

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



**Children working with Smelters and Scrap
Collecting in Qalubaya**



Project Report

Pick Work
PPICW

Background

PPIC-Work improves the working conditions and learning opportunities of working children in Egypt and has had a particular focus on those children who are engaged in the growing micro and small enterprise sector. This focus broadened after the government of Egypt through the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) asked PPIC-Work to carry out investigative studies of three of the worst forms of children's work (child labor) where the work is considered to be inherently hazardous and unsuitable for children. The sectors identified generally involved larger scale businesses and included: quarrying in Minya, lead smelting and scrap metal sorting in Qalubaya, and furniture finishing in Damietta. Brick making, glass and plastic recycling along with some forms of tanning and pottery production are also recognized as particularly hazardous types of work for children in Egypt although these were beyond the scope of the planned study.

Before the studies were started NCCM requested PPIC-Work to set aside the study plans and instead develop a practical program to help children get out of work in the lead smelting and scrap metal sorting businesses of Qalubaya. This would help children in at least one type of inherently hazardous work and could form a model for dealing with other forms of hazardous work. PPIC-Work recognized that many of the children involved in the hazardous work with the smelters and sorters like the children involved in many of the micro and small enterprise businesses in Upper Egypt were dependant on the income that they earned and therefore rather than trying to prevent the children from working the approach would help children find alternate forms of safer work and income.

To implement the program with the working children in Qalubaya PPIC-Work developed an agreement with the Center for Development Services (CDS).

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Introduction

The Center for Development Services (CDS) implemented the “Children working with Smelters and Scrap collecting in Qalubaya” project to comprehensively address the worst forms of child labour, specifically working children between the age bracket of 12 to 18 in Shoubra El-Kheima District. This district was specifically selected because it represented a typical environment for children at risk and has large numbers of children suffering from harsh working conditions in different industrial and commercial sectors. Shoubra El-Kheima, as part of Qalubaya governorate, is known as one of the most notorious places where child labour in the informal sector exists. The project aimed at transforming the hazardous jobs of children working in smelters and scrap sorting into safer jobs, in which they can build their future careers. The project focused on working children, their families, employers and local communities.

The project adapted a so-called “*Collaborate Community Action Approach*”, a gender sensitive, participatory approach through which individuals, members of the community of scrap collectors, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as the private sector in the area acted together to determine the types of initiatives needed to improve the situation of the children and implement the initiatives. An essential component of this approach was the identification and use of resources available within the community, invest in these children’s own future and provide a sense of ownership and self-control.

The project consisted of three phases:

Phase I: Qualitative Participatory Research Using Participatory Rapid Appraisal;

Phase II: Participatory Initiative Design; and

Phase III: Initiatives’ Implementation

The original project implementation period was planned for 12 months, Phase I three months, Phase II three months and Phase III six months. The actual duration of the project was extended to a total implementation period of two years and seven months. The project was extended several times to increase the total number of beneficiaries targeted by the project.

This final report summarizes the outcomes and the lessons learned from this project. The project has demonstrated the value of investing in the technical vocational and life skills of working children and we hope that this report will be used as a source of inspiration for the implementation of similar kind of projects in different industrial and commercial sectors in order to improve the lives of working children.

Project Implementation Process

Challenges in project implementation:

- **Parent's resistance** towards their children's participation in the project due to the low wages earned by the children during the internship
- **Low capacity** of the local grass root level partner organization
- **Lack of awareness** on laws and conventions regarding child labor of all stakeholders involved
- Initial **undesirable attitude and behavior** of several of the children who started the internship
- Limited number of factories applying **industrial safety measures and procedures**
- Several factories could not participate due to export limitation if they would employ children, they had to adhere to **international labor law**

Phase I: Qualitative Participatory Research Using Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA)

The project started with the implementation of a participatory research into the needs, priorities, and alternatives for the working conditions of the children in Shoubra El-Kheima area. This research was conducted in collaboration with a select group of community members. The selected community members were trained in the use of qualitative data collection tools (PRA tools) and were involved in all stages of the research process. The research focused on children between the ages of 12 to 18, boys and girls, their families, and the smelters and scrap sorting workshop owners.

The outcomes of this research phase were:

- A clear perspective of the types of work conducted by girls and boys, women and men, the advantages and disadvantages of the type of work done by each as well as an understanding of the income earned;
- A list of alternative types of work that are viable and of interest to the children and their parents;
- A shared understanding of the types of problems affecting working children as well as their parents in the area and a clear idea of how improvements in working and living conditions could be made;
- A list of opportunities for formal and/or non formal learning by the working children; and
- A map of the resource available within the community to be used for the implementation of the project initiatives.



