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Critical success factors of international development projects in the education sector in Egypt: Community Schools as a case study

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The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN EGYPT:

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AS A CASE STUDY

A Thesis Submitted to the

Public Policy and Administration Department

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Public Administration

By

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Supervised By

Dr. Khaled Abdelhalim

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Acknowledgements

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."
Proverbs 3:5-6

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Abstract

      The purpose of this study is to identify the critical success factors of development projects funded by international development partners in Egypt in the education sector. In quest of achieving this objective, the research applies a qualitative approach through a case study methodology that aims to explore the critical success factors in the community schools project implemented in Egypt by UNICEF and USAID throughout the project life cycle.

      Through the detailed analysis of the case study findings, in addition to secondary sources, fifteen critical success factors are revealed during the course of the project. The findings are grouped to critical success factors that *facilitate* project success and factors that *hinder* project success. Critical success factors are categorized into: 1) Internal factors that are within the direct control of the project management, among which: proper needs assessment and clear understanding of the project context, effective consultation with all stakeholders, monitoring and evaluation.; 2) External factors that are beyond the project management control; among which: availability of data, community participation, political will; 3) Factors that require mutual cooperation between two or more parties; among which: partnership with key stakeholders, working closely with the government, ensuring government's capacity for sustainability.

      The study concludes that these critical success factors not only affect project success in achieving the anticipated objectives, but also the sustainability of the project. Based on the lessons learned from the case study, recommendations for future projects are driven with a view to guide policy makers, international donors, implementing agencies and development partners to better project management practices that boost project success. These recommendations include government-led initiatives to development projects, resource mobilization plan, monitoring and evaluation processes and securing adequate resources for project sustainability.

List of Acronyms

APM	Association for Project Management
CBE	Community Based Education
CCIMD	Center for Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CS	Community Schools
CSFs	Critical Success Factors
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
GOE	Government of Egypt
IDPs	International Development Projects
IDPM	International Development Project Management
LFA	Logic Framework Approach
LFM	Logic Framework Methodology
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCEEE	National Center for Examination and Educational Evaluation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPOs	Non-profit Organizations
NSP	New Schools Program

ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMI	Project Management Institute
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNESCO	The United Nations for Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1   Study Overview

International Development projects (IDPs) are defined as projects funded by international donors for contributing to development in the country where they are located (Diallo & Thuillier, 2004). Objectives of IDPs may cover a diverse range of development fields from poverty alleviation, education, health, food, agriculture, trade, private sector development and institutional capacity building in developing countries (Diallo & Thuillier, 2004). IDPs play a vital role in the socioeconomic development of developing countries and their recipients.

The history of international aid goes back to the adoption of the Marshall Plan to help Europe rebuild in 1948 when President Harry Truman mentioned this as an important component of the U.S. foreign policy (Edwards, 2015). In the early 1960s, the United States, jointly with other advanced countries, founded the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) at the newly formed Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to coordinate aid to the poorest countries (Edwards, 2015).

The management of international development projects is a challenging area that has been relatively less studied (Hermano et al., 2013; Diallo & Thuillier, 2012). Until the 1960s, no specific project management approach was available to guide IDPs management despite their importance (Hermano et al., 2013). Recently, project management concepts have been studied in other fields like construction and software development; however, there are limited tools and body of knowledge for managing IDPs due to their unique nature (Hermano et al., 2013; Ika et al., 2012). Furthermore, most of

the attention of project management was allocated to project evaluation criteria or project management tools, while less focus was on the critical success factors of IDPs despite the presence of literature discussing ODA project management tools (Hermano et al., 2013).

IDPs are different from other types of projects for many reasons and so the approaches to project management and implementation should also be different. Therefore, international aid (or international development projects) is one of the sectors where project management concepts should be studied believing great value is added that impacts project success.

In order for IDPs to achieve their mission, it is essential for donors and implementing agencies to understand the critical factors that influence project success. This is not only vital for monitoring purposes or assessment of the project status, but also in guiding project managers and policy makers in identifying potential problems and allocating the necessary resources to guarantee project completion and success.

Spotting on the education sector in Egypt in the 1990s, the start of the period of focus of this study, it is found that access to quality primary education and girls' enrollment rates in schools in Upper Egypt were a problem (El Baradei & El Baradei, 2004). In 1993, the percentage of dropouts for the cohort of pupils starting grade 1 in 1992/1993 and reaching grade 8 in 1992/2000 was 13.23% (El Baradei & El Baradei, 2004). Moreover, according to USAID (2006), overall enrollment rate in some rural areas ranged from 63% to 70% only where girls enrollment could only be 10-15%.

