOE has not given the opportunity for NGOs to participate in the strategy to reach these groups.

Local NGOs in Egypt still face a lot of problems related to capacity building for their teams and financial resources. The changes in the NGOs regulations that limited their sources of the fund has impacted negatively their effectiveness (Krafft, 2015). In Egypt, the previous regimes affected the work of local. Local NGOs in Egypt left with unfortunate managerial and organizational capacities, low participation, and absence of sustainable financing plans. Some of the challenges are due to several factors such as the centralization, bureaucracy of government processes. In addition to the inability of the associations to achieve financial independence and their partial subordination by the government, they have to find a balance between providing vital services with the predominance of the governmental security mentality in dealing with civil activity in general (Abdel Majid, 2009). Consequently, the role of local NGOs other challenges faces the local NGOs in the field of ECD, related to the lack of infrastructure and education facilities, qualified teachers and the difficulty in the societies because of the mentality of the households and their doubts from this NGOs (Adly, 2009).

IV. CONCLUSION

NGOs have played a significant role in ECD across the world. In fact, the role of NGOs varied between providing the financial incentives to households, capacity building to the society or the individuals, nutrition and health care programs to children, and provision of infrastructure in needed areas. The role of NGOs in Egypt is the same as the globe NGOs role. In Egypt, NGOs support the educational function, technological support, numeracy, literacy. NGOs help in

capacity building programs and selecting teachers, pay their salaries, provision of land or buildings. Furthermore, NGOs's monitoring and evaluation programs have assisted in the development of scheduling and arranging. The beneficiary who participated in these programs received alternative benefits beyond education such as health care, daily meals, and safe areas for the children to play. *Secondly*, NGOs support the profession of education through the provision of seminars, lectures and conferences, and the care of people with special needs and emphasize the thought of integration. *Thirdly*, NGOs support the relationship between school and also the family by addressing the problem of dropout; to promote cultural, health, social, and environmental consciousness and to provide social assistance. In some cases, they received clothes, school uniforms, daily nutrition, textbooks, and other support.

Educate Me has a unique strategy to support the educational function in their preschool in Talbiya area in Giza. Educate Me working to raise the efficiency of the educational process, technological support, special programs for numeracy and literacy, capacity building program for the preschool facilitators. Also support Educate Me to give attention to the relationship between school and also the family by allowing parents participation in the preschool activities, in addition to the monthly meeting to promote cultural, health, social, and environmental consciousness and to provide social support. Educate Me also provide school uniforms, daily nutrition program, textbooks, and other support. All the activities in Educate Me Foundation fall under evaluation and monitoring program to improve the performance and measure the outcome and the achievements.

The difference in roles between NGOs and MoE is demonstrated through the implementation of the programs and the planned objectives. NGOs aspire to enhance the dynamics of the society by supporting social and economic programs derived from national needs and priorities. The results of the study showed that Educate Me foundation had a significant role in the ECD in Giza; they achieved their progress within the limited financial resources and unstable relationship with MoE due to the regulations and bureaucracy.

V. POLICY RECOMMENDATION

1. Through the results of the study, it is possible to make some recommendations and proposals for policymakers in the field of education and Educate Me to provide the educational chance to develop the main partner with the MOE in the reforms of pre-school education targeting marginalized groups. Children through formal or informal agendas in disadvantaged communities: The study shows that there is a problem for the perception by the officials of the MOE and its culture about the concept of NGOs. Therefore, we must seek to change the culture of the MOE and its vision towards the existence of these organizations through seminars and

conferences organized by NGOs in cooperation with government sector institutions. This strategy was successful in Zambia in 1998 (Kalemba, 2013).

2. Based on the results of the role of NGOs in supporting ECD, we believe that it is necessary to allow the contribution from international NGOs to assist the preparation of qualified trained specialized in working within the functions of NGOs and their objectives and achieve their vision and mission. And there are many successful programs conducted in Egypt and other developing countries supported by USAID and UNICEF.
3. There is a weakness and lack of funding in supporting the organizations is the main factor that challenges NGOs. Therefore, the study recommends that institutions open income-generating projects, because of the importance of supporting projects and self-financing instead of an external one. Some of the organizations in Pakistan follow this vision to provide fund (Anzar, 2002).
4. Engage NGOs in a real way in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of various educational programs with MOE.
5. Conduct further studies on the role of NGOs in ECD to support the development of early childhood in Egypt and to benefit from international experience and expertise to improve the performance of organizations. Increasing the support of the MOE and alleviating obstacles facing these organizations during their work.
6. There is a need for the acknowledgment of the importance of NGOs in human achievements, social, and economic contribution from the decision maker's view.

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