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Working paper: Enhancing Education
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Making Rights Work:

Exploring Rights-based Programming to Enhance Education Opportunities for Children Working in Egyptian Micro-Enterprises

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Promoting and Protecting the Interests of Children Who Work (PPIC-Work) Project

Abstract

As participatory and rights-based approaches to child protection mature in the development community, programming is increasingly built upon nuanced and context-specific understandings of children's work, seeking to support the "best interests" of working children, and valuing their voices in the process.

This paper offers contributions from the field, exploring linkages between education and work through the philosophy and programming of the PPIC-Work Project (Promoting and Protecting the Interests of Children who Work). Employing a rights-based approach, PPIC-Work has developed programming to enhance children's learning opportunities inside micro-enterprises in Egypt. Through research and interventions with working children and business owners in Cairo and Aswan, staff have come to recognize that many children and youth working in micro-enterprises are developing essential skills needed for their vocations and local economies.

PPIC-Work's "Learning Through Work" program seeks to strengthen existing enterprise-based learning systems in trades such as automotive repair and hairdressing, and ensure that children who work in these industries have safe, age-appropriate, and non-exploitative working arrangements as well as access to quality non-formal education programming. Project staff believe a Learning Through Work approach can offer rights- and market-based solutions to an enduring problem.

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Introduction

Over the past decades, the evolving conceptualisation of ‘child labour’ has inspired lively policy discussion. In the 1970s, a legalistic approach concerned with children’s susceptibility to exploitation predominated, inspiring the development of International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 138, which calls for the abolition of all child labour through the establishment of minimum age laws.¹ By the 1990s, growing recognition of child labour as “a complex phenomenon deeply rooted in social, cultural and economic structures”² that cannot be eliminated easily or by legal mechanisms alone, and the development of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and application of a rights-based approach to children’s work shaped ILO Convention 182, which focuses on the *progressive* elimination of child labour with priority given to its “worst forms”. While legal regulations continue to prohibit the general employment of children under 14 or 15 in much of the world, the ILO,³ child protection specialists⁴ and development institutions⁵ increasingly distinguish between children’s work that is ‘benign’ and involves a learning component, and ‘child labour’ which is hazardous or exploitative, focusing their efforts on addressing the latter. As participatory and rights-based approaches to child protection mature in the development community, and socio-cultural discourses critiquing the myriad and conflicting constructions of ‘child labour’ and problematising the conflation of ‘education’ with school gain attention in academia, understandings of children’s work are becoming more nuanced and context-specific. This has paved the way for programming that begins with the “best interests” of working children and values their voices in the process.

Understanding and supporting these “best interests” is foundational to the Canadian-funded Promoting and Protecting the Interests of Children who Work (PPIC-Work) Project in Egypt. Utilizing a combination of participatory, gender sensitive, rights-based and business-focused⁶ approaches to programming, PPIC-Work partners with local microfinance institutions (MFIs) to reach both business owners and working children in micro and small enterprises.⁷ The objective is to establish self-financing programs that

¹ ILO Convention 138, 1973. <http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/childlabour/c138.htm>

² Helmy, M. and Ismail M. *Learning Through Work: the Interface Between Education and Child Labour*. Commissioned for PPIC-Work, 2005. p 4. ILO Convention 182, 1999. <http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/childlabour/c182.htm>.

³ One example of the ILO’s evolving position can be found in a report from 2002: “According to international standards, not all work that is carried out by children is deemed as unacceptable and so slated for abolition. When work is performed by young persons below the minimum age for employment that is considered appropriate for their age and maturity level and does not interfere with their school attendance or capacity to learn, it can be acceptable and may even be beneficial to children. This type of work may teach young persons about responsibility and life skills or a particular trade, and can contribute to their own or their family’s financial well-being.” Anker, R. et al. *Measuring Decent Work with Statistical Indicators*. Geneva: Statistical Development and Analysis Group, International Labour Office, 2002. pp. 17-18.

⁴ Examples of such Egypt-based specialists include: Community and Institutional Development as documented in *A Rights-based Analysis of Child Protection in Egypt*. Commissioned for Save the Children UK, Nov. 2007; and researchers associated with the Social Research Centre as documented in Azer, A. et al *Inclusion of the Excluded: A Rights-based Analysis of Child Protection in Egypt*. February, 2007.

⁵ Examples of international non-governmental organizations who differentiate between types of work include UNICEF, as documented in their 1997 Global Strategy on Child Labour; the Save the Children Alliance as documented in *Save the Children’s Position on Children and Work*. January 2003; and Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) as documented in their publication *Galvanizing Communities to End Child Labor*, 2007; among others.

⁶ For additional information on PPIC-Work’s business-focused approach see appendix 1.

⁷ Initial experience with the Egyptian Association for Community Initiatives and Development (EACID) in Aswan and the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS) in Cairo is now being extended to the Zeinab Kamel Hassan Foundation (ZKHF) in Cairo, and the Association for Rural and Urban Women’s Development (ARUWD) in Qena.

build on microfinance best practice principles to improve the working conditions and learning opportunities of economically active children. Since 2002, PPIC-Work has developed a series of intervention tools to be used by Egyptian microfinance institutions (MFIs) in collaboration with working children, their families and business owners.⁸ Central to the PPIC-Work approach are differentiations between work that is benign and/or educational, work that is hazardous but where hazards can be mitigated, and work that is inherently hazardous.⁹ Recognizing that most Egyptian children work as a result of family poverty and/or an inaccessible and poor quality formal education system, PPIC-Work interventions seek to protect children from harmful work on one hand, and support them in securing safer work if they must be or would like to be working on the other hand. In our interactions with working children PPIC-Work staff have found that work can help children acquire valuable technical, business and life skills for a future career, as well as increase their self-confidence and social status.

Egypt has a rich history of producing skilled artisans in diverse fields such as woodwork and ceramics, weaving and jewellery, brassware and leatherwork, and many other trades. The high degree of skill involved in the production of these crafts has been passed on from skilled masters to new apprentices over generations. This traditional apprenticeship system has more recently been applied to modern trades including automotive mechanics, carpentry, plumbing and electrical repairs. While there are many modern vocational training programs in Egypt, there are still large numbers of young people who learn their technical vocations through traditional apprenticeships in small and often informal, or unregistered, workshops.

Workshops are, therefore, both places of business and learning; business owners are both employers and mentors/trainers. The main instructional methodology they utilize can be described as “guided observation” as they model activities, coach the apprentice through the activity and then have them learn through practice. In this way, business owners pass on technical, business and life skills over a period of several years while their young workers progress from junior support staff, to partly skilled assistants, to trained specialists. By the time they reach their late teens, the young artisans are able to manage both the technical and business aspects of their work. Some continue as adult employees in their original places of training; others move on to join new workshops but many start their own businesses, engage new apprentices and prepare to train the next generation.

Since 2005, one component of the PPIC-Work project has focused on understanding how children learn in trades where they are employed in ‘non-worst forms’ of work, and exploring how to enhance the learning processes inside these apprenticeships. This paper offers an overview of our “Learning Through Work” research and programming in the Doweika neighbourhood of Cairo. It discusses how learning and work can be defined and combined to support working children to access their rights to education, participation and play; and presents the successes and challenges of programming to date.

There are many advantages to learning through work in traditional apprenticeships. The learning process – including access to skilled trainers and current equipment – is self-financed by businesses themselves and learning takes place in real-world business environments. Graduates do not need to learn how to transition from a formal training institution into the business world nor do they need to start learning how to run a business.

⁸ These intervention tools include dual purpose loans (which require business owners to use some of the money to improve workplace safety), a code of conduct for businesses, non-formal education programming for working children (including computer-based learning, artistic development, rights awareness and empowerment programming, as well as standard literacy and numeracy), the development of working children’s networks, and other hazard mitigation work within the workplace.

⁹ These differentiations are outlined in detail in appendix 2.

They have already learned these skills by being part of an operating business over several years. However, there are limitations to the learning that takes place in these workshops: workers do not always gain knowledge about new trends and techniques within the trades and there are few if any opportunities for academic learning. This is particularly a concern for young workers who may start an apprenticeship as an alternate way of preparing for a career after dropping out of school. While graduating apprentices are generally of an age where they can legally work, new apprentices are often below this age and are considered to be working children. The questions around children's work and the issue of child labour are complex and not easily resolved.

PPIC-Work staff believe that until the formal education system in Egypt becomes more accessible and relevant, and employment opportunities and wages improve for those in the lower economic brackets, Egyptian children will continue to participate in the informal apprenticeship systems in micro-enterprises. By strengthening the existing systems through collaboration with business owners, ensuring that children who work in these industries have safe, age-appropriate, and non-exploitative working arrangements and providing non-formal education programming to fill children's learning gaps, a Learning Through Work approach can offer rights- and market-based responses to an enduring problem.

The Scope of Children's Work in Egypt

Before exploring PPIC-Work philosophy and programming in greater depth it is valuable to understand the nature of children's work in the country. This section briefly explores the numbers of children working in Egypt, the kinds of work they engage in and some of the main reasons for their work.

Depending on how one defines children's 'work' and the times of year in which the survey is conducted, there may be millions of working Egyptians under the age of 15. A recent Child Protection Study, analysing data from a range of sources between 1988 and 1998, found anywhere between 2.6% to 14.7% of children aged six and 14 to be economically active in the country.¹⁰ Their data demonstrates discrepancies of up to 9.3% between different sources reporting findings one year apart. As a Situation Analysis Paper commissioned for the PPIC-Work Project explains:

The Egyptian government has in recent decades collected considerable information on children's work, education, and related topics... However, the usefulness of this official data often has been limited by constantly changing definitions and survey methods, which impairs the comparability of information from different time periods and makes it difficult to establish trends.¹¹

More recent estimates have placed the number of working children more consistently between 6-7% of Egyptian children. According to the 1998 Labour Market Survey (LMS) 6.4% of children – 4% of boys and 8.9% of girls – between the ages of 7 and 14 were engaged in economic activity or significant domestic work.¹² A decade later, UNICEF reported that approximately 7% of children – 8% of boys and 5% of girls – ages 5-14 were found performing 'child labour' from 1999-2007.¹³ While the overall numbers are close, when disaggregated by gender it appears the ratios have reversed. The contradictions between even these statistics demonstrate the challenges in analysing the scope and breadth of Egyptian children's work over time and the importance of developing consistent definitions and tools to understand and address the issues surrounding their work more comprehensively.

In 2001 the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) conducted their first *National Survey on Child Labour* in Egypt. This survey found that of the total population of children working, 64% of could be found in agriculture, 14% in crafts, 12% in commerce,

¹⁰ Azer et al, 2007. P 18.

¹¹ Zibani, N. *Working Children in Egypt and Aswan*, Commissioned for PPIC-Work 2002, P 1.