In commitments of the Education for All (EFA) world conference in 1990, the international community proposed the Community Based Education (CBE) or the

Community Schools model as a second model to provide low cost and more practical

chance to offer children, especially girls, with schooling and education (Langsten, 2016).

Community based education targets children, ages 9 to 14 who were dropped out of

primary school, children who are between 6 to 14 who were not enrolled in school and

are living in areas deprived from educational services, and children living in difficult

conditions (Zaalouk, 2004).

In an effort to contribute to the theoretical knowledge and policy-making in the

field of IDPs project management, this thesis aims to identify the critical success factors

of international development projects implemented in Egypt through conducting a case

study on the Community Schools (CS) projects. The CS projects selected for the case

study are those funded by international donors, namely UNICEF and USAID, aiming to

explore the success factors throughout the project life cycle.

Benefitting from an integrative and a theoretical review of literature, the

researcher reviewed different theories for project performance assessment, scholars

definitions of project success, diverse approaches to project success criteria as well as

broad scanning of authors' views on IDPs critical success factors. The researcher has also

considered, compared and evaluated both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in

studying the topic. In addition, the researcher also reviewed similar case studies that have

been researched in the last decade in selected countries of similar context to Egypt.

From this review, evidence from the literature confirms that some factors can

affect IDPs success when taken into consideration in the different phases for the project

life cycle. Therefore, this study follows a qualitative approach to examine the critical

success factors of the Community Schools project in Egypt and aims to explore the

relationship between these factors and project success. This is followed by identifying the

lessons learned from the CS project and the recommendations for project managers of

IDPs, policy makers and governmental organizations. Chapter four provides more details

about the methodology of the study.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Different stakeholders, including donors and governments demand to see results

verifying the success and impact of nonprofit projects and activities (Carman, 2007).

Development organizations need to communicate the impact and benefits they provide in

order to satisfy and keep current donors, and attract future ones (Arvidson & Lyon,

2014). However, managing IDPs in developing countries like Egypt where there are

political, economic and social challenges with scare resources is not an easy task. Such

challenges can cause project delays, cost overruns, stakeholders' dissatisfaction, and

other results that can affect project completion or eventually lead to project failure. The

problem lies in identifying what can cause such projects to actually succeed or fail.

Unlike industrial or commercial projects that have tangible objectives and

deliverables, the management of IDPs has less tangible objectives and deliverables where

development outcomes and impacts are about qualitative changes in human development

and in people's quality of life. Hence, the management of IDPs and identification of the

critical success factors of each project are crucial for both donors, project managers and

beneficiaries. Moreover, despite the presence of literature on IDP project management

tools, there is limited research and lack of documentation on what critical success factors

project managers of IDPs should consider. In addition, the absence of guiding benchmark

to best practices that project managers can aspire to achieve might result in lack of vision, weak implementation and deficient monitoring and controlling activities.

Using a case study methodology, this study aims to identify the critical success factors of international development projects implemented in the education sector in Egypt.

1.3   Research Questions, Importance of the Study, and Scope of the Study

a.   Research question

In examining the critical success factors of international development projects in Egypt, the focal research question for this thesis is:

What are the critical success factors (CSFs) for international development projects in the education sector in Egypt?

In addition to the literature review, the researcher tries to answer the main research question by examining the Community Schools project implemented by international donors in Egypt aiming to identify the success factors behind the project and to investigate how they influence the project success. The following are the research sub-questions:

- How do CSFs affect project success?

- What are the obstacles that hinder project success?

- What are the lessons learned from the community schools projects that can be adopted in future IDPs in Egypt?

b.   Importance of the Study

The significance of the study stems from three reasons. First, there is a dearth of academic research on studying the critical success factors that affect IDPs in general and

in the sector of education in Egypt in specific. In addition, most of the literature on project management focuses on project management tools and procedures while little focus is given to study CSFs of aid projects.

According to the Ministry of International Cooperation (2017), Egypt has a budget of US$ 25.74 Billion for development aid projects, while not enough efforts are exerted to ensure that these projects are reaching their objectives and contributing to Egypt's development in such a critical stage. This study contributes to filling the gap in the literature by studying critical success factors in the Education sector in Egypt.

Second, this study not only makes an academic contribution to the field of project management for development projects, but also guides practitioners like project managers and implementing agencies through the success and achievement of project objectives by providing a documentation and recommendations for adapting project CSFs to the Egyptian context.