Fig. 1: A child working at the smelters in Shoubra Al-Kheima

Project Implementation Process

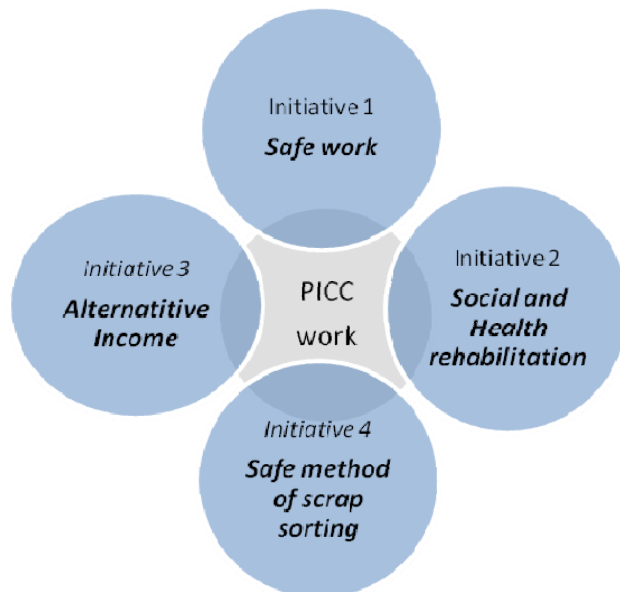
Phase II: Participatory Initiative Design

The information collected in phase II was presented and discussed during a workshop with 60 representatives of the community of scrap collectors (adults and children), business owners, governmental and nongovernmental organizations from the area. Business owners of three sectors, construction, furniture and textile industries, participated in this workshop.

Based on the information presented, the representatives designed the project initiatives and an action plan was developed with the role of each stakeholder in the implementation of the initiatives.

The participatory initiative design process resulted in an agreement to implement 4 initiatives.

The key in the design of the initiatives was the participatory nature of the process by which the initiatives were selected; assuring that the stakeholders themselves were capable of managing the intervention.



Phase III: Initiatives Implementation

The implementation of Phase III - the project initiatives - started as planned with an initial target group of 20 working children in the Safe work initiative. Based on the success of this initiative, phase III of the project was extended to 19 months to provide vocational training opportunities to more children.

The project was initially implemented in partnership with a local association called 'Kablat'. However, due to other commitments and limited management capacity of Kablat, the project implementation team partnered with an association called 'El Malak al Sagheir'. El Malak El Sagheer association is currently still supporting the children with their initiatives.

Initiative 1: Safe Work

The most successful initiative of this project was the Safe Work initiative. Through this initiative, 105 children (aged 12-18), previously working under the hazardous conditions of the smelters and scrap sorting workshops, were provided with vocational training opportunities in a safe working environment. The vocational training was provided in the fields of mechanics, equipment repair, carpentry and garment manufacturing. The project established and signed protocols of cooperation with three major companies working in the different fields: the Arab Contractors, Tiba for Textile and Decorama.

The three companies contributed over LE 100,000 to the Safe Work initiative either in-kind, through the provision of trainings, or through financial training incentives. The three companies signed contracts with the trainees, providing them with insurance against work-related injuries as well as access to other health and social benefits at the factory. The three companies involved in this initiative were motivated to participate because they viewed this initiative as a chance to develop good future caliber employees that are competent and able to contribute effectively to the companies' operations. The children received a small incentive of LE 20 a day (LE10 from the factory, LE 5 from Qalubaya governorate and LE 5 from the project budget).

At the Arab Contractors, the training program had a more holistic approach. Apart from the technical vocational training, the children also received computer-based literacy and mathematics' classes to help them pursue their education while employed. The training also included physical exercise such as football competitions, to teach them team work, perseverance and discipline. The success story of the Safe Work initiative at the Arab Contractors won the first place in the Good Practice Competition on Responsible Business Conduct. The Egyptian Corporate Responsibility Center and its partners, including GIZ, the World Bank Institute and the MENA-OECD Investment Program, provided the prize.



Fig. 2: Children receiving vocational training

A video of the program with the Arab Contractors is available through the PPIC-Work website at: www.ppic-work.org

Outcomes

- Technical vocational skills improvement of 105 children in three different sectors
- 80% of the children in safe jobs, were employed by the factory after completion of the internship.
- Positive change in attitudes and behavior of the working children.
- Improvement in literacy and mathematical skills of 40 children.

Initiative 2: Social and Health Rehabilitation

The second project initiative focused on the improvement of the physical and mental wellbeing of the children. Many of the children were subjected to verbal and sometimes even physical abuse from their previous employers, work colleagues and peers; which resulted in low self-esteem, poor attitudes, and behavioral problems. The supervisors at the factories faced many challenges regarding the poor and conduct, attitude and behavior of several children, especially in the beginning of the project. The Social and Health Rehabilitation initiative was designed to address these issues, raise awareness, and train social workers to deal with the specific issues and needs of the working children.