¹² Understanding Children's Work Project – Country Data" *International Labour Organization*. Accessed on May 14, 2009: http://ucw-project.org/cgi-bin/ucw/Survey/Main.sql?come=Ucw_Tables.sql These are the most recent LMS statistics available on Egypt, and are considered to be relatively rigorous as they account for girls' work to support the economic activity of their families, and are designed to be compatible with broader Labour Force Sample Surveys (LFSSs). Unfortunately as author of the PPIC-Work Situation Analysis notes, the LMS is still flawed in that it "classifies responses according to 'primary activity', and a child enrolled in school is automatically classified as studying and not in the labor market, regardless of whether he or she also works. Moreover, there is a significant response error of unknown size. This standardized labor force survey (and census) methodology, used in Egypt and most other countries, produces such an unreliable estimate (usually a large undercount) of the numbers of children who in fact do work that some specialists prefer to ignore absolute numbers altogether." 2002, p 4.

¹³ UNICEF "Child protection statistics" Accessed on May 16, 2009:

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/egypt_statistics.html. UNICEF considered their survey correspondents to be performing child labour if (a) as a 5 to 11 year-old they had engaged in at least one hour of economic activity or at least 28 hours of domestic work during the week preceding the survey, or (b) as a 12 to 14 year-old they had engaged in at least 14 hours of economic activity or at least 42 hours of economic activity and domestic work combined during the week preceding the survey.

8% in the service sector and only 2% in industries. Notwithstanding the statistical challenges mentioned above, these percentages are fairly widely cited in Egypt to give an approximation of the fields in which children are active. Due to the high level of informality of the Egyptian economy a high percentage of these children can be found working in unregulated micro- and small-enterprises ranging from grocery or supply stores to trade workshops. While these may not be considered worst forms of work, their informal nature leads to varying levels of hazardous equipment and working conditions for young employees. In Egypt the most common 'worst forms' of employment include work in metal smelters, brickyards, quarries and tanneries.¹⁴ These tend to involve heavy lifting, dangerous equipment and/or exposure to hazardous materials, and are predominantly undertaken by boys, while domestic work in non-family residences is a much less common 'worst form', and is typically performed by girls.¹⁵ Unconditional worst forms such as soldiering, prostitution, pornography, slavery and trafficking are not prevalent in the country.

In Egypt, children may be found working for a combination of reasons. They may be 'pushed' into work by issues related to the family's socio-economic level resulting from large family size; the absence of caregivers due to incarceration, death, or separation from the family unit; or the inability of other family members to work due to medical conditions. However, more frequently children are pushed into work by problems with the formal education system. According to a National Survey of adolescents conducted in 1997, "[N]early two million children between the ages of 7 and 14 were out of school, having either never started or dropped out before completion [of the compulsory grades]."¹⁶ The reasons for dropping out were found to be very different from the reasons children never started school. Those who could not access it were constrained by poverty:

They and their families simply could not pay the costs of school fees, private tutoring (virtually requisite in Egypt), and various expenses for uniforms, textbooks, writing materials, and expected school 'donations'.¹⁷

Those who dropped out, however, were not usually driven by poverty. Over one third of respondents mentioned that they had been discouraged because of their poor performance in class. Others were not interested in schooling, or chose to leave as a result of conflicts or maltreatment by teachers. Only 10% of dropouts cited poverty as the reason for their work.¹⁸ These findings are affirmed in a recent assessment conducted by Terre des hommes-Egypt for their "The Protection of Working Children in Damietta Project" in early 2009.¹⁹

Children may also be 'pulled' into or attracted to work by more positive factors including the income it may provide for them – either for personal use or to support their family –

¹⁴ Note: it was difficult to find Egyptian information about worst forms of child labour in the academic literature and therefore this list comes from general consensus among practitioners. Even a 2007 publication by the World Food Programme: *Rapid Assessment: Identification of Worst Forms of Child Labor in: Beni Sweif, Assiut, Sohag, and Red Sea* failed to discuss what constitutes a worst form of work and which ones are prevalent in these governorates of Egypt.

¹⁵ To date, the latter has not been well studied, publicized and addressed by government and NGOs alike.

¹⁶ Zibani, 2002. P 6.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ This assessment involved in-depth interviews with 121 full-time workers aged 16 and under. A total of 78 or 64% stated education-related problems as the main reason they left school to work. Of these, 25% suggested a low capacity for formal education, 18% reported bad treatment of teachers, 9% explained that the curriculum was inappropriate or challenging, and 3% reported bad treatment in general. An additional 22% of these 78 suggested they left school for a combination of reasons, while 23% suggested they left for other reasons such as economic issues. Internal Document, cited with permission.

and the desire to learn a trade and/or develop business and life skills for a career. The decision to learn a trade may be related to poor performance in school, limited career opportunities resulting from failure to enter the formal education system²⁰ or as a way to enhance overall capacities.

Within this context, PPIC-Work programming focuses predominantly on supporting children who work in micro-enterprises that are reasonably safe, in non-worst forms of work and where hazards, when they exist, can be mitigated. Two PPIC-Work interventions have been undertaken where children are engaged in worst forms of child labour: since autumn of 2007 PPIC-Work has partnered with Community and Institutional Development (CID) to pilot programming to improve conditions for children working in the brickyards.²¹ Even more recently, the PPIC-Work team has begun a second pilot program with the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) on technology upgrading in the Metal Smelting industry to eliminate inherently hazardous work for children there. However LTW programming is appropriate only for the trades in non-worst forms of work, and has been developed very consciously in communities where work hazards may be found but they can be mitigated.

²⁰ For example, in the same survey of 121 children, six children or 5% of interviewees never attended school. However, five of these six boys suggested the reason they started working was to learn a trade.

²¹ Programming in the brickyards seeks to provide non-formal education classes to children using Montessori models, and to engage with business owners to mechanize the brick-making process thereby engineering out the hazardous work for children. The goal is to shift their work from carrying piles of heavy, hot bricks long distances to using equipment such as trolleys.

Employing a Rights-based Approach

During the inception of the PPIC-Work project, efforts were made to establish a strong grounding in rights-based programming. While the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the central framework guiding the field, there are many interpretations within academic and practitioner circles about what rights and rights-based approaches actually entail.²² While child rights are widely embodied in international conventions, charters and in national constitutions, rights are also expressed through everyday attitudes and practices. Thus it was important for PPIC-Work to integrate a rights-based approach on multiple levels of the project: first, for internal processes or modes of operation; second, for the local structural level, coordinating groups of children and business owners to develop a code of conduct that works for their businesses; and third, in linking local findings and work to a larger policy dialogue.

In discerning how to employ a rights-based approach project staff investigated the different international laws and conventions pertaining to children and work and sought to determine the implications of these laws for the project.²³ In this process, staff discovered that conflicts occasionally arise within and between international conventions:

The historical evolution of the Minimum Age Convention (ILO 138 from 1973), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) and the Convention of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO 182 from 1999) have within them different understandings of childhood and these differences will affect how children's work is viewed. There are also differing interpretations of the definitions of work and hazards from work. As such the application of Convention 138 and Article 32 of the CRC can be interpreted to mean that all children below 18 years of age should be excluded from work. In other instances, the CRC (Articles 1, 12 and 32) refers to the need to always act in children's best interests, to ensure that children participate in decisions that affect them and that children should be protected from **exploitation** through work. The CRC recognizes that children may work under certain circumstances and that attempts to ban children from work may clearly not be in children's best interest and may even bring harm to children and their families.²⁴

As a result of these conclusions, PPIC-Work staff have undertaken an approach that both engages with children in their present working circumstances and seeks to improve their working conditions and learning opportunities by striving to act with children to support their best interests. This approach acknowledges the importance of international conventions, particularly the core principles within the CRC, which support a holistic approach to rights instead of focusing on individual aspects of a convention. Effectively involving the children, their families and business owners in a participatory process is assumed to support substantial and positive change in their lives.

²² Comparing development practitioners in Bangladesh, White remarks: "For some, child rights meant thinking about the whole child in an integrated way rather than through separate sectoral programmes such as health or education. For others, child rights held a much more specific content of respect to individuals, and entitlements to self-determination and participation. For some rights were given and inalienable. For others, they need to be established, by the state, by individual struggle, or even individual merit." Pp 729. White, S. "From the Politics of Poverty to the Politics of Identity: Child Rights and Working Children in Bangladesh" in *Journal of International Development: 2002: Vol 14, Issue 6. pp 725-735.*

²³ As discussed in the PPIC-Work Project's Annual Work Plan from 2003, "[B]oth human rights and children's rights are protected through law as well as through custom and practice; however, there can be times when conflicts between law and custom arise. In such instances it is expected that the national law and national constitutions will override local customs to protect rights and furthermore, that international law and conventions (such as the CRC, ILO 138 and ILO 182) will supersede national law." P 6.

²⁴ Ibid, pp 6-7.

Clarifying Terms

How does one define 'child labour'? As scholars suggest,

Although children can be seen working all over the world, their activities are perceived in a wide variety of ways, resulting in multiple, competing definitions of 'child labor'. This means that however it is used, the term is not an objective, technical description of a single, observable set of human relations, but rather a rhetorical label that blends description with negative value judgments.²⁵

As the field evolves, researchers and practitioners are moving towards a greater consensus on defining child labour as a sub-set of children's work that involves a violation of rights or exploitation. However it is unfortunately still common for researchers and practitioners to equate all children's work with child labour, or to avoid defining what they mean by their usage of the term.²⁶ This can, in part, be attributed to competing definitions of the two sub-components of 'child labour'. This section briefly explores some of the common social constructions of 'child' and 'labour', and how PPIC-Work interpretations have shaped engagement with children in the Learning Through Work initiative.

a) Perspectives on Children's 'Work'

'Work' is conceptualised in a range of ways, from unpaid household chores or any form of productive activity on one end of the spectrum, to remunerated formal sector employment on the other.²⁷ The prevailing concept in economic development, used by the ILO, labour ministries, economists, and trade unions views work as paid employment or 'economic participation'.²⁸ While this conceptualisation creates clear boundaries, it has shortcomings: it excludes and arguably undervalues unpaid activities like domestic work, volunteerism and collaboration in family-run businesses if individuals - frequently children - are not directly compensated. In the English language, the definition of 'labour' is generally narrower and more negative than 'work' as it is frequently associated with "toil and strife", or - in the context of 'labour camps' and 'child labour' - exploitation.²⁹ As a result of these connotations, there are an increasing number of child protection initiatives that challenge the notion of children's work as intrinsically negative by calling only what they perceive to be inherently hazardous and/or exploitative forms of children's work 'child labour', or by avoiding the term entirely.³⁰ PPIC-Work partners are among these organizations, as staff have observed that when work occurs in a safe and non-exploitative environment, is age appropriate, and involves a learning component it can be a positive element in a child's life. Naturally there are qualifications: for a work environment to be non-exploitative there must be fair wages, reasonable work hours, safe conditions, and good treatment for the

²⁵ Ennew, J.; Myers, W.; and Plateau, D. "Defining Child Labor as if Human Rights Really Matter" in *Child Labor and Human Rights: Making Children Matter*. Weston, B. (ed.). Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005. p 28.

²⁶ Myers, W. "Considering Child Labor: Changing terms, issues and actors at the international level". *Childhood Vol 6, No. 1, 13-26, 1999*.

