

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF YOUTH CENTERS IN THREE EGYPTIAN GOVERNORATES

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ABSTRACT

Youth centers are formed from the youth in villages, districts or towns as a non governmental NGO which has a priority role in education and entertainment activities. Youth from both sexes have the right in the membership of the youth centers and they can elect the board and decide together the set of policies and procedures of the center. The role of the youth center is concentrated in giving the opportunity for the youth to practice different activities such as sports, cultural, arts and also can acquire life skills in development.

The study aims to evaluate the performance of the youth centers in three governorates in Egypt+, the study identifies the physical conditions of the assessed youth centers, operational governance of youth centers and programs, composition of board members and their roles, and methods of having effective youth centers that serve its purpose of providing safe spaces for youth to practice sports, acquire knowledge and become effective members of their communities distribution of funds available for youth centers' usage.

The overall objective of this study is to assess the situation and performance of the twelve targeted youth centers in three governorates. This study aims at addressing some important components such as youth centers' physical buildings, strategic planning and activities; operational governance and set up; institutional and financial resources, gender attitudes; and finally their role to support and empower youth.

The geographical location of the study is three governorates: Behira, Alexandria, 6th October. 6 youth centers have been selected: Dariout El Mahmoudia and kom Asho in Behira governorate, El siouf and Dahria youth centers in Alexandria governorate, Manial shiha and Dahshour youth centers in 6th Oct governorate . 6 focus group discussions were conducted where 32 youth males and 3 youth females.

The study concluded that it is very important that youth participate in the preparation of the yearly activities plan of the youth center although 30% of the assessed youth centers allow limited youth participation in the planning of its activities. It has been noticed that central Planning uses the top bottom approach which has been practiced in most of the youth centers in the study. There is a need to decentralize decision making to the lowest tier of the pyramid which represents youth themselves .As youth voices matter, Youth participation should be stipulated clearly in the new operational regulations and / or amendments to allow of systematic obligatory participatory planning of youth. Youth centers should primarily plan and act merely as youth-serving organizations whereas youth centers are the service provider and youths are the customers / beneficiaries.

One of the study findings which was captured from the responses of the young women in this study is the absence of having an equal gender opportunities that allows female young women to exercise their rights inside the youth centers particularly in the different governorates. The prevailing cultural norms are leading to such discriminatory practices in the governorates.

INTRODUCTION

Youth Centers are semi- government “quasi- government” structures working under the auspices of National Council for Youth (NCY). National Council of youth has been established by a presidential decree no. 425 of the year 2005 based on the law number 77 of the year 1975 for the establishment of organizations related to youth and sports Administratively, Youth Centers study to the Youth Directorates at the governorates level which reports to the Central Department of Youth Centers at the National Council of Youth. Youth centers are considered an appropriate channel to promote youths' rights and support their active role in the community.

Youth centers' first mandate in Egypt is sports practice and in reference to the new rules and regulations by the NCY states that youth centers' aim to: (UNICEF, 2010)

- Encourage youth's spirit to initiate acts, and become creative.
- Discover and develop hobbies and challenged youth and offer care for them in order to develop their hobbies.
- Provide trainings for youth to help develop their scientific skills.
- Determine potential leaders and prepare them to become effective leaders in different positions.
- Encourage civic participation amongst youth and make certain to promote citizenship value.
- Promote the value of voluntarism among youth.

Youth are at risk of being unemployed, illiterate, and lack appropriate life skills. programs strive to ensure that youth and their communities play a key role in planning, implementing and evaluating the development projects done with and for them. As other child centered organizations, Plan Egypt started to give special attention to the young people in all of the programs carried out in Plan working areas.

Plan has extended its programs from focusing only on children to the youth as a bridge period between the childhoods to the adulthood stage. This is the time when youth transit from school to work, to higher education, to citizenship, to marriage and the establishment of independent households.

The United Nations defines youth broadly as the transitional period between childhood and adult. It is also defined as a preparatory phase during which young people are prepared for adulthood (UNFPA, 2005) to actively participate in the social and economic development of their communities. Recent population growth trends have shifted the focus of relief and development strategies to concentrate more on building the capacity of individuals and societies to meet the needs of the next generation. According to the World Bank, youth in the Middle East face major challenges including, finishing secondary school; acquiring relevant skills for the job market; accessing information; and dealing with social norms and stereotypes related to gender issues. In addition, lack of sustainable and productive income generation and employment opportunities is a major challenge for youth in the Middle East region and especially in Egypt. Unemployment, thus poverty results in young people engaging in risky behavior to earn money, such as migration for low-skilled labor or sex work and selling drugs or other illegal

substances. Without the skills and attitudes needed to identify safe and productive ways of earning a living, many young people see these options as the best way to support themselves and their families. (Assaad, R. and Ghada Barsoum, 2009)

From a globally point of view youth center is a social and recreational center intended primarily for use by children and youth. The center supports opportunities for youth to develop their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive abilities and to experience achievement, leadership, enjoyment, friendship, and recognition. The center offers organized instructional programs for physical activities and arts programs such as science, crafts, and theatre. They also offer opportunities for unstructured activities such as game playing, socializing, club meetings, and outdoor play. These elements impact facility design for youth- friendly and youth-appealing centers. A youth center serves the dual purpose of accommodating unstructured social interaction among different age groups and providing instructional classes all in a safe, supervised environment. This drives the facility layout and functional space adjacencies. (Rania Roushdy. 2007).