A health and social awareness program was designed and implemented in collaboration with the health administration in Qalubaya governorate. The program targeted 400 women, 70 male child workers and 50 working girls through a number of awareness sessions and seminars. The sessions and seminars focused on raising the awareness on health issues such as 'the impact of high level of lead on child health' and social issues such as 'how to deal well with our children' and 'child rights'.

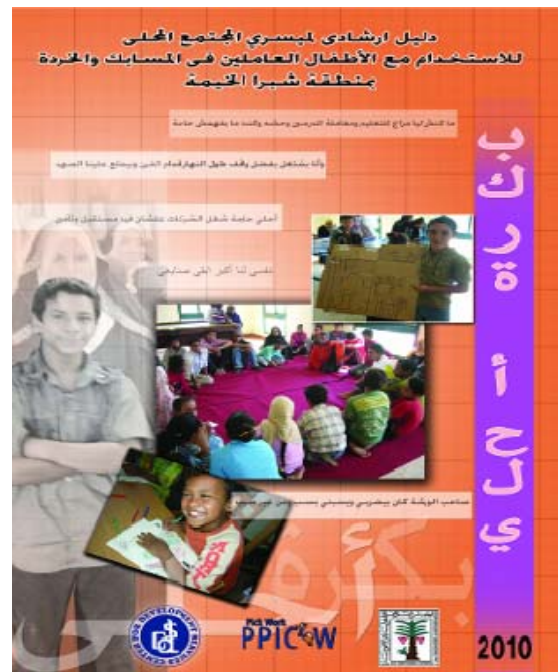
Outcomes

- 400 women and 130 children are aware of pressing health and social issues in their community
- 'Bokra Ahla' (A Better Tomorrow) an operational and training manual was developed
- 12 facilitators/social workers have the knowledge and skills to work with and address the specific needs of working children
- 612 community members received free health care
- 18 working children are able to provide First Aid in emergencies

The awareness sessions and seminars were facilitated by local facilitators/social workers with support of CDS project staff. The facilitators/social workers were especially trained by the project team to work with working children. An operational manual entitled 'Bokra Ahla' (A Better Tomorrow), along with a training manual for social workers/facilitators working in the field of child labor was developed by the project team. The training manual provided the facilitators with the necessary skills to educate children about child rights and provide them with the necessary support to deal with the challenges they face in their daily life.

As part of the project a medical caravan was organized through the Ministry of Health with support of the private sector (contributed LE 5,500 in medicine) which provided free health services to child workers and their families as well as other community members.

At Arab Contractors 18 interns received first aid training. A number of first aid kits were made available at the workshops for the children.



Initiative 3: Alternative Income

The Alternative Income initiative aimed to provide underprivileged families with income generating opportunities so that, on the long run, they will no longer need to send their children to work.

A cooperation agreement was signed with the Community Development Association (CDA) in El Eskan El Sena'y area to establish a micro-loans' program. The project subsidized the salaries of a field worker and a coordinator from the association, in return for the association to provide the project with micro-loans. The program targeted women in the community - mothers of children who work - by supporting them if they have small business initiatives or by helping them start their own initiatives.

The CDA assessed the eligibility of the women selected by the project team for the micro-loans' program. 360 women received loans ranging from EGP500 to EGP1000. The women received the loans in small groups and they were only entitled to receive further loans if all members of that group paid back their initial loan.

A workshop was conducted on "How to start a small business" for the women who received the micro-loans. This workshop provided the participants with basic understanding of small businesses as well as the necessary skills to establish and run the business.

Examples of business initiatives initiated with the micro-loans:

- Vegetable selling;
- Making and selling washing pins;
- Establishment of a small grocery shops;
- Establishment of a small shop for selling cloths;
- Embroidery and sewing business; and
- Selling small home appliances.

Outcomes

- 360 women were enabled to generate income for themselves and their families.
- Increased business skills of 360 women in Shoubra El-Kheima community

Initiative 4: Safe Method of Scrap Sorting

The fourth initiative that was agreed upon during the participatory design process was the relocation of the scrap sorting industry from the residential area to the Industrial City to improve the health and safety of the residents of Shoubra Al-Kheima. The project team managed to arrange with the governorate of Qalubaya the allocation of a 6,000m² area in El Safa Industrial City (near Shoubra El-Kheima) to be used for the construction of a complex of scrap warehouses.

A participatory design workshop was facilitated with scrap sorters and a technical engineer to get their points of view regarding the design of the complex and discuss their financial ability to purchase units in this new complex. A comprehensive mapping exercise was conducted to assess the capacity of the scrap sorters to move.

Qalubaya Governor offered the land to the scrap sorters on lease basis; however the scrap sorters were not comfortable with this offer and wanted to buy the land with the project support. *Fig. 3: Final design Scrap complex*



Unfortunately this conflict put this initiative on a hold. Finally, the project team decided to reallocate the project funds to another initiative because there was no solution for this issue within sight of the project timeframe.