²⁷ After consulting working children for their landmark position paper *Children and Work*, the Save the Children Alliance concluded that, "For girls and boys work means many things. For some unpaid activities are not considered work. For others it is important to include these activities to ensure that the housework of girls is recognized. Some working children argue that work is 'dignified' and contributes to their own or their family's survival. Others see work as harmful and exploitative." 2003, p 2.

²⁸ Ennew, Myers, and Plateau, 2005. pp 34-35.

²⁹ Dore, R. "The Pains and Rewards of Work in the Twenty-First Century" in *Work in the Global Economy: Papers and Proceedings from an International Symposium*. Eds. Lavieci, J.; Horiuchi, M.; and Kazou Sugeno. Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 2004. p 3.

³⁰ As Ennew, Myers and Plateau argue, "Concepts and definitions [of 'child labor'] are so many, so varied, and frequently so vague that the term has been devalued beyond technical usefulness." 2005, p 27

child. Furthermore, work should not undermine a child's ability to participate in formal education if they are interested in this, nor prevent them from enjoying leisure time. Ideally, work should be a choice for children, not something they are forced into as a result of economic hardship within their family, or an inaccessible or failing education system.

The concept of 'childhood' is itself a social construction, and one that has varying associations and expectations in different cultural communities. As developmental psychologist Barbara Rogoff describes in *The Cultural Nature of Human Development*, the age at which a child will begin taking on responsibilities, such as caring for younger children, or training for autonomy, for example using sharp tools, may occur at vastly different times depending on the community. While children in North America and Western Europe learn in homogenous age groups at formal institutions and practice or play instead of participating in the community's mature activities, much of the world uses a very different model, integrating children into everyday activities of their communities and teaching them through experience and close observation instead of in the abstract.³¹

Unfortunately, as Ennew, Myers and Plateau point out, a "northern cultural construction of childhood and child-rearing is now globally dominant".³² This is problematic because:

...[it is] incorrectly assumed to represent a scientific understanding of children valid everywhere and is the driving force behind many universalised social policies, including those governing child work... *even in developing societies where often these policies do not fit.*³³

Thus, some academics suggest that efforts to abolish child labour through minimum age standards, embodied in ILO Convention 138 and national policies throughout the world, need to be reconsidered, as:

(1) insufficient attempt has been made to determine [its] real impact on children, the intended beneficiaries, (2) existing evidence suggests that the policy often harms the children it claims to protect, and (3) the effort of enforcing blanket prohibitions affecting all work – even safe work – diverts attention away from the urgent need to intervene in forms and conditions of work that are genuinely harmful to children.³⁴

It is extremely important that development initiatives assisting working children consider the cultural framework in which children's work takes place, as well as how their interventions relate to and could affect these frameworks.

b) Perspectives on Children's 'Education'

With the current focus on achieving "education for all" and "eliminating illiteracy" within development circles, discussions about 'education' can be easily oversimplified to include only 'formal education', or non-formal literacy programming. However, as Ivan Illich points out: "Paradoxically, the belief that universal schooling is absolutely necessary is most firmly held in those countries where the fewest people have been – and will be – served by schools."³⁵ Critiques of the mainstream institutions and philosophy of education suggest a

³¹ Rogoff, B. *The Cultural Nature of Human Development*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. pp 4-9. Rogoff suggests that the Northern model has only excluded children from participation in mature activities since the industrial revolution when mechanization removed the need for children's contributions and an extended education system began preparing them for other forms of work.

³² Ennew, Myers, and Plateau, 2005. p 31.

³³ Ibid, 31. Emphasis added.

³⁴ Bordillion, M.; Myers, W.; and White, B. "Reassessing Minimum Age Laws for Children's Work" in *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 2009: Vol 29, Issue 3/4. P 106.

³⁵ Illich, I. *Deschooling Society*. London: Marion Boyars, 1970. P 7.

crisis in our values and systems of education. As Maalak Zaalouk elucidates,

Education, a public good, is tailored for private goals and the exclusive interests of those in power, and to the enhancement of career development in its narrowest sense, and not to vocations or principles and causes.³⁶

She is not alone in calling for the reframing of education to foster human – as opposed to economic – development. In this framework, PPIC-Work staff have come to view knowledge, learning, and education as concepts that extend beyond formal training or literacy to all the things that enable one to survive and participate in community life. Learning is not confined to a classroom or curriculum; rather, it is a life-long process people engage in everywhere, and which is an intrinsic part of what it means to be human. As the 21st Century Learning Initiative explains:

Table 1: Understanding ‘Learning’³⁷

- Learning is fundamentally social and inseparable from engagement in the world.
- Knowledge is integrated in the life of communities; learning is how people gain membership and participate in community.
- Learning is an act of membership; motivation in learning lies in the intimate relation between the desire for participation and the role of new knowledge in enabling that participation.
- Knowing depends on engagement in practice; only in the classroom is knowledge presented in the abstract.
- Engagement is inseparable from empowerment; potential for learning is greatest in situations in which participants have meaningful roles in real action that has consequences not only for them but for their community as well.
- Failure to learn is the result of exclusion from participation; people denied membership with the right to contribute to the creation of meaning cannot be sufficiently engaged to learn easily.
- We already are lifelong learners; in the search to participate, people learn all the time, but not necessarily what is best for them or society.

To build on the popular Yeats expression, education is not the filling of an individual pail; it is the lighting of a collective, participatory process in which individual actors and groups can learn from and shape an evolving body of knowledge that explains what it is to be human and how to live in a particular culture or community.

Learning, in this broader experiential sense, may be understood as a form of “apprenticeship in thinking”. As Barbara Rogoff explains in her book of the same title, children begin this cognitive apprenticeship at an early age, “through guided participation in social activity with companions who support and stretch [their] understanding of and skill

³⁶ Zaalouk, M. *The Pedagogy of Empowerment: Community Schools as a Social Movement in Egypt*. American University in Cairo Press, 2004. P 4.

³⁷ 21st Century Learning Initiative. *Schooling Alone Cannot Successfully Prepare Young People for the Economic and Social Challenges of the 21st Century*. 1997. As cited in Myers, W. “Some Thoughts About Learning Through Work and SME Apprenticeships”. Prepared for PPIC-Work, Jan. 2007. The 21st Century Learning Initiative “was established in 1995 by a group of English and American businessmen and organizations. [Their] essential purpose is to facilitate the emergence of new approaches to learning that draw upon a range of insights into the human brain, the functioning of human societies, and learning as a community-wide activity. [They] are convinced that education has to be about much more than intellectual development, and that learning and schooling are certainly not necessarily synonymous.”

<http://www.21learn.org/>

in using the tools of culture.”³⁸ Their guides are older children and adults, whom they observe and interact with, developing behaviours, values and skills along the way. Increasingly, as they participate in the community, they begin transmitting knowledge to those who come after them.

This understanding of learning has been important for PPIC-Work as the project seeks to enhance the learning opportunities available to working children both in the workplace, and in groups with peers. Since Egyptian children may be expected to begin contributing to the family or participating in mature activities earlier than in other parts of the world, and, at the same time, safe work environments such as mechanic or hairdressing shops can be positive sites for them to develop skills needed for life and to participate in their community, supporting them in safe work and maximizing their opportunities for learning within this environment is in fact supporting their rights to participation and education. If they are not interested in returning to formal schooling or wish to combine their work with other non-formal education programming, this support is especially important.

c) Combining Children’s Education and Work

If one recognizes the educational value of work, there are a number of ways in which the learning opportunities of working children may be enhanced by combining work and education. Child protection specialist Dr. William Myers identifies four ways in which learning and work can be naturally combined:

Table 2: Combining Education and Work³⁹

1.	Learning Through Work (LTW): any type of apprenticeship arrangement, where children or youth perform work activities under the guidance of a more knowledgeable person. It is learning that takes place during normal work and in actual workplaces.
2.	Learning With Work (LWW): learning that takes place alongside work, like literacy or numeracy. Learning is separate from work. Work is usually scheduled to take place during school holidays or break periods.
3.	Learning From Work (LFW): programs that lead working children to reflect upon their experience in work, draw lessons from it, and then use their insights to advance their own protection and best interests.
4.	Learning For Work (L4W): vocational education in the form of schools or classes dedicated to teaching children a trade, organized as a full-time instructional activity with basic literacy and numeracy as prerequisites.

These models can be built upon by development practitioners to enhance working children’s access to relevant education programming. The strengths and limitations of each are outlined below.

The first model, Learning Through Work, has been a popular educational methodology for the transmission of skills since ancient times. Even today, apprenticeship systems flourish in a variety of forms around the world, ranging from formal to informal, individualized to collective and ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’. As Myers notes,

Essential skills—ranging from the simplest to the most sophisticated—that sustain the economy and urbanization of most [countries] are learned through apprenticeship processes apart from formal education. *There is at this time no other realistic alternative for producing workers with essential skills in the number, variety and quality needed to support [the development of] society.*⁴⁰

³⁸ Rogoff, B. *Apprenticeship in Thinking: Cognitive Development in Social Context*, New York:Oxford University Press, 1990. p vii.

³⁹ Myers, 2007. With slight adaptations.

⁴⁰ Ibid. (Emphasis added).

The challenge is that apprenticeship systems in the informal economy may not provide a comprehensive learning system that caters to all of the educational interests or needs of children. Apprenticeships do create workers whose knowledge is based on practical experience, who must and do innovate to respond to the needs of their markets, and who develop the entrepreneurial skills required to open their own business in the future. These apprenticeships require few resources for the trainee or trainer, making LTW far more cost-effective than the other models described above. Workshops also foster natural employment networks, and offer potential for long-term support between trainer and trainees. However, apprenticeships are also largely unregulated, which can result in variable working conditions and treatment for the apprentices. As was stated earlier, apprenticeships often provide limited theoretical education, may lack equipment or depend on outdated technology, and may not provide the trainee with literacy or negotiation skills. The quality of instruction depends entirely on the pedagogical skills of the trainer and they may wilfully limit their trainee's progress or neglect training as jobs take precedence over teaching. As some trades in Egypt have deep cultural roots, they also may reinforce existing social patterns or fail to address some forms of exclusion such as gendered trades and roles within a trade.⁴¹

In order to build upon this model it is important to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the specific industries one intends to support and identify children's learning gaps and how intervention in the system is possible. This process may require an in-depth study of the industry or conversations with business owners and working children to gauge their interests and needs.

The second model, Learning With Work, may be formal or non-formal in character, and addresses the need for written linguistic skills and other forms of knowledge such as geography or science. If conducting programming with working children who are not in school, development organizations typically need to respond with active child-centred activities and let the learners contribute ideas to the curriculum content. It is possible in some cases to support children's re-entry into the school system; however this requires careful analysis of the root causes of withdrawal from it and discussion with them and their families about their interests and aspirations. PPIC-Work staff are critical of current discourse suggesting that "child labour [i]s an obstacle to education for all" and that helping them transition back to formal schooling is their ticket to a better life.⁴² Conversations with children who have left the formal education system has shown that while they are interested in gaining literacy, numeracy and computer skills they are predominantly not interested in rejoining this system.