Problem of the study:

It is important to learn not only about the physical model of youth centers on the international level but also on its institutional and management processes to allow for comparability between youth centers on the international level and the local Egyptian level.

In Egypt, youth compose the largest age cohort, accounting for almost 60% of the total population. Each year, there is about 1.3 Million young youth who is 18 years old and in 10 years there will be about 28 million youth between the age 18-28 years. Until to-date NGOs are concerned with service provision for youth rather than engaging youth in designing, planning and implementing these activities. The concept of youth engagement in development is new and hence requires double the effort and will accordingly entail double benefit, namely for youth and the community at large.

Objectives of the study:

The current study aims to identify unmet needs and gaps, within the aim of strengthening youth centers physically and institutionally in three governorates namely 6th October, Alexandria and El Behaira governorates through choice six youth centers. Therefore this study aims to provide information about the physical conditions of the assessed youth centers, operational governance of youth centers and programs, composition of board members and their roles, and methods of having effective youth centers that serve its purpose of providing safe spaces for youth to practice sports, acquire knowledge and become effective members of their communities.

1. Youth Centers Regulatory and Institutional Structure:

Due to the importance of youth in the development of Egypt and the problems they face, the Egyptian state has historically accords great interest to this vast sector. The state had realized that youth centers are the best premises to involve youth, through helping them identify the strengths and weaknesses of their leadership styles and developing their communication and problem- solving skills to identify school or community problems facing

them, identify alternative solutions and lastly design community action plans to address them. (Save the Children, 1997).

In 1956, the Egyptian state issued law no. 197 to establish the Supreme Council for Youth Care, which aims to realize the resources of power and care for youths, through physical and social education. In 1975 government of Egypt issued a law for the special organization of youth and sports. In 1978, the state issued a decree to establish a new youth ministry. The decree stipulated establishing youth directorates in the various governorates of Egypt. In 1979, the state established the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports. In 2003 the state established Youth and Sports National Council with representatives from the different ministries concerned with youths. In December 2005, Ministry of Youth and Sport was abolished and the National Council for Youth was established. The National Council for Youth is responsible for proposing legislation and setting the regulations and mechanisms to determine the relations, responsibilities and organize all youth activities and monitoring them. It also draws the legal and institutional framework to mobilize financial resources and provide administrative independence in order to maintain the momentum of youth development. **(Innovation Center for youth and community development, 2009):**

Youth centers fall under the supervision of the National Council for Youth and aim to provide sports and cultural gathering locations for the youth in Egypt. Youth centers are currently operating under the regulations number 882 issued by the NCY in 2002. NCY has issued new regulations dated November 2009 governing the operation of Youth Centers. Such regulations provide regulator reform, all aims at increased youth engagement in youth centers such as:

- Youth percentage in Board of Directors must be 50% minimum (6 members).
- Increase young women percentage to 25% of the Board of Directors..
- Appointment of Executive Director of the youth center.
- Provide decentralized authorities to youth centers to plan their activities and generate own- source revenues.
- Effectuate General Assembly authority against Board of Director's performance specifically in terms of endorsing year-end budget and final accounts as well as the following year budget.
- The possibility of forming board of trustees to youth centers and civic education centers.

The number of youth centers and other youth organizations that report to the national council of youth are as follows;

- About 4460 youth centers distributed among the twenty nine governorates of Egypt with about 70 model and modernized centers. Egypt has a plan to establish a youth center in every Egyptian village that has a population over 5,000 citizens. Priority is also given to Upper Egyptian villages and villages of high populated density due to their needy status 2.
- About 9 Youth Forums that are established to attract talented and distinguished youth. NCY has issued a special regulation for its

management and operation with a plan to have one youth forum in each governorate.

- About 15 Civic Education Centers established in the capitals of governorates to mainly provide training in political development and civic education.

2. Study Methodology (Process & Tools):

2.1 Participatory Study Tools:

The methodology adopted for this study was defined and elaborated by the research team. It is mainly a qualitative research that provides a deep insight of six youth centers in three governorates settings. Quantitative study was also incorporated to support qualitative conclusions.