Fig. 4: A project team member discussing the initial design with the scrap sorters

Outcomes

- Allocation of 6,000m² of land by the Qalubaya Governor to build a scrap sorting complex
- An agreed design of the scrap sorting complex .

Children's initiatives

During the project implementation two additional initiatives were implemented by the children. **Initiative 5: Establishment of workshops for the interns who worked at the Arab Contractors Company** and **Initiative 6: Establishment of a coalition of child workers working in Shobra El- Kheima.**

Initiative 5: Establishment of workshops for Child Interns at the Arab Contractors

During the several discussions with the children who were following the vocational training program at the Arab Contractors, these children expressed their dream to own their own workshops some day. With the initiative to develop safe scrap sorting facilities on hold (Initiative 4) and no clear solution to resolve the issue the project team decided to reallocate the funds to support the establishment of these workshops. With the technical support of their supervisors at the Arab Contractors, three workshops were established in Shoubra El- Kheima;

- A welding workshop;
- A mechanics workshop; and
- A workshop for car electrics.

A total of nine children were involved, three per workshop. The workshops were established with full participation with the children; the children selected the location and were actively involved in the selection and buying of the workshop tools and equipment. The children work in their own workshop after they finish their work at the Arab Contractors and during the weekend. Several staff members of the Arab Contractors provide technical support to the children at the workshop.

The initial six month rent of the workshop was paid by the project. After this period the children are expected to pay the rent from the income generated by the workshop. Currently, the ownership of the tools and equipment is at the hands 'El Malak El Sagheer' Association. The children agreed to contribute by 30% of their incomes to the organization to gradually pay for the tools and equipment. On this basis, 'El alak El Sagheer' will continue to provide support to the project.



Fig. 5: An intern at the workshop receiving technical support from a member of the staff of the Arab Contractors

"I decided to get enrolled in a technical school and I did; I passed my first year thanks to the training I was received at the Arab Contractors company since I had to acquire practical experience in addition to the theory I was learning at school. This training did it all for me." Ismael Gomaa' Enawi -17 yrs

Children's initiatives

"I completely changed since I received the training. I now have a workmanship, a sense of respect for the work I do, and a high self-esteem. I am now comfortable, satisfied and feel secured with what I do." Ashraf Khairy Fathi 17 yrs



Fig. 6: An intern at work at the welding workshop

Initiate 6: Formation of a coalition of Child Workers in Shoubra El Kheima

Based on the initiative of the children involved in the project, a coalition of all child workers in Shoubra El Kheima was formed. 600 children elected a group of 40 children to represent them in the coalition. A series of workshops and training camps were conducted to enhance the communication, leadership, cooperation and teamwork skills of the coalition. In collaboration with 'El Malak El Sagheer', the coalition worked on implementing a series of initiatives addressing issues of child rights and child labor beyond the timeframe of the project.



Fig. 7: Girls voting for their representatives in the coalition

Lessons Learned

We will take these lessons forward during the implementation of similar types of projects in the future:

- ✓ The key in the design of the initiatives is the participatory nature of the process by which the initiatives were selected; this approach assures that the stakeholders are capable of managing the intervention.
- ✓ The continuous presence in the community is essential for the success and the sustainability of the project; working together in partnership with a local association or organization in the community is required from the very beginning of the project.
- ✓ Several pre-project assumptions such as *“it will be easy to access the children”* and *“most factories will provide safe working conditions”* did not stand valid during the implementation process. The incentive offered to the children to participate was lower than their previous earned income; this led to a resistance from the parents and children to participate. Many factories do not apply industrial safety procedures and several factories which do apply industrial safety procedures were not able to participate due to the high risk of export limitation if they would employ children. A thorough research to test the project assumptions is required pre-project design.
- ✓ The initial timeline for the project (one year) was too short - Phase III of the project alone required a minimum of 12 months.
- ✓ An important component of the project was the social rehabilitation of the children; a component not to be overlooked in future project design. Children suffered from abuse, had low self esteem, were agitated, aggressive, and anti-social at the beginning of their internship. The factory staff and project team saw great improvement in the attitudes and behavior of the children. Also, the children indicated a positive change in their lifestyles and behavioral values towards their families.

Through life skills training, vocational training to improve the working conditions of children, and employers' collaboration, support and partnerships with all stakeholders, the project demonstrated the value of investing in working children's skills providing them with future career pathways to sustain their livelihoods and their families.

Success factors

- **Participation** of all stakeholders involved in the project.
- **Community resource mobilization** to increase the impact of the project
- **Sustainability** of the project through employment and partnerships
- Microcredit schemes for the **enhancement of the economic status** of the whole family
- Combination of vocational training **(technical skills)** with social rehabilitation **(life skills)**