The third model, Learning From Work, is predominantly approached through non-formal education activities and addresses the need for praxis – critical reflection and action to change one's experience. The PPIC-Work project utilizes a modest combination of the second and third approaches in our non-formal education programming, offering working children a range of literacy, numeracy and arts sessions on the Learning With Work side, and facilitating workshops on hazards in the workplace and child rights in the workplace to enable them to negotiate better working hours and conditions with their employers on the Learning From Work side. High quality programming of this type has the potential to encourage higher or more significant levels of participation from children, enabling them to better advocate for their rights and interests.

⁴¹ Discussion of strengths and weaknesses based in part on Crump, P.; Grierson, J.; and Mortagi, M. *Tradition and Change: Enterprise-Based Training in Egypt*. Commissioned by CEOSS, NCNW and USAID, 2000. pp 25-26.

⁴² Guarcello, L.; Lyon, S. and Rosati, F. "Child Labour and Education For All, an Issue Paper" *Understanding Children's Work: an Inter-Agency Cooperation Project*. November, 2006. Pp 1, 20

The last model, Learning For Work, is often difficult to incorporate into schools in the developing world, as this requires significant changes in how the formal education systems operate, and the bureaucratic machines supporting these systems typically have difficulty responding.⁴³ While technical secondary schools exist in Egypt, they are not seen to provide students with enough of the vocational skills they need to transition into the workplace effectively.⁴⁴ This may be partly attributed to the lack of resources invested in technical education:

2.4 million students are currently enrolled in TSS, but the entire state budget allocated to these students does not exceed 55.7 million pounds or about 23 pounds per student (academic year 2006/7). In the end there is almost no budget at all for teacher training. Income of teachers is low and may be one reason that two-thirds of students take private lessons to keep up. Private lessons constitute the only substantial source of income for teachers, something which may contribute to the low quality of regular teaching.⁴⁵

Discussions with business owners and working youth have also demonstrated that young people who undergo enterprise-based training – or learning in the workplace – believe they are more likely than their vocational-trained peers to find related employment and to be successful in their work.⁴⁶ Their skills are deemed to be “better adapted to the market, they have developed a more complete package of skills and attitudes, and they are more connected to networks of support and opportunity.”⁴⁷

Formal vocational education programming in Egypt has proven to be expensive and insufficient for the students that require vocational skills. For these reasons, Myers suggests,

...[O]ne of the most viable ways to provide training sufficiently *en masse* to meet the growing workforce and small business entrepreneurship needs of a developing society is to make use of current informal apprenticeships where they exist, empowering, improving, and expanding their capacity as education providers.⁴⁸

All of these considerations, underlined by the idea that “[P]eople learn best when they learn skills in the context in which the information is used,”⁴⁹ have made a Learning Through Work approach appropriate for PPIC-Work.

⁴³ Myers, 2007

⁴⁴ According to a GTZ report, “[O]nly 50% of enrolled [Technical Secondary School] students graduate at all and a large proportion of them leave school to go into unemployment (around 35%), mainly as a result of the low quality of the courses and their lack of relevance to labour market needs. Therefore, graduates are ill equipped for the labour market and usually need retraining.” Grunwald, E. et al. *Vocational education and training in the context of labour mobility – country report “Egypt”*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), 2009. P 5

⁴⁵ GTZ, 2009. P 5

⁴⁶ As one youth combining technical secondary school and work has explained, it is best to combine work and school, but if this is not possible it is better to work than to go to a technical school if you want to learn the trade. Interview with Mahmoud – youth working in Carpentry – February 23, 2008.

⁴⁷ Myers, 2007. See also Crump, P.; Grierson, J.; and Mortagi, M. 2000

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Poczik, R. “Work-based education and school reform”, in *Learning to Work: Employer Involvement in School-to-Work Transition programs*, ed. Bailey, T. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995. p 56.

Enhancing Apprenticeship Systems in Egypt

Since 2005, the PPIC-Work project has been slowly developing the theoretical and programmatic foundations for Learning Through Work. An initial study, conducted in Aswan by Dr Maged Helmy and Mona Ismail, revealed that children develop valuable technical, business and life skills as they pass through a four-stage training process in micro-enterprises.⁵⁰ A second rapid survey, conducted by the pair in Doweika in 2006, affirmed the relevancy of conclusions from the Aswan research to the Cairo context and documented the technical skills learned in each of these stages in three local trades.⁵¹ This laid the foundation for an in-depth qualitative assessment of four Doweika industries between late 2007 and early 2008 with the aim of establishing programming to enhance the learning processes in terms of technical, business and life skill acquisition in these industries. The objectives of that assessment and overall Learning Through Work Programming are:

Table 3: LTW Objectives

1. To explore how technical and cognitive apprenticeships work in micro-enterprises, and identify gaps in children's learning in specific industries.
2. To use this understanding to enhance learning opportunities for working children by:
 - a. Supporting Business Owners (BOs) to improve learning opportunities within their workplace,
 - b. Facilitating BOs' acquisition of new technologies that improve the learning environment, and
 - c. Filling learning gaps outside the workplace through relevant educational programming.
3. To assist already-working children in the search for safe/educational jobs.

The Doweika neighbourhood of Cairo was selected as the pilot site for the initiative for a number of reasons: this neighbourhood has a significant number of workshops that employ children learning trades; initial research had been undertaken in this community already; and PPIC-Work's MFI partner had recently commenced its loan programming in the area and was already establishing relationships with local business owners. Four industries were selected for the pilot program: automotive repair, textiles, carpentry and hairdressing. Over the course of this assessment PPIC-Work staff conducted in-depth interviews with five to ten business owners in each of the industries, in-depth interviews with all available working children and youth in the same micro-enterprises, and separate focus group discussions for business owners and working children in most sectors to verify findings. A total of 55 business owners, children, and youth contributed to the LTW assessment.⁵²

Following analysis of field research and planning, the PPIC-Work team developed a series of interventions in the Doweika community:

⁵⁰ Helmy M. and Ismail, M. 2005.

⁵¹ Helmy M. and Ismail, M. *Learning Through Work*. Commissioned for PPIC-Work in 2006.

⁵² For a list of interviewees, including background information, see appendix 3

Table 4: LTW Interventions

1. Improving learning opportunities in the workplace by:
 - a. Enhancing the instructional methods of business owners via participatory workshops, discussion groups, work tours and a charter of learning; and
 - b. Providing BOs with access to new technologies to upgrade workplace safety via loans and rentals.
2. Improving learning opportunities outside of the workplace by:
 - a. Offering children non-formal educational programming: literacy and numeracy, rights awareness and computer-based learning.
3. Facilitating a referral centre or network for already-working children.

The purpose of these interventions is to support and strengthen existing apprenticeship systems in culturally sensitive ways, instead of importing a model that could affect community structures in negative ways or simply be inappropriate for the Doweika context. Cooperating with business owners was identified as the key to improving the learning opportunities. The main challenge of Learning Through Work programming then is to discern how to attract business owners to participate in project activities and to create positive and sustainable mechanisms for behavioural change. Business owners' interests must be served in order to share their valuable time and to commit to improving their workshop environment and teaching methods.

The following sections explore a) how informal apprenticeships in Egyptian micro-enterprises operate, as gleaned from recent field research and b) the successes and challenges of PPIC-Work implementation to date.

a) How Apprenticeship Systems Work: the Unwritten Syllabi

In informal apprenticeships in Egyptian micro-enterprises, a child's training begins the moment they enter the workshop. The amount of time required to progress through an apprenticeship varies across industries, between business, and from child to child. However PPIC-Work staff have isolated a few main factors:

Table 5: Factors that affect the Rate of Progress in an Apprenticeship

1. The age, size, cognitive development and/or maturity of the child
2. The child's eagerness to learn and ability to stay in one workshop
3. The instructor's skills and teaching philosophy
4. The needs and opportunities inside the workshop

Over the course of field research these factors were affirmed in many interviews. As one youth described from his experience training younger children, "What takes one child one week takes another a month due to differences in their minds."⁵³ Comparing two boys he had trained at different times, another youth said: "the first boy did a lot more because he was a quick learner."⁵⁴ When recounting their stories of how they learned the trade, some business owners who took many years to open their own businesses explained that the extreme length of their apprenticeship – fifteen to twenty years - was a result of being held back by the business owner, or only learning certain elements of the trade.⁵⁵ While

⁵³ Interview with Mustafa – working youth in automotive industry – November 17, 2007.

⁵⁴ Interview with Hassan – working youth in automotive industry – November 17, 2007.

⁵⁵ Interview with Ibrahim – BO in automotive repair industry – November 3, 2007; Interview with Shaaban – BO in carpentry industry – January 24, 2008

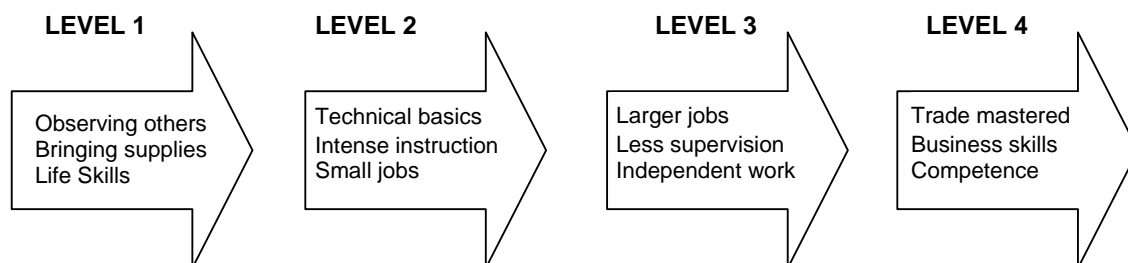
individualized progress based on the abilities and interests of the child can be a strength of enterprise-based learning, when children are hindered from learning it can adversely affect their short and long-term wellbeing.

After interviewing business owners about their experiences as apprentices researchers concluded that developing statistics on the average length of time taken to become a business owner was futile because each interviewee had a unique experience. The fact that business owners and youth commonly identified progression through the apprenticeship as based on initiative, skill and occasionally size – as opposed to the length of time performing a certain job or the age of the worker – reinforces this point. Further, the diversity of attitudes and abilities possessed by both trainer and trainee make the apprenticeship process difficult to regulate and support.

Stages of Learning

As mentioned above, different researcher teams working in Aswan, Doweika and now Damietta have affirmed the existence of four levels of learning.⁵⁶ It should be acknowledged, however, that there was not 100% consistency among interview subjects on what was learned at each stage, the length of time required to learn the skills in that stage, and in a few cases the number of stages themselves. Interview subjects frequently made comments like “the learning never stops” and some required significant clarification to separate things into levels.⁵⁷ This may indicate some tension between a Western conceptualisation of learning that constructs phases or benchmarks, and an Egyptian framework that views training more holistically and fluidly, emphasizing life-long learning.