2.2 In depth interviews:

The fieldwork phase commenced upon completion of the review of secondary data and development of the research tools. The fieldwork covered 6 youth centers and was implemented in three governorates: 6th October, Behira, and Alexandria. Every meeting in the fieldwork started with an introduction to the study's objectives. 66 in-depth interviews were conducted with various key informants including board chairman representatives, Executive Directors, Financial Managers, Youth Specialists, CDA representatives, local administration / local government youth departments and committees.

2.3 Focus Group Discussions:

Six focus group discussions were conducted with a total of 35 youth (32 men and 3 women) representatives. Focus group discussion guide (Questionnaire) was developed to guide the discussion with youth. The main aim of the focus group discussion was to gather information related to youth's experience with the youth centers including their membership, involvement in decision making as well as activities practiced inside the centers. In other words listen to the youth voice.

Table 1 shows that six youth centers were assessed and a total 35 interviewees participated in both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Around 91.5 percent of youth participating in the focus group discussions were men while 8.5 percent were women, hence indicating a gender gap among members of the youth centers.

3. Data Analysis and Study Writing:

The data analysis process started by cleaning the data through which the data was inspected. This step also included noting the research team's observations. The second step of the data analysis phase involved transcribing the data through typing the text from interviews and observational notes into a word processing document. Study outline, in which a thorough documentation of the study process, thematic analysis as well as recommendations were presented technology club and toilettes. Each of the assessed factors / indicators was given a numerical score varying between 0 – 3 resembling facilities that are not available through poor, good and very good conditions.

Based on the numerical score given to each facility, an overall average rating was given to each youth center. (Table 2 - Youth Centers' Buildings / Physical Study Rating).

4. Findings Study:

4.1 Buildings & Physical Study:

The six studied youth centers had their differences and commonalities. The overall youth centers' buildings and physical conditions were assessed including: general building conditions, playgrounds, gymnastic facilities, library, cafeteria, women club and / or kindergarten, information.

Table 2 shows that around 33% of the assessed youth centers were in poor conditions and need substantial up-grading, rehabilitation, equipment supply and re-construction. Poor conditions included wastewater flooding, unequipped playgrounds, lack of proper lightening, unequipped gymnastic, poor latrines and poor information and technology centers. On the other hand, 17% of youth centers are in very good conditions thus encouraging youth to fully participate in the centers' daily activities. It is worth noting that though a considerable number, 50% between good and very good, of youth centers are equipped, staff lacks the knowledge and know-how to effectively operate the GYM and IT equipment and maintain the facilities thus prevent the full use and utilization of those equipment by youth.

4.2 Operation and Maintenance – Financial Resources:

Fees are set up by the youth center based on the standard of living of each community, which is usually estimated by the Board of Directors and approved by the Directorate then by the National Council for Youth. Theoretically, youth centers are eligible to generate income. However, in practice youth centers go through an extended process to obtain approvals to undertake any income generation activity. Youth centers have to obtain the approval of the directorate then National Council for Youth. Such routine discourage the majority of youth centers to generate any additional income, other than the membership fees, renting the field courts and in some cases provide computer trainings.

Youth centers have a diversified source of income, mainly depending on four types of resources: (1) National Council for Youth annual support, (2) annual membership fees, (3) rental fees of football courts and event halls - if available- for weddings, and (4) fees for gymnastic and computer use. Nevertheless the most steady source of income for youth centers is the National Council for Youth's annual support and the membership fees.

In addition to the steady income, Dahshour center, for instance, earns additional financial resources through renting its billiard Egyptian Pounds monthly; whilst El- Seouf youth center rents its football court for eight different sports club to practice and hold their trainings.

Nevertheless, in practice, youth centers lack a solid operation plan. In Daruit el Moderia center stated that income generating is a haphazard and unorganized process. Youth centers also lack a system to review their budgets periodically.

Table 1: Study Tools Summary

Name of Youth Center	No. of In-depth Interviews							No. of Participants In Focus Group Discussion Age 12-35 yrs	
	BOD Chairman and	Executive Director	Financial Manager	Youth Specialist ¹	CDA Rep.	Youth committee ²	Local Admin Rep ³	Male	Female
El Seulf – Alexandria	1	1		5				2	2
Dairut El Mahmoudia – Behira	1	1	2	4				10	
Kom Esho – Behira	1	1							
El Dahria – Alexandria	2	1	1	1	1			5	1
Manial Shiha – 6 th October	1	1						5	
Dahshour 6 th October	3					3	1	10	
Total	9	5	3	10	1	3	1	32	3

¹ Youth Specialists are those youth employees who are responsible on various activities such as scouting and are in direct contact with youth centers' members.

² Youth committee is the youth committee of the respective local popular council.

³ Representatives from the local administration at either district or governorate level.

Source: results of field study.