Table 6: What is Typically Learned at Each Stage



At the first level, the child generally assists other workers without becoming involved in the technical process and tasks include: bringing materials to the workers, cleaning the shop, observing work, learning the names of equipment/tools, and running errands. This stage continues until the child is familiar with the work environment, has developed trust with the employer and has demonstrated an interest in learning the trade. The first stage often takes between a few months and a year. At this point in the apprenticeship the child is learning many life skills: they are tested for honesty and integrity, they develop a sense of responsibility towards their work and workshop materials, and in many cases they are coached in communication skills and proper hygiene. Learning life skills through work is very important to both the business owners and the working children themselves.⁵⁸ When

⁵⁶ The Damietta Study was conducted by Terre des hommes-Egypt, another child protection organization working with Egyptian children who work. One could include a fifth learning or ‘entrepreneurial’ stage, where the apprentice ‘graduates’ from training to become a workshop owner. Over the course of the assessment, PPIC-Work Staff encountered a few business owners that included this level in the stages they identified. While there is certainly significant learning required to start up a business, analysis will be confined here to learning under the supervision of older peers or adults, which happens predominantly in the four levels identified mentioned above.

⁵⁷ Interview with Asharaf – BO in automotive repair industry – November 3, 2007; Interview with Hossein – BO in automotive repair industry – November 1, 2007

⁵⁸ As Mustafa – BO in automotive repair industry – indicated, “It is important for the business owner to develop the life skills/qualities of employees because if the child does not have good relationships with others, those

youth in the automotive industry were asked about the most important thing learned through work, 80% identified life skills, specifically how to communicate with others, how to be responsible, how to be a good person, how to be self-reliant, and how to love the trade. As one boy explained,

These qualities are foundational – you learn them from very early on. If the building foundation is not strong, the whole house collapses.⁵⁹

In many cases the business owner prefers to hire a younger child aged 10-12 as opposed to an older child because it is easier to shape these qualities in a younger child.



Meet Amal. She is 12 years old. She is about to finish the first stage of an apprenticeship in the hairdressing industry. She is currently combining work and school, spending six hours a day at the hairdressing salon six days a week. Amal is working because she wants to be a hairdresser when she grows up, and because she needs to pay for tutorials in order to pass her classes, like the majority of her classmates.

She has been working in this business for about one year now, and is good at cleaning the shop, handing the right tools to the hairdresser and running errands. She is excited to be learning how to wash and blow-dry hair, and has fun practicing to put make-up on her business owner and other workers. As she gains experience, Amal will begin to do makeup for customers, as well as offering them manicures and pedicures.⁶⁰

At the second level of the apprenticeship system, the child begins to learn the technical trade through guided observation and participating in small repairs. They prepare the vehicle or materials for the main work by washing, sanding, or trimming things, or removing small parts. They may also do simple repetitive work to gain experience with different elements of the trade. During this time they are taken under the wing of either older workers or, if it is a small business, the business owner. These instructors will teach the apprentice all of the essential technical procedures. As the child gains competency in basic technical skills, they will be given more significant and challenging work, gradually transitioning to the third level.

Meet Hassan. He is 17 years old. He has been working since he was 11, and is now in the second level of an apprenticeship as a car mechanic. He has not always been in this business: he started out in a barber's shop. He changed professions after two years, starting in this industry with a different business owner. His first mechanic workshop was a large one and he did not feel he was doing much except bringing tools although he was keen to learn the trade. After one year he asked if he could begin doing small things, so they let him start training, but around that time his trainer left and the new one sometimes hit him and said bad things about his mother so he left. Hassan's uncle knew another mechanic, so he asked if Hassan could work with him. This new apprenticeship has been much better. He feels that his new business owner is like a father to him, and likes what he is learning. He now knows how to take the engine out of cars and contribute to the repairs. However he says that the most important things he has learned are how to depend on himself, how to help others and how to love his trade. Hassan spent five years in school, leaving before completing primary school. He is keen to learn how to read and write and wants to know how to use computers because he believes that in the future he will need this for his work.



others could come and cause damage to the shop." In other words, the actions and reputation of the child is important for business owners because they may affect customer service. Interview, October 29, 2007

⁵⁹ Interview with youth from automotive repair industry, November 3, 2007.

⁶⁰ Note: names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of individual study participants. Photos may also not represent the individuals in the case studies as an additional measure to ensure privacy. All photos used with permission

At the third level the child is able to do small jobs and increasingly significant components on their own, and is well on their way to mastering the technical trade. It may take a few years before they will be able to do complete jobs on their own, but during this stage they gain experience using larger machinery and in many cases begin to learn the prices of materials and services and to negotiate prices with customers in the absence of the Business Owner.



Meet Mohamed. He is 17 years old. He has been working in his father's carpentry business since he was 10 years old and is now between the third and fourth stage in his apprenticeship. He is combining work and school attending a technical secondary school for carpentry. During the week, he works six hours a day, and on weekends he works 11-12 hours, but he is happy with this because he wants to be a carpenter. He says going to school has made him love the trade even more. By now Mohamed can do small jobs on his own and is starting to learn business skills. He is also learning how to do decorative designs at school and is teaching his father how to do these as well. He plans to open his own business in the future, perhaps when he is 20.

At the fourth and final level, the child – by this time a young adult – becomes a ‘senior apprentice’, and can do complete jobs on his or her own. Their focus shifts to the acquisition of business skills so that they can open their own shop in the future. In this stage the youth learns how to account for materials and labour time when setting prices, negotiate with customers, manage the resources of the business, balance profit maximization with fairness, and in some cases keep records of accounts.⁶¹ In some cases – particularly in the carpentry industry – these skills are not fully developed in the workplace, and are tested and enhanced only after an apprentice leaves the business to start their own enterprise.⁶² Research in the textile industry has also revealed that girls do not often make it to this final stage as a result of cultural assumptions about their role in society, and their own common preference to stop working once they are engaged or married.

Meet Heba. She is 22 years old. She has never been to school, but she taught herself how to read and write. She started working when she was 12. Heba chose to work in the sewing industry because she thought it would be suitable work for a girl and she loves this business. She has worked with her current business owner for five years and is the senior worker and manager of four or five other workers. Heba has mastered the technical trade and has been pushing the business owner to teach her very advanced things like how to repair the sewing machines and a bit about marketing and accounting. She is also teaching some of the junior workers. Although she is married and has a three-year-old daughter she wants to continue working outside the home because she loves the social environment and work. In many ways Heba defies the gender patterns in the textile industry described above.



⁶¹ Keeping accounts is, however, somewhat rare in the informal economy, as many businesses do not pay taxes.

⁶² Two of the six business owners in the carpentry industry – Mohammed and Moharram – stated that they either had not learned or did not teach apprentices business skills. For Moharram it was a matter of not trusting some apprentices with customers, and for Mohammed, it was a matter of observation and then practice as a business owner. Interviews with Mohammed and Moharram, January 26, 2008.

How do all the components of an apprenticeship fit together? This can be demonstrated in the following table. The information from this table is a synthesis of multiple interviews with business owners and children in the automotive industry. Business owners may not teach all of these things depending on their own strengths and weaknesses. Therefore this table describes what is typically learned in panel beating workshops (part of the automotive industry) and represents a framework to work towards. Apart from differences in technical skills, the content of this curriculum is fairly standard across all sub-sectors of the automotive repair industry, and is quite comprehensive.

Table 7: Skills Learned in a Panel Beating Apprenticeship

Level	Technical Skills	Business Skills	Life Skills
<i>Level 1: Entry-Level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The names of tools and how to clean - How to clean-up vehicles after the main worker uses fire to remove paint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Politeness towards staff and customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honesty/Trustworthiness - Initiative - Obedience - Personal hygiene - Timeliness - Manners/respect for others - Dedication (to work/trade)
<i>Level 2: Junior</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to remove parts (beginning with the easiest: doors, bumpers, then parts with screws/nails) - How to use fire to remove paint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prices of materials/products (sometimes) - how to talk to customers (eg. explaining when the BO will return) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attention to detail - Systematic thinking - Fairness (to customers) - Respect for others
<i>Level 3: Intermediate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to prepare vehicles for professional work – panel beating easier parts - How to recognize what needs to be done to make the repair - How to supervise and teach younger workers - How to weld 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prices of materials/products (sometimes) - how to negotiate with customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem Solving - Responsibility - Fairness - Respect for others
<i>Level 4: Senior</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to stretch the frame - How to perform difficult bending - How to respond to an evolving industry - How to work without any guidance/complete jobs independently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced customer service skills - Pricing (eg. learning how to make a profit, factoring in labour time and supplies) - Management skills (eg. maintaining inventory, ordering supplies, managing orders/time) - Administrative skills (eg. receipt writing, working with government documents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independence/self-reliance - Critical thinking skills - Time Management - Responsibility - Fairness/Justice

Overall, while proceeding through this four-stage apprenticeship system, children start out with the acquisition or enhancement of life skills, then focus heavily on technical skills for a number of years, and finally concentrate on management and entrepreneurial skills. Business owners and working children in each of the industries were readily able to identify these technical, business and life skills learned through work and affirm this general sequence of learning. While there is certainly overlap between the types of skills

learned over time, this sequence of life-technical-business skills is a framework and should not be viewed too rigidly.

The Learning Process

Teaching methodologies and approaches for technical, business and life skills were found to be similar across industries with some variation between individual instructors. Overall, the learning process interviewees identified consists of guided observation, practice, monitoring, continued repetition and then independent work. The person responsible for the child's instruction depends on the size of the workshop. In small workshops, children are predominantly taught by their business owner, who may have a familial or friendship connection with the child's family, while in larger workshops a senior worker – either a youth at an advanced stage of the apprenticeship or an adult – will train the child and may be less closely affiliated.

When business owners were asked how they evaluate their apprentices, they commonly explained that they observe the child working to see how well they are able to complete tasks. They may 'test' them by asking them to do something to see if they require help or make a mistake. In general when a child is able to complete a task many times without assistance, they have 'passed' that level in their training and can begin new tasks. Learning is iterative, frequently building upon the skills already learned, and the child will often continue to do the simple foundational activities even in the upper levels of their apprenticeship.

What varies greatly among business owners is what happens when a child makes a mistake. Some business owners use physical punishment, others use only angry words, some remove responsibilities from the workers after a serious mistake has been made, and some seek to create a learning environment in which mistakes are understood as a part of learning itself. Many business owners explained that when they were learning the trade it was very common to be disciplined with physical force, but that this model is changing over time because children will not tolerate physical punishment and will leave the business if treated this way.⁶³ Although business owners saw a difference between physical force 'to teach' and physical force 'to abuse', working youth often expressed a dislike of any fear-based model – whether physical force or yelling – as they felt the mere act of telling them they had made a mistake made them want to improve. One youth who was training younger children even indicated that he did not want to yell at his apprentice because he wanted him to love the trade.⁶⁴

At the same time, it is important that instructors encourage and recognize success in learning throughout the apprenticeship. When asked what they do when the child has done a very good job, most business owners replied that they rewarded them with a little extra money, a special drink or positive feedback. When youth were asked the same question they validated the responses of the business owners. All the youth in the automotive repair industry who answered this question claimed that when they do a good job, more than money or a treat they value the words of the business owner. Hassan indicated, "When I do something very well I am praised with kind words. These words give me confidence and make me feel happy."⁶⁵ Adel confirmed that when he does something well he is praised and gets a salary increase, but that "[It's] the words [that] mean the most!"⁶⁶

⁶³ Interview with Ibrahim – BO in automotive repair industry – November 3, 2007. Interview with Asharaf – BO in automotive repair industry – November 3, 2007. This is likely supported by the high demand for children's work in the industry.

⁶⁴ Interview with Hassan – youth in automotive repair industry – November 17, 2007

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Interview with Adel – youth in automotive repair industry – November 15, 2007.

Gaps in Learning

While the system generally seems to be working well, there is significant variation between businesses and children in learning opportunities and outcomes. From a rights perspective, identifying and filling children's learning gaps both in and outside the workplace is important, particularly as the majority of the working children and youth interviewed indicated that they have dropped out of school to work and were interested in gaining literacy and numeracy skills.⁶⁷ The following table synthesizes the key gaps for each type of skill, which should be addressed through Learning Through Work programming. These were identified by children and business owners through interviews, as well as through direct observation in workshops.

Table 8: Children's Learning Gaps

Industry	Technical	Business	Life	Other
<i>Automotive Repair</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Occupational Safety Awareness - Theoretical: how automotive electrical and mechanics work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some children are not reaching the advanced level in apprenticeship and need pricing, negotiation and communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life skills vary across businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literacy and numeracy - Computers - Rights awareness
<i>Textiles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Girls do not necessarily learn upper level technical skills - Theoretical: how to repair machines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender differentiated gaps: girls are not reaching the upper levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life skills vary across businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literacy and numeracy - Computers - Rights awareness
<i>Carpentry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Occupational safety awareness - Need for age appropriate work - Design skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some children do not learn senior level skills required to open a business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life skills vary across businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literacy and numeracy - Computers - Rights awareness
<i>Hairdressing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some require more rigorous technical training (because business owner lacks and passes this on) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children gain customer service skills earlier than other industries but may not learn management skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life skills vary across businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literacy and numeracy - Computers - Rights awareness

Apart from the content that is missing in the apprenticeship 'curricula', some of the biggest gaps in the systems are the varying levels of awareness or value on the part of business owners of what they are doing to prepare the next generation of workers, and their instructional practices. On one hand many business owners are already effective instructors with a range of good practices to share. Across the four industries, many do an excellent job of teaching technical skills to the next generation of workers. Some have adopted very sophisticated approaches to reward and punishment: giving extra responsibility to the apprentice in recognition of good work and withdrawing it as a disciplinary technique, or creating a learning environment in which mistakes are a part of learning and progress is acknowledged with words as well as monetary rewards. In each

⁶⁷ Only six out of 24 child interviewees were still in school at the time of writing: one of six working in the automotive repair sector was in technical secondary school, one of ten children in the textile industry had already graduated from secondary school, two of five girls in hairdressing were in primary school, and all three of the boys working in carpentry were still in school – ranging from primary to technical secondary. See appendix 3.

industry, there are also business owners who offer comprehensive learning for apprentices, helping them to develop core business management skills and competencies for life. Indeed, many business owners have demonstrated that they take a strong mentorship role with their young workers.

On the other hand, there are many business owners who hold back learning in their businesses, only teaching apprentices what they want them to know at specific times, or avoiding teaching some areas such as business skills. Some admit to verbally and/or physically abusing their workers when they make a mistake at work, or do not help them to develop a love for the trade or confidence in their abilities through positive encouragement. In particular, many business owners in the textile industry may not fully train female workers based on cultural assumptions that are not always reflective of their female apprentice's wishes or abilities. Both the content of the apprenticeship and the approach to teaching are important from a rights perspective, meaning that the diversity of disciplinary strategies is an area that needs further intervention. Improving the instructional abilities of business owners is a way to address both these gaps in an apprentice's curriculum, as well as the quality of instruction they receive.

b) Intervening in the System

One of the major findings of the assessment and the LTW development process was that PPIC-Work's core programming – dual purpose loans, hazard mitigation, codes of conduct, and participatory non-formal education programming – was an important foundation on which to build further LTW interventions.

Project staff came to these conclusions for a number of reasons. First, without a rights-based framework to protect children from hazardous or inappropriate work, it seems counterproductive to promote educational work; the PPIC-Work project does not wish to violate one child right to serve another. Second, without a strong relationship between project staff and business owners based on mutual benefit and support, as is created through the loan relationship, other interventions would not be successful. Third, it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel; experience gained from pilot education programming in other communities can be adapted and applied in Doweika based on the ideas, interests, and needs of children there. Through an exercise in identifying gaps, and mapping out how they could be filled, as outlined by the table below, PPIC-Work staff determined where to begin in developing the Learning Through Work initiative. Italicised interventions represent aspects of PPIC-Work's standard programming in other communities:

Table 9: Filling Gaps with Interventions

Type of Gap	Identified Gap	Intervention Target	Intervention
Technical	- Occupational Health and Safety training	- Children - Business Owners	- <i>Non-formal education program</i> - <i>Hazard Mitigations in businesses</i>
	- Limited technical equipment used in trade	- Business Owner	- <i>Dual Purpose Loans</i> Rental equipment program
	- How to use or repair equipment	- Business Owner	- Networking Meetings to exchange experiences - Workshop on instructional practices

	- Other knowledge about the industry (eg. theoretical, innovations employed by formal sector)	- Business Owners	- Professional Development Tours to larger enterprises in the formal sector
Business	- Advanced Management skills	- Children - Business Owners	- <i>Ba'alty Computer Program (business skill resource)</i> - Workshop on instructional practices - Networking sessions
Life	- Comprehensive instruction in life skills across businesses	- Children - Business Owners	- <i>Non-formal education programming</i> - Workshop on instructional practices - Networking Sessions
Other	- Literacy and Numeracy - Computer Skills - Rights awareness	- Children (for all three) - Business Owners (for rights awareness)	- <i>Non-formal education program (children)</i> - <i>Participatory code of conduct development</i> - <i>Participatory charter of learning development</i>

Although four industries were considered during the PPIC-Work assessment, only two – automotive repair and carpentry – have been involved in actual programming. This is the result of challenges operating in the community and a lack of collaboration from business owners, as well as the limited human resources and management capacities of the local partner MFI. While there was talk about developing specific interventions to address the unique needs of girls in a “Safe Spaces” mentorship program, this was not accomplished. Overall, LTW pilot programming has involved approximately 150 children and business owners to date, expanding from Doweika to Aswan after a natural disaster and security incident hindered the abilities of staff to continue in the original proposed area.

c) Successes and Challenges in Programming

This section explains the scope of interventions along each of the programming objectives: improving learning opportunities in the workplace, improving learning opportunities outside the workplace and supporting already-working children in their search for safe and educational employment. It then discusses challenges and lessons learned in implementation to date. While the implementation of PPIC-Work’s Learning Through Work initiative has been an imperfect process, programming has provided an important testing ground for working through existing apprenticeship systems and understanding the possible strategies and interventions that can be developed with micro-enterprises. It is hoped that honest reflection on these experiences will be helpful for other organizations interested in similar approaches in Egypt and beyond.

Improving Learning Opportunities in the Workplace

i. Enhancing Instructional Abilities of Business Owners

In order to improve the learning opportunities available to apprentices, a central consideration must be the instructional abilities and methods of business owners themselves. As a result, the LTW team has developed four interventions for business owners to increase the use of best practices in instructional methods, and help business owners to reflect on the significance of their responsibilities as trainers and mentors in their industries. These activities include:

Table 10: Activities with Business Owners

1. A two-hour workshop for business owners entitled “Business Owners as Instructors,” described in full in appendix 4.
2. Regular networking meetings for business owners to discuss good practices among themselves, with LTW staff as facilitators.⁶⁸
3. Professional development tours for business owners to large-scale operations in their industry.
4. The development of a “Charter of Learning in the Workshop” with business owners and working children

In order for the first two interventions to be successful, PPIC-Work staff have found that there must be a range of business owners present, from those utilizing effective techniques to those using problematic ones. Both the workshop and networking meetings draw upon those business owners who exhibit good practices, asking them to share the philosophy behind their approaches to others utilizing less progressive techniques. These activities have been selected because LTW staff believe that other methods, such as a lecture on best practices conducted by MFI or project staff, would not be well received or bring about the desired behavioural change. Through peer to peer discussion, other business owners can be convinced of the value of good practices, including teaching their apprentices comprehensively to promote loyalty. Loan officers from the partner MFI or other project staff can later reinforce good practices as they develop relationships with the clients and monitor progress.

It is important to offer business owners something that benefits them directly in order to maintain their participation in the other LTW programming. Professional development tours have been an effective way to enhance their knowledge of the new technology in the industry in a way that is both accessible to them and provides them with a tangible ‘reward’ for participating in other aspects of the initiative. This idea came from focus groups with business owners, in which they were asked about activities to enhance their own professional knowledge.

It is also important to find a balance between providing attractive activities for business owners to enhance their knowledge and skills, and finding mechanisms to ensure they are committed to improving the educational environment of their workshop for their young workers. Aside from participating in a workshop, which leads to the acquisition of knowledge, it is important to encourage business owners and their working children to collaboratively design a charter of learning, essentially documenting good practices in the workplace, which they will begin to follow. This is, perhaps, the educational equivalent to a code of conduct, which encourages the application of knowledge. After programming shifted to Aswan following a rockslide and security problem in Doweika, this strategy was employed quite successfully with business owners and children. The key was in not imposing standards, but allowing those who would be affected by the charter to create it. Overall, the latter two interventions have been more successful than the first interventions, simply because project staff have only run the workshop twice and have not conducted the networking meetings on a monthly or even bi-monthly basis.

⁶⁸ In order for this intervention to be successful, there must be a range of business owners present, from those utilizing effective techniques to those using problematic ones. Business owners exhibiting good practices must explain the philosophy behind their approaches. It is hoped that through peer to peer discussion, other business owners will be convinced of the value of good practices (e.g. that it is in their interest to teach everything to their apprentice as they will be more loyal to the business and owner, as well as more diligent and skilled in their work) and change their methods.

ii. Providing BOs with Access to Loans/Rentals for Technology Upgrading: The Role of Microfinance

A microfinance institution's work in a community begins through its loans. Loan officers are in a unique position to develop a relationship of trust and openness with business owners, enabling them to monitor the progress of non-financial interventions and support the business owner to change certain practices. Indeed, experience in the Doweika community and findings from the LTW study have demonstrated that business owners require a direct benefit in order to collaborate, and when they are receiving money as a client, they are more likely to commit to participating in LTW interventions.