Table 2: Youth Centers' Buildings / Physical Study

Name of Youth Center	General Building conditions	Playgrounds	GYM Facilities	Library	Cafeteria	Women club Kindergarten	IT club & Equipment	Toilets conditions	Average Rate
El Seulf – Alexandria	3 ⁴	3	1 ⁵	2	2	0	2	2	2
Dairut El Mahmoudia – Behira	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	1
Kom Esho – Behira	1	1	0 ⁷	0	0	1	0	1	1
El Dahria – Alexandria	2 ⁶	2	1	3	0	0	2	1	1
Manial Shiha – 6 th October	3	3	3	3	0	0	3	2	3
Dahshour 6 th October	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	1

³ Very Good: Well constructed, well equipped and maintained facility. Don't hinder youth participation and normal use by youth of the center. Needs minimal work.

² Good: Facility is just up to acceptable use by Youth. Lack of standards may affect their full participation in the center's activities. Needs medium refurbishment work.

¹ Poor: Facility is below acceptable use of youth. Substantially prevent them from participation in youth center's activities. Needs major/ upgrade and refurbishment work.

⁰ Not Available.

Source: results of field study.

Section Two in the new regulations of the National Council for Youth stipulates the membership fees for youth centers to vary between 25 -100 Egyptian pounds. Fees are categorized by the National Council for Youth based on the centers' location. For youth centers located in urban settings, fees can reach 100 pounds for youth above eighteen years and 50 pounds for youth under eighteen years. As for centers located in settings, the fees can reach 50 pounds for youth above eighteen years and 25 pounds for youth under eighteen years. The new regulation also stipulates that youth under 30 years old are exempted from 50 percent of the membership fees. However, the debate about the membership fees was contested and youth activists were against the high membership fees stipulated by the National Council for Youth. Accordingly, the President of the Council issued a decree to exempt youth from the entrance fees and to decrease the annual membership fees by 90 percent.

In practice, the examined youth centers had different schemes for membership. with an exception to Dairout El Mahmodia youth center in Behira governorate, charge the same amount of fees for the under and above age, all youth centers collect membership fees, which varied for youth under eighteen years old between one and eighteen pounds, and Kom Esho youth center in Behira governorate charging the least fee. The average fee for youth below eighteen years amounted to 8.75 pounds per year. As for youth above eighteen years, membership fees varied between two pounds to twenty-eight pounds, Kom Esho youth center in Behira governorate charging the least fee. The average fee for youth above eighteen years amounted to 13.58 pounds per year.

In addition to the annual fees, two youth centers charge an entrance fee in the first year varying between ten to fifteen pounds. Most youth centers charge additional fees for specific activities. Manial Shiha youth center charges 20 pounds per month for Karate, and 15 pounds/ month for football. Youth indicated that they are willing to pay the membership fees to have access to the centers' activities. Sherouk from Manial shiha youth center *"I will always pay my membership fees even if it exceeds what I am currently paying. The youth center provides recreational activities and trips that I participate in and enjoy and want to be part of"*. A considerable number of youth indicated that they do not pay their membership fees during the exam time, since they do not use the centers' facilities at that time, but they resume paying the fees and renewing their membership during the vacation. Lastly, an average of 20 percent from the total members frequents the center on a daily basis. The maximum attendance reached 70 percent whereas the lowest reached 5 percent.

4.3 Institutional Setup & Administrative Structure:

The relationship between youth centers and the National Council for Youth is a hierarchal structure in its nature whereby all youth centers perform their work and duties through the Muderia or local *Idara* (Department). Dealing with the Muderia and *Idara* level is perceived by the management of most youth centers as a routine that delays the implementation of their activities. In most cases youth centers do not practice decentralized decision

making. The management of youth centers, in general, is a top-bottom approach starting from the National Council of Youth.

In another note, the number of executive employees varied from one youth centers to another. It was observed that some youth centers do not provide guidance to their employees as studied by Manial Shiha, and Dairut el Mahmoudia. They added that some of these employees suffer from stability and low financial reimbursements.

All youth aspire to full and productive lives and many of them will take on positions of leadership, while others will contribute significantly to productivity. Per the National Council for Youth new regulations youth have the right to acquire such leadership skills through youth centers, yet youth do not see youth centers as an organization that provide them with political, economical and educational support. Results of the UNDP Human Development report of 2010 indicated that voting by young people did not exceed 29% of the selected sample (about 400 individual in the last parliamentary elections).

4.4 Youth Political Behavior and Values of Democracy:

Political party work is also extremely limited and the number of those party members was only 3% of the sample. The study further added that youth doesn't believe either in elections or in political work. Such statistics and findings reflect a degree of marginalization and exclusion of youth, some of which is self-imposed since nearly all party programs and platforms in Egypt appear not to attract youth or cater to youth issues. Per the same 84% of the youth sample expressed strong support for the importance of living under a democratic rule. Most were males with university education. One of the paradoxes of international comparisons is that the democratic rule option among youth puts Egypt in eighth position at the world level with 8% higher than the international 76%. This may indicate a wish among young Egyptians for more democracy than presently available (UN, 2007).