In the initial planning stages of the LTW initiative, focus groups were conducted with business owners to discuss the feasibility of receiving loans for technology upgrading, as this would at once increase the productivity of their business and bring in new opportunities for learning for both the BO and their apprentices.⁶⁹ Unfortunately the larger loan required to facilitate technology upgrading would entail a high level of risk for an MFI, as many business owners would have trouble paying it off, even with the increased productivity of their business. Business owners also recognized the risk for them and were not very interested in these loans. As a result, the LTW team abandoned the idea, instead exploring the possibility of renting or leasing equipment and introducing the standard PPIC-Work working capital loan with social conditionalities.⁷⁰ At this point in Doweika programming, a pilot rental program for the new technological equipment has been running for approximately one month and standard PPIC-Work 'dual purpose loans'⁷¹ have been running for about one year. The rental equipment program is still too new to evaluate; however the dual-purpose loans have assisted with relationship-building in the community. The main challenge has been that the Doweika community does not have a good market for MFIs as business owners have taken loans from another organization, which they were not forced to repay. This has created a culture of non-accountability that has been difficult to overcome and has therefore limited the pool of clients significantly.

Improving Learning Opportunities Outside the Workplace

As was identified earlier in this section, some of the pressing needs and wishes of children working in the four target industries were basic literacy, numeracy, and computer skills.⁷² These skills help apprentices to learn more about their trade, enhance their business management skills, keep up with rapidly changing technology and noticeably improve their self-confidence. They also have the potential to shape the apprentice's career aspirations, further encouraging them to become a business owner in their trade or giving them the

⁶⁹ 69 Focus group discussions with BOs in the automotive repair and textile industries, December 7, 2008 and January 17, 2008. The 'technology loans' would be for large equipment such as a computerized scanner in a car repair shop that enables the mechanic to quickly isolate which part of the system needs to be fixed without taking pieces out or running a series of tests. The computerized scanner would greatly reduce the time needed for the repair work or the overall productivity of the business, and simultaneously create a need for workers to acquire computer skills.

⁷⁰ This PPIC-Work "dual-purpose loan" provides a needed financial service to the business owner, but also requires him or her to commit to improving the conditions within the workplace. BOs are supported by loan officers to identify and address hazards in their workplace and create a code of conduct with their young workers that protect child rights.

⁷¹ Specifically, loan officers and business owners complete a hazard assessment form and business improvement plan as part of their loan negotiations, and then business owners attend a focus group with other business owners about rights within the workplace, deciding as a group what they think is fair in terms of children's work hours, treatment, and the types of work that are appropriate for them to do. Then their children are brought together by the social officers for a separate focus group discussing hazards and child rights within the workplace, the business owners' ideas about hours, treatment, work etc, and what the children would like to have included in a code of conduct. Then these two groups are brought together to collaboratively create their community's code of conduct.

⁷² Only six of 24 children and youth interviewed were in school, the majority in primary school.

courage to work towards other education-related aspirations. As a result of these needs and the PPIC-Work project's commitment to improving the educational opportunities of working children, the Doweika team has begun non-formal education programming with education specialists hired by our partner MFI. These staff members offer classes two days a week, building on the education experience of PPIC-Work partners in Aswan and training in Montessori and CARITAS approaches. Their classes present a Learning With Work model but have the potential to broaden if children express interest in learning more about the theoretical aspects of their trades. As life skills have been identified as an area that is taught inconsistently in workplaces in all four industries, LTW staff integrate life skill discussions into education programming. Topics include hygiene, communication skills, and developing healthy habits among others.

Supporting Already-Working Children in the Search for Employment

Interviews with working children and business owners demonstrated that there is already a strong informal network through which business owners find children to apprentice and work with them. In all industries except textiles, children predominantly work with a family friend, extended family member, neighbour, or acquaintance of a family member, although in some cases they simply ask for work in their desired trade. When business owners and children were asked if the creation of a community referral centre would be helpful for them, many business owners felt it would not be useful as they preferred the system they already use. Hiring a child based on a family connection or prior knowledge of the child is an insurance mechanism and screening process in the search for a good worker. However during the first "Business Owners as Instructors" workshop a few business owners indicated that this is a need for good workers, as most children are no longer learning the trade for the sake of the trade, but for money. They even asked PPIC-Work staff to help them find children from the streets to start working.

At the same time, as children's relationships with educators have deepened, they have started asking for help moving to new jobs where their learning opportunities are increased or where the instructional methods are better and disciplinary practices less abusive.

If the primary objective is to support children's best interests, how should an organization intervene? On one hand, PPIC-Work partners do not want to create a mechanism that draws children who are not already economically active into work, and staff may not want to take responsibility for matching children with a business owner that is not improving workplace safety or utilizing sound instructional methods. On the other hand, this could be an important way to help already-working children to find employment in a trade they want to pursue. The mechanism has the potential to protect children from negative working environments. Yet, relationships in the community may be delicate, particularly if the business owner is a client the organization is supporting to build better practices. They may try to damage the organization's reputation in the community if they are angered.

These dilemmas have led PPIC-Work staff to approach this on a case by case basis, suggesting that this intervention be demand-driven, developed organically as loan officers and education officers deepen in their connections with business owners, working children and the community at large. Whether this becomes a main intervention within the LearningThrough Work program remains to be seen.

Overall Challenges and Lessons Learned

If others are interested in adopting Learning Through Work Programming, it may be helpful to learn about general challenges PPIC-Work staff have encountered in initial programming and their resulting recommendations. These reflections are found in the following table:

Table 11: Initial Challenges in Implementation

Challenge	Recommendations
<p>- During initial implementation, pressure on the LTW team to move ahead in a few directions simultaneously meant that planning was not always systematic. Investments in staff training were not always made before commencing activities. This has made it more challenging to maximize the impact of some interventions.</p>	<p>- Plan carefully and ensure staff are fully trained to create effective programming.</p>
<p>- As the LTW team progressed with our planning, the shift from loans for technology upgrading to “dual purpose loans” required us to retrofit core aspects of the PPIC-Work project (hazard mitigation and code of conduct). These components, while important, may come against some resistance in a community where children work much longer hours than a code of conduct would suggest, and where business owners may not wish to invest in safety if not told this was a conditionality of the loan up front.</p>	<p>- If partnering with an MFI, seek to work from an existing client base that staff have already established good rapport with and are receptive to non-financial interventions. - If starting in a new community, make sure you have a clear sense of how you will approach the financial incentives for participation - Before developing programming to enhance enterprise-based learning opportunities ensure other rights-based interventions are in place.</p>
<p>- When children work full-time, the time they are available for social and non-formal education programming may be more limited.</p>	<p>- Be realistic about what commitments are manageable in the community, and adapt programming to the needs and availability of stakeholders. In situations where children work long hours, negotiating codes of conduct are that much more important both in raising awareness and creating boundaries around children’s work.</p>
<p>- Behavioural change, particularly enhancing the instructional methods of business owners, takes time because it is very relationship-driven. It is also difficult to monitor the extent to which behavioural change has occurred, and requires significant commitments of loan officers and the LTW coordinator in visiting each business.</p>	<p>- Be willing to invest for the long-term. - Make sure staff members are prepared to spend significant time in the field documenting baselines and monitoring progress. - Develop standards to which business owners must conform in the long run in order to continue to qualify for professional development activities.</p>
<p>- Due to limited capacities of local management, some activities have not been implemented systematically, nor has a comprehensive monitoring system been developed. This, and the short duration of the pilot has made it more challenging to understand and document the results of the initiative.</p>	<p>- Carefully recruiting staff and ensuring project team members share a common vision is perhaps the most important ingredient for creating and evaluating the success of programming.</p>

Working in the SME sector, particularly in a large urban setting or new community will bring with it many challenges. Business owners may be slow to trust MFI staff or may initially be interested in participating only because of the direct benefits to them. If there is a history of development programming in the community, they may also have unrealistic expectations of the project, looking for handouts instead of partnership. In this context it is important not to expect instantaneous change.

Through years of work in this sector, the PPIC-Work project has found that the first loan cycle with a client is often more about building relationships and raising awareness than it

is about tangible change within the business. It is important to see hazard mitigation and behavioural change as iterative processes that develop alongside relationships as business owners cultivate a deeper awareness of how their participation in the project benefits them, their young workers, and their businesses. However, when they reach this point, they become a responsible employer, an important role model in their community, as well as a strong participant in project programming.

There are a number of constraints to what an organization can do with limited financial and human resources, and in the span of a single project or, in this case, one component of a project. In the context of Learning Through Work, staff have been involved in programming for less than a year and a half and on a pilot basis. LTW is further constrained by the fact that it serves children who are learning trades. Ideally, regular PPIC-Work programming would address other working children's needs in the community; however, there are some that may not be served if their business owner is not interested in a loan or willing to collaborate with the MFI to support the child. Even with those participating, as with all social programming, the more vulnerable sometimes fall through the cracks as a result of their inability to advocate for themselves, a lack of awareness of their rights, or the lack of systems to support them. On one occasion a child who came to PPIC-Work staff asking for help moving to another business with better learning opportunities was not served before he dropped out of non-formal education programming. Cases like these require more methodical follow-up and support. Finally, while indicators were constructed to track LTW results, limited monitoring and evaluation skills of implementing partners mean that systematic analysis of programming results in Doweika or Aswan have not taken place to date.

While the development of LTW has not been seamless, PPIC-Work staff have led regular and quality non-formal education programming that integrates business and life skills alongside literacy and numeracy programming as well as rights and hazards awareness sessions using artistic and child-centred activities. At the same time, loan officers have addressed fundamental safety issues in business involved in the initiative, and facilitated professional development tours and participatory sessions to improve business owner awareness of their responsibilities as mentors for the next generation of workers, and introduce the concept of best practices for instruction that enhance the educational environment for young workers. Project activities have successfully addressed many of working children's rights to safe and educational work through this initiative, as well as their right to comprehensive education through non-formal education programming and other artistic and rights-based activities.

Conclusion

Until governments, the development community, and the private sector can address the root causes of children's work – family poverty and quality of the formal education system in the Egyptian context – children will continue to work to support their families and to learn a trade. Therefore the PPIC-Work project seeks to ensure that work does not violate children's rights to education, health and play. Further PPIC-Work seeks to ensure that children's participation in work is age appropriate, safe and based on their own decision. PPIC-Work staff believe it is important to continue focusing on preventing children from working in worst forms of child labour by reducing hazards wherever possible and facilitating children's transition to less harmful professions if they want or need to be working.

PPIC-Work's LTW research and programming in non-worst forms of work suggests that children and youth working in these micro-enterprises in Doweika, and indeed throughout Egypt, are developing many of the essential skills needed for their vocations and the local economy. This approach represents a departure from programming that seeks to move children out of work into school as a result of its broader conceptualisation of education and learning, valuing the apprenticeship system and participation in community life as well as literacy skills.

There are certainly many areas for intervention in the enterprise-based learning system. While instruction of technical skills functions relatively well – albeit with gaps in the instruction of how core machines function and differences in the learning opportunities for girls and boys in some trades – there seem to be significant challenges in ensuring apprentices learn business and life skills, as well as improving the overall methods of instruction and workplace safety. In order to foster a positive learning environment, business owners should be encouraged to develop non-corporal methods of punishment, and the development of their worker's skills should be recognised. Changing the philosophies and practices surrounding instructional methods is not an easy task. However, it can be influenced through peer-to-peer discussions, and ongoing mentorship. The impacts of such changes may be far-reaching, touching the lives of the next generation of workers, and through them, perhaps the evolution of the industries themselves.