However, none of the examined youth centers are advocating or providing services to support the new proposed policy. Examined youth centers lack programs related to employability or civic education. In addition, although youth centers are supposed to be a channel for youth to practice freedom, democracy and become leaders, the actual system and management does not allow youth to freely express their opinion nor that assist them to become leaders through organized learning programs.

Youth in the examined youth centers do not have a clear political role. They do not participate in the planning of their centers. Consequently there is a general absence of activities directed to support youth in order to maintain an active role in the society. Youth are absent from the decision making process of their centers and are rather recipients of programs. Their role in the youth centers is being dimensioned to practice sports. The U.N. has issued a study criticizing the lack of political freedom in Egypt that prevents youth participation in the society at large. The study listed several areas that need to be addressed to better involve the country's 20 million Egyptians between the ages of 18 to

29. These areas of recommendations include improving education, housing opportunities, political participation and employment. The study also identified government corruption, nepotism, electoral fraud and the long-running state of emergency are discouraging factors for youth political engagement.

4.5 Capacity Building Activities:

Broadly, the examined youth centers lack organized capacity building activities. None of the centers showed the capacity to identify a topic around which they were able to build a series of training sessions or activities. Most efforts supporting awareness raising sessions and capacity building activities were scattered and disorganized. In few cases, the youth centers were able to collaborate with international organizations to provide a series of capacity building activities. In collaboration with Plan International, some youth centers' attempts to provide capacity building activities was met with distaste from the community and failed to attract youth. Despite the fact that El Seuif youth center in Alexandria has a youth parliament, they failed to attract youth to attend its series of capacity building seminars. Few courses in communication, negotiations and leadership were offered in youth centers but participation was limited to board of directors rather than youth and community members to benefit from and create a cadre of Agents of Change.

4.6 Youth Participation Perception and Attitude:

Due to the absence of youth from the decision making process, youth offered several suggestions to participate in this crucial process. For example, joining the general assembly and attending the annual meeting is a good entry point to become part of the decision making process. Youth in El-Dahria center in Alexandria mentioned that attending to the youth centers on a regular basis will expose them to the centers' plans, new activities and decisions and consequently become able to participate in the decision making process. They also suggested nominating themselves to join the board. *Mahmoud* - from El Dahria youth center in Alexandria said that he is planning to nominate himself for the board next round. In addition, youth in Dairut El Mahmoudia youth center in Behira governorate have formed a force group in order to demand any requests by any member youth in the center.

On another note, the attitude and perception of the board of directors towards the participation of youth in the decision making was not encouraging for youth to participate in this process. This is a clear indicator of the lack of awareness of the board members about the importance of youth participation. Moreover, parents in El Seuif youth center in Alexandria suggested the establishment of parents' board in order to allow them to participate in solving youth related issues and demands. Parents were recipients of service, rather than been actively engaged in the center.

In brief the following reasons and barriers to increased youth participation were studied from the focus groups discussions as follows;

- There is an absence of volunteering culture due to either social trends of individualism "me first" away from collective public services work or to economic reasons and lack of free time.
- The lack of trust towards the management and governance of youth centers.

- The quality of education received or career development is very modest to enable them to active participation.
- Lack of effective channels of communication in order to let their voices heard between young people and youth centers BoD, youth departments and directorates.

4.6.1 Transparency and Accountability:

Adherence to the concepts of transparency and accountability is new to most youth centers. Youth centers' efforts towards transparency are individual and scattered.

Nevertheless, budget management and discussing or presenting budget related issues is usually restricted to the finance team and is not one of the topics mentioned by any of the centers in order to ensure transparency.

4.6.2 Networking and Partnerships:

Thus despite the scattered efforts exerted by the examined youth centers to develop partnership and network with multiple state organizations does not ensure that local initiatives can become replicable nationally and that resources can become sustained. Youth centers lacked a broader consultation and strategic relationships with local administration, decision makers, business sector, donor and the general public at large. The examined youth centers mainly lacked an effective channel of communication with key social actors in order to be able to complement their endeavors, which will hence be an essential component of success.

4.6.3 Services Delivery and Youth Activities:

Though the content of youth centers programs varies from one center to the other, they all provided cultural and sports gathering places for youth. All youth centers provided a safe and supportive environment for youth to practice five main programs: sports, gymnastic, political activities, recreational activities, and awareness programs (Innovation Center for youth and community development, 2009). First, all youth centers offered sports programs. Football is the most common type of sports practiced in youth centers, Konghofo and karate are the second sports most commonly practiced. Other sports offered by the centers include tennis-table, and billiard. Second, gymnastic activities and physical exercises were additional activities practiced inside youth centers. Third, political activities mainly included youth parliament, which acted as a platform for youth to discuss and express their opinions. Three, re-creational programs were offered in all youth centers. Most youth centers organized a one day camp to either site-seeing places in their own governorates or to other sites in other governorates. This included trips to Ismailia governorate, Ein Sokhna, the pyramids, Al Azhar park, Egyptian Museum .etc. Manial shiha Youth center was the only one that organized a camp through the Scouts to Sudan. Fifth and lastly, all youth centers provided awareness programs through organizing seminars. Awareness seminars were provided by youth centers seasonally, especially during religious and social occasions and in cases of emergency such as awareness programs tackling the issue of bird flu and pandemic influenza. Awareness seminars discuss topics such as smoking, drugs. Other topics may include religious issues. Awareness programs also

included library based activities that provided reading and arts. Number of books available in the libraries ranged from 1800 to 4500 books.

Due to the absence of certain programs in most youth centers, most interviewed youth requested to receive English language courses, whilst very few requested French language courses. Computer was also another priority indicated by youth. Very few youth, especially in Alexandria governorate, requested business administration and accounting training courses.

In terms of services coverage which is the percentage of members to the total area population served by the youth center is 65%. Some youth centers were as high as 90% of coverage whereas others where as low as 30% of coverage. Average 20% from total members are attending daily. Maximum attending percentage reaches 70% whereas the lowest reaches 5%. *Please refer to Table 3.* Youth centers must exert an effort to improve its attraction decree in its programs, facilities, etc to increase its membership rate.

The majority of youth centers visited lack the vision and programs oriented towards youth development in terms of empowering youth economically, politically and socially. There were general absents of activities that enhances employment sills, income generating activities, vocational training, civic participation, community- based volunteerism and development.

5. Gender Analysis:

A strong, continued commitment to gender mainstreaming is one of the most effective means to support promotion of gender equality at all levels - in research, legislation, policy development and in activities on the ground, and to ensure that women as well as men can influence, participate in and benefit from development efforts. There is a continued need, however, to complement the gender mainstreaming strategy with targeted interventions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly where there are glaring instances of persistent discrimination of women and inequality between women and men.

Types of jobs carried by women inside youth centers are membership coordinator, trainers for social activities and librarian. On the other hand men filled senior positions and in most cases were the executive directors, financial managers, and sports trainers. (Barsoum, Ghada, Ali Rashed and Dahlia Hassanein. 2009)

Youth centers have been a male domain, thus reflecting a considerable gender gap in terms of participation of the centers' various activities. Men studied significantly higher levels of participation in sports, gymnastic, and recreational activities. None of the girls participated in any of these activities thus limiting their opportunities to develop the skills and competencies promoted by sports involvement. Girls were mainly attracted to in-door activities such as awareness programs through either attending seminars or joining the library. In very few cases, such Dahshour youth centers, girls don't joined the gymnastic to practice physical exercises. In this case, girls joined the gymnastic because the youth centers identified certain hours during the day when visiting the gymnastic was restricted to girls.

Table 3: Youth Centers Governance & Membership Statistics

No	Name of Youth Center	Board of Director ⁸				General Assembly ⁹				Beneficiaries					
		Youth 18-20 years	Male	Female	% of Youth	% of Female	Total	Male	Female	% of Female	No. of ¹⁰ population served	No. of ¹¹ total members	% of ¹² services coverage	Average No. of member attending daily	% of ¹³ daily Attendance
1.	El Seuf – Alexandria	5	1	3	55%	35%	1071	571	500	50%	1300	1071	85%	400	40%
2.	Dairut El Mahmoudia – Behira	3	6	0	35%	0%	600	580	20	5%	600	300	50%	200	70%
3.	Kom Esho – Behira	5	2	2	55%	20%	432	278	154	35%	9000	8000	90%		
4.	El Dahria – Alexandria	2	7	0	25%	0%	800	741	59	35%	4000	3000	75%		
5.	Manial Shiha – 6 th October	3	5	1	35%	10%	1440	1200	240	20%	1500	750	50%	55	10%
6.	Dahshour 6 th October	3	4	2	35%	20%	120	118	2	2%	1000	600	60%	25	5%

8 Board of directors consist of not less than 9 members, the majority are elected by the general assembly whereas the remaining are assigned.

9 General Assembly consist of all youth center's members who are above 18 years (working members) and who have paid their membership fees

10 Total population served is the planned number of citizens to be served within the proximity / geographies of the youth center

11 Number of total members who are actually registered in the center (members who have paid and who haven't paid their fees

12 Percentage of services coverage is the percentage of actual members who may benefit from the youth center's services to the total planned citizens to be served

13 Percentage of members attending on daily basis to the total number of members

Source: results of field study.