There are a number of issues that could open meaningful policy discussions and there are a variety of levels on which change would be beneficial. On the government level, conversations about enhancing the linkages between school curricula and children's work to make education more relevant, and improve the overall quality of the formal education system are important. Secondly, working toward an accreditation system for enterprise-based learning, even if it is simply a standardized test that enables one to obtain a certificate as a skilled carpenter or mechanic, could enhance the value of technical trades as viable careers and sites of learning. This accreditation system would involve government partners, and at the same time support a shift in societal values. In light of the above recognition of the reasons that children work in Egypt and the enduring prevalence of young workers, encouraging government bodies to adopt policies that embrace the reality of children's work in Egypt and a rights-based approach to programming that protects them from negative environments and supports their right to education is another important area for advocacy. Within civil society, a rights-based approach may involve supporting children and communities to create a demand for safe and educational work.

While PPIC-Work's LTW initiative is still at the pilot stage and has faced some significant challenges in the community of Doweika, the project is having a positive influence on children's lives, and over time staff hope this approach will be able to reach larger and larger numbers of working children as other organizations adopt and adapt this approach for their context. It is hoped that honest reflections on the methods, challenges and findings of this initiative will be helpful to other organizations seeking to improve enterprise-based learning for children and youth in the growing informal sectors around the globe. As Singh has suggested,

[I]f systems of education and training are to cater to both the formal and the informal labour markets, then they need to take into account the traditions and values of the system of vocational learning in working life, cater to the requirements of local development, and be based on an understanding of the kinds of competencies people in the informal economy want, need and utilize, the socio-economic and cultural contexts within which they work, and how they cope and sustain their livelihood strategies.⁷³

These are indeed the overarching challenges and goals of the PPIC-Work project's Learning Through Work initiative.

⁷³ Singh, M. "Combining Work and Learning in the Informal Economy: Implications for Education, Training and Skills Development" in *International Review of Education* 2000, 46 (6), p 599.

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Appendix 1:

Changing Approaches: Child Labour - Children's Work

HISTORICAL APPROACH		BUSINESS FOCUSED APPROACH
BUSINESS		
	Businesses are part of the problem	Businesses are part of the solution
	Business owners harm children	Business owners are trainers and be protectors of children
	Business support programs (loans / Business Development Services) focus on business improvements	Business support programs focus on improving businesses and the conditions of working children
	Connections come through children or child focused agencies and are confrontational with the business	Connections are through business support agencies (Micro Finance Institutions or Business Development Service providers)
	Inherently hazardous working conditions = removal of the child (but the production process remains unchanged and new children enter the work places left behind by the departing children)	Modernization of production processes and the introduction of new technologies can eliminate unsafe work; parallel business support programs can help displaced workers (children or adults) find new employment or start their own businesses
	No support for change	Support for change through loans and Business Development Services
CHILDREN		
	Children are victims of exploitation through work and the objects of programming interventions	Children are rights holders and can participate in the design and implementation of interventions
	Children must be removed from all work	Children may continue to work under certain conditions
	Children learn only in school	Children can learn in work and non formal education programs as well as in school

Source: PPIC-Work Annual Report 2005

Appendix 2: Categories of Work and Corresponding Interventions

CATEGORIZATION OF CHILDREN'S WORK	TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS WITH ENTERPRISES	TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS WITH CHILDREN / FAMILIES
Acceptable	Monitor status of children's work	Provide training / information on children's rights; Support opportunities for improved learning
Hazardous / improvements possible	Build on existing or establish new relationship with business owner through business support / lending programs; In collaboration with business owners and working children identify ways of improving working conditions and learning opportunities Provide support through intervention tools (particularly lending) Establish / upgrade code of conduct through participatory process with business owners	Provide working children with training of rights, gender equality and other key concepts (health, safety, hazards & risks, entrepreneurship); Assist working children to form their own groups / associations where they can share experiences with peers and learn to act in their own interest Support children through intervention tools (literacy, lending, computer-based learning, accident insurance, others) Assist children to stay in school or find alternate sources of learning, Improve learning with and through work Assist families of working children to improve incomes, reducing the need for children to work
Inherently hazardous / worst forms of child labour	Provide no business support programming / lending; Support implementation of ILO Convention 182 & related legislation; Support / advocate appropriate policy development Collaborate with technology upgrading programs to change production processes to eliminate hazardous forms of work; Assist business owners to find alternate types of business opportunities;	Provide children's families with assistance to start their own enterprises; Provide children with opportunities to engage in safe work including access to learning opportunities (formal or non formal learning); Provide children with alternate types of skills in safe / acceptable work places.

Source: PPIC-Work Annual Report 2005.

Appendix 3 Interviewee Backgrounds

i. Business Owners

Sector	Name	Business	Time as B.O.	Time in Trade	Workers under 18	Formal Education
Automotive Repair	Ali	Paint Mixing	7 years	15 years	2	?
	Ahmed	Panel Beating	17 years	27 years	4	Dropped out at age 12
	Mustafa	Painting	20 years	?	2	left primary after 4 years
	Hussein	Car Door Repair	30 years	40 years	2	Less than six years
	Mahmoud	Seat Repair	16 years	21 years	1	Less than six years
	Medhat	Seat Repair	10 years	27 years	3	3 rd year secondary school
	Hossein	Mechanic	10 years	45 years	1	Left during prep. school
	Mohammad	Mechanic	25 years +	47 years	1	Uni degree in engineering
	Ibrahim	Panel Beating	One month	28 years	4	Less than six years
	Asharaf	Car Door Repair	7 years	27 years	1	Six years
Textiles	Nosr	Carpet Weaving	14 years	20 years?	10	Less than nine years
	Ali	Sewing	15 years?	32 years	4	Five years
	Sabra (f)	Small sewing	20 years (w h)	20 years	1	?
	Sayida (f)	Lg sewing shop	1 year (w h)	1 year	4+	?
	Mohammed & Nadia (f)	Small carpet weaving	16 years 16 years	40 years 32 years	2	No school No school
	Khalid	Lg carpet factory	17 years	32 years	Approx 50	Uni degree in edu
	Amal (f)	Sm sewing in house	2 years	2 years	4	?
	Hind (f)	embroidering	2 years	7 years	5	Five years
	Asharaf	Sewing bags	15 years	27 years	7 (2 full time)	Completed tech. secondary
	Carpentry	Fahmy	Carpentry	32 years	45 years	1
Shaaban		Carpentry	4 years	21 years	2	No school
Mohammed		Carpentry	4 years	32 years	2	Completed primary 2
Moharram		Carpentry	5 years	25 years	4	Uni degree in Business
Ahmed		Carpentry	16 years	30 years	3	Completed primary 6
Roshdi		carving	20 years	?	n/a	?
Hair Dressing	Magda (f)	Hair dressing, dresses	2 years	2 years	1	Hair dressing school
	Karima (f)	Hair dressing, dresses	10 years	14 years	1	Completed Primary 2
	Buttah (f)	Hair dressing, dresses	6 years	10 years	3	?
	Asharaf	Hair dressing, photo	15 years	15 years	1	Hairdressing courses

(f) = female Business Owners ? = unknown: as a result of limitations in interviews

ii. Children and Youth

Sector	Name	Age	Age Started Work	Business	Business Owner	Formal Education
Automotive Repair	Mohammed	19	12	Seat Repair	Medhat	Left school around age 12
	Adel	17	6	Mechanic	Mohammed	In 1 st year secondary school
	Mustafa	15	7	Car Door Repair	Hussein	Left school after two years
	Hassan	17.5	12	Paint Mixing	Ali	Completed Prep. School
	Hussein	17	11	Mechanic	Hossein	Left school after 5 th year
	Sayyid	18	10	Car painting	Not interviewed	No school
Textiles	Basma (f)	22	12	Sewing	Ali	No school
	Neglaa (f)	18	15	Sewing	Ali	Completed Prep School
	Mahmoud	22	14	Sewing	Sayida	Left during last year of Prep
	Nesma (f)	16	14	Sewing	Sayida	Left school after 4 th year
	Karima (f)	15	5	Carpet weaving	Nosr	No school
	Mustafa	20	6	Carpet weaving	Nosr	Left school at age 10
	Shaimaa (f)	16	6	Carpet weaving	Nosr	No school
	Wafaa (f)	18	6	Large Carpet	Khalid	Completed Tech Secondary
	Hanan (f)	17	16	Large Carpet	Khalid	Completed 4 th year Primary
Carpentry	Israa (f)	16	6	Large Carpet	Khalid	No school
	Mustafa	12	10	Carpentry	Shaaban	In P1 (for a few years now)
	Abdul	10	6	Carpentry	Shaaban	In 5 th Year Primary School
Hair Dressing	Mahmoud	17	11	Carpentry	Ahmed	In 2 nd year Tech Secondary
	Nada (f)	17	15	Hairdressing	Karima	No school
	Sahar (f)	18	17	Hairdressing	Asharaf	Left school after a few years
	Aya (f)	12	12	Hairdressing	Buttah	In 5 th year Primary School
	Aya (f)	11	11	Hairdressing	Buttah	Left school after a few years
Dina (f)	10.5	9	Hairdressing	Magda	In 5 th year Primary School	

(f) = female interview subject

N.B. The formal education system in Egypt includes six years of Primary School, followed by three years of Preparatory School, followed by Three years of Secondary School prior to tertiary education.

Appendix 4: “Business Owners as Instructors” Workshop Background

i. Workshop Objectives

1. To increase awareness among Business Owners of their role as trainers (both individually and collectively – as key mentors for the next generation of workers in these trades)
2. To discuss learning methodologies within the workplace
3. To share research findings from the 2008 LTW study and reinforce good learning methodologies and disciplinary strategies
4. To explore how EACID can continue to enhance learning in the workplace, and support the business owners and youth in the community

ii. Workshop Outline

1. *Introduction (10 minutes)*
 - Overview of LTW program and objectives of this workshop
2. *Learning a New Skill (20-30 minutes)*
 - Participants are divided into three groups to learn a small technical skill foreign to their profession (eg. how to sew a buttonhole and button). Each group is taught with a different method, without knowledge of how the other groups are learning.
 - These methods include:
 - Guided Observation: (with the help of an expert)
 - Audio-visual: (using a powerpoint and pictures from expert)
 - Lecture: (oral only, based on description of process by expert)
3. *Discussion of Learning Techniques: (20 minutes)*
 - The three groups come together to show each other their finished products, and discuss what makes learning easier or more difficult (e.g., patience of instructor, repetition, being yelled at and hurried by instructor).
 - Mini-role plays by Learning Through Work Staff or participants (e.g., an impatient instructor) make this portion lively and fun.
4. *Business Owners as instructors:*
 - Presentation of findings from the Doweika Study
 - Discussion of good practices
 - Suggestions for LTW implementation
5. *Conclusions*
 - Discussion of short-term impact – training and learning at work are important for your business – the employee who learns and learns effectively is more likely to stay with the business
 - Discussion of long-term impact of their work - training the next generation of trades-people (this is why teaching business skills is so important)
6. *Refreshments and informal discussion*