Thus this study found that girls were socially and politically disengaged from many of the youth centers' programs and their participation was limited to specific activities.

In most cases, youth centers were mainly dominated by men, with very low participation among girls and young women. Most communities do not encourage girls to frequent the youth centers. Management of manial sheiha youth center revealed that the community does not allow girls to practice sports. The youth center had thus requested from NGOs to build the capacity of women in order to work in the youth center. Having women employees in the youth center will hence attract young girls from the community to visit the youth center and participate in its daily activity.

One of the findings captured from the responses of the young women in this study is the absence of having an equal gender opportunities that allows female young women to exercise their rights inside the youth centers particularly in the centers located in the areas. The prevailing cultural norms is leading to such discriminatory practices in the areas.

In other cases, youth centers adopted coping techniques to encourage women's participation. Some youth centers managed to attract young girls to visit the center on a condition that the center provides safe spaces for girls. Management of El Seuif youth center mentioned that they introduced the concept of the social club to the community as opposed to youth center. This helped to break the silence regarding girls visiting the youth centers. Dahshour youth center managed to attract girls to the youth center in cases where special activities were designed for girls. Accordingly, the youth center offered literacy classes and gymnastic sessions for girls in special hours of the day to encourage them to participate.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations:

Support should continue to Egyptian youth to become leaders in the political and civic arena in order to become more active in their communities and have more productive lives. This will be achieved through the provision of programs that enhance youth's capabilities and creating better life opportunities' for youth.

6.1 Civic Education and Community Development:

Youth centers should develop a strategy to mobilize talents and resources to promote good civic participation through the promotion of civic values and civic education. The strategy should seek to guide the selection and planning of youth centers' initiatives, public awareness and capacity building activities and community initiatives that stress on voluntary public services works; tolerance, leadership, etc.

Further more, using multidimensional integrated activities linking sports tournaments with community public works such as cleaning activity with other civic awareness seminars will ensure attracting young people to maximize their benefits from the youth center. Exercising sports is the 1st priority that the young men looking for when they go to the youth centers as studied by the interviewed youth.

6.2 Good Governance:

Elected Board of Directors should seek to improve transparency and accountability. Board of Director's should engage youth in reviewing its planned activities. Holding hearing sessions before and after the planning process can be effective in ensuring that youth voices are heard. All youth center's activity plans with budget must be approved by general assembly and being published in the youth center for youth members to observe. All center activities must be advertised clearly in an advance notice prior to the activity deadline allowing transparent information sharing and equal opportunity. The ultimate goal is an improved delivery of programs and activities offered to youth which result in an increased youth participation in membership and attendance.

6.3 Budget Planning & Execution:

Boards of Directors should be trained on how to plan to budget, raise financial resources and / or in kind contributions. Board of Director's should capitalize on the new regulations allowing them to invest in their current assets such as renting fees as well as on the recent decree of allocating government's budgets to the directorate level thus allowing and facilitating funding prioritized needs.

6.4 Capacity building:

Youth centers should design a solid capacity building plan in support of civic education, participatory planning and most importantly employable/marketable skills training. These employable skills include IT, languages and other vocational training skills. Youth centers should also seek to employ qualified staff, or build capacity of existing staff on how to plan and manage youth programs/initiatives, engage youth in activities and leadership training.

6.5 Gender participation:

Youth centers should encourage women participation in youth centers. Income generating vocational programs such as handicrafts, netting, sewing should be designed for girls and women in order to attract them and their families to attend youth centers. Physical safe spaces women friendly should also be created insides the youth centers to encourage girls' attendance such as separate areas for women, maintained and secured toilets and timing arrangements for physical activities attended by female trainer.

6.6 Equipment and renovations:

Youth center are not only in need of new equipment but with a well defined plan on how to operate and maintain such equipment. Increased financial resources and maintaining maintenance agreements with equipment suppliers would increase life operating time for such equipment.

6.7 Networking and Media Exposure:

Youth centers should capitalizes on the recent initiatives of foundations and private sector companies who implement social enterprises and corporate social responsibility respectively. Both will have an impact on sustainable job creations to youth and on community development projects. Examples of foundation and corporate are Vodafone, Swairas

foundation and EFG-Hermes. Donors may include Japanese Embassy; or ministries, such as the Ministry of Local Development, social fund for development, etc. Moreover, exchange networking visits between youth centers will inform and exchange real life success initiatives. Maximize the role of media coverage and media campaigns to document best practices inside different youth centers will support mutual learning and encourage replication of such successes.

6.8 The Participation and inclusion:

Youth's voices and interests should be heard in developing youth center's plans. The actual governance and management procedures in the youth centers do not allow youth to freely express their opinion. Participatory planning tools such as opinion survey; hearing sessions, claims offices, board of trustees, etc. should be encouraged to solicit and review youth opinions and needs.

6.9 Use of Information Technology:

Special attention should be given to the use of IT labs in youth centers. These centers should be regularly maintained and supervised. This was evidenced by the responses received from the young men interviewed in this study when the majority indicated their need to use these labs to connect with the internet and learn computer skills.

6.10 Establishment of Youth Federation:

One of the recommendations studied during field visits is the establishment of youth centers' federation. Federation of youth centers at the district level for instance may enhance collaboration, networking amongst youth centers and act as a strong lobby advocating for their interests. It is noteworthy to mention that there is a current youth centers' federation at the cities level and 29 federations at the governorate level per National Council for Youth decree number 36 for the year 2009. Further exploration for such idea is recommended.

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تقييم أداء مراكز الشباب في ثلاث محافظات مصرية

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مراكز الشباب يتم تكوينها أساساً من شباب القرية أو المركز أو المدينة كممنظمة أهلية قطاعية ذات نشاط تربوي وترويحي بالدرجة الأولى وينخرط في عضويتها الشباب من الجنسين ويتخبون فيما بينهم مجلساً لإدارة المركز ويجمعون مرة على الأقل في الشهر لوضع الإطار العام لسياسة المركز وخطته ومحاسبة مجلس الإدارة. وتتركز مهام المركز في توفير فرص ممارسة الأنشطة الرياضية والثقافية والفنية المتنوعة للشباب والتدريب على اكتساب بعض المهارات العملية في مجالات التنمية.

ويتمثل الهدف العام للدراسة الراهنة في تقييم وضع وأداء مراكز الشباب في ثلاث محافظات من خلال التعرف على الظروف الحقيقية لمراكز الشباب المستهدفة، والعوامل التشغيلية للمراكز وبرامج الشباب، وتكوين أعضاء مجلس الإدارة وأدوارهم، وأساليب وجود مراكز الشباب الفعالة التي تخدم الغرض المتمثل في توفير أماكن آمنة للشباب لممارسة الرياضة واكتساب المعرفة. بالإضافة إلى معالجة بعض العناصر الهامة مثل التخطيط والمباني بمراكز الشباب البدنية والأنشطة الاستراتيجية، والحوكمة التشغيلية، والهيكلية الخاصة بمراكز الشباب، والموارد المالية والمؤسسية، والاتجاهات القائمة على الفارق القائم على النوع الاجتماعي، وأخيراً دور المراكز في دعم وتمكين الشباب.

تمثل المجال الجغرافي للدراسة في ثلاث محافظات مختلفة هي: البحيرة، والإسكندرية، و ٦ أكتوبر قبل إلغائها حيث تم اختيار ستة مراكز للشباب هي: ديروط المحمودية و كوم اشو بمحافظة البحيرة، السيوف والضحيرية بمحافظة الإسكندرية، منيل شيحة و دهشور بمحافظة ٦ أكتوبر قبل إلغائها. وتم عقد عدد ٦ لقاءات بورية شارك فيها ٣٥ عضواً من تلك المراكز الست ٣٢ منهم من الشباب و ٣ شابات.

وقد خلصت الدراسة أنه على الرغم من ضرورة مشاركة الشباب في إعداد خطة الأنشطة السنوية لمركز الشباب إلا أن ٢٠٪ فقط من مراكز الشباب موضع الدراسة هي التي تسمح بمشاركة الشباب في التخطيط لأنشطتها. حيث أن التخطيط المركزي من أعلى إلى أسفل هو النهج الذي يميز غالبية مراكز الشباب المدروسة رغم أن هناك حاجة إلى تحقيق اللامركزية في صنع القرار إلى أدنى مستوى من مستويات الهرم الذي يمثله الشباب أنفسهم. وينبغي أن تكون مشاركة الشباب المنصوص عليها بوضوح في اللوائح التنفيذية الجديدة / أو تعديلات وذلك للسماح بالتخطيط المنهجي والمشاركة الإلزامية للشباب، كما ينبغي أن تكون مراكز الشباب في المقام الأول ليست فقط مجرد منظمات تخدم الشباب وإنما تكون مراكز الشباب لخدمة الشباب على أنهم عملاء وكلاء التغيير.

كما كشفت نتائج الدراسة من خلال ردود الشابات في اللقاءات البورية التي تم إجراؤها إلى غياب وجود فرص متساوية بين الجنسين تلك التي تسمح للشابات بممارسة حقوقهن داخل مراكز الشباب في المناطق المختلفة، حيث تؤدي الأعراف والمعايير الثقافية السائدة في المناطق المختلفة إلى ممارسات تمييزية من هذا القبيل.

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