And third, the study may prove to be beneficial to donors, local policy makers, project managers, project teams and any other regulators of development projects implemented in Egypt, especially the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of International Cooperation, to better understand the project status and the factors that affect project success, and to formulate appropriate interventions for projects when and if necessary.

c. Scope of the Study

The research aims at providing an understanding in the area of project management of international development projects in the education sector in Egypt by identifying critical success factors behind project success and determining how they

affect project's success. In addition, investigating some stakeholders' perceptions regarding success barriers is also included. Lastly, recommendations and lessons learned by research participants are identified. The objectives of the study entails:

- o Exploring critical success factors that influence international development projects success implemented by international development agencies in the education sector in Egypt.

- o Explaining the relationship between CSFs and project success.

- o Adopting the lessons learned from the Community Schools project as recommendations to future projects in the Egyptian context.

The following chapter introduces a background on education development projects in Egypt, followed by a literature review on project management and performance measurement approaches. The author then zooms on the international development projects and their success criteria followed by a theoretical and integrative review of projects critical success factors.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1   Project Management and Project Success

In a systematic review of literature, this section starts by identifying what is project management and what is project success. This is followed by a theoretical review of performance measurement by different scholars.

According to the Project Management Institute (PMI), project management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to meet project requirements (PMI, 2008). The academic and professional scopes of project management have grown but remain in need for developing and updating (Winter et al., 2006). Different scholars agree that a large number of project management tools and techniques were created to enhance project management (White & Fortune, 2002; Morris, 2010; Besner & Hobbs, 2006). While others believe that different tools have been developed to assist the standardization and implementation of project management practices by associations like PMI, International Project Management Association (IPMA) and the Association for Project Management (APM), and others (Montes-Guerra et al., 2015). In addition, different bodies of knowledge are emerging with standards, guidelines and best practices to improve project management (Morris et al., 2006).

Although project management was traditionally applied on engineering and software projects, literature points that recipient countries for international aid have been interested to apply project management practices in development projects (Ika et al., 2010). Different scholars studied the most commonly used project management techniques; for example, the earned value analysis (Anbari, 2003; Cioffi, 2006; Plaza & Turetken, 2009), critical path method (Conde, 2009), the logical framework (Baccarini,

1999; Couillard et al., 2009; Crawford & Bryce, 2003), and balanced scorecard (Barclay, 2008; Milis & Mercken, 2004; Stewart, 2001). According to Montes-Guerra et al. (2015), using project management tools and techniques combine essential elements that can influence the projects results if used properly.

In my analysis of the literature regarding project success, and in agreement with several scholars, project success remains a complex and a subjective issue depending on different points of views of the parties involved, a project can be a success for some and a failure for others (Montes-Guerra et al., 2015). Authors including Baccarini (1999) and De Wit (1998), differentiate between project success in achievement of objectives and the success of project management. While Lim and Mohamed (1999) introduce two possible viewpoints for project success: macro-level success and micro-level success; the micro success is concerned with the traditional triangle of whether the project is on time, in budget and meets quality specifications, while the macro success is concerned with the eventual operation, functions and long term gains of the project (Ogunlana, 2010).

In his study, Cooke-Davies (2002) differentiates between project success criteria as the measurements by which the project's success or failure is judged, while defining project success factors as the inputs to the management system that support the project and which contributes to project success. In agreement with Cooke-Davies (2002), Ogunlana (2010) points that the measurements constituting the success criteria are commonly referred to as the key performance indicators or KPIs.

The British Association for Project Management states that project success includes satisfaction of needs of the project's stakeholders and that it should be measured according to a predetermined set of criteria that was agreed upon prior to project

implementation (Yamin & Sim, 2016). Later, in a more comprehensive definition, Ika (2009) states that project success is achieved through effectiveness and efficiency and summarized the definition of project success to be hexagonal – that it is about cost, time, quality, realization of strategic objectives, and satisfaction of end beneficiaries and other stakeholders. In the same line, a more recent definition by the Project Management Institute (2013) views project success as the completion of a project within a specific scope, time, quality, cost, constraints and resources.

In the scope of this study, project success is defined as achieving the project objectives within specific constraints of time, cost and quality with the satisfaction of end beneficiaries and key stakeholders.

2.2   Performance Measurement

According to Barclay and Osei-Bryson (2010), performance assessment is based on measuring and monitoring of the project execution criteria; traditionally, this has been associated with variables of time, cost and quality (Pillai et al., 2002; Wi & Jung, 2010).

Scholars have studied performance measurement in different approaches. In this literature review, Lee and Nowell's (2015) integrated framework is adopted for a theoretical review of literature between the year 2000 and 2012. The adopted framework summarizes seven different perspectives and frameworks to measuring performance (Lee & Nowell, 2015).

Input is the first framework which was adopted by several scholars; it takes into account that organizations work under various constraints of budget and resources and argues that ways inputs were acquired and how they were utilized are key dimensions of

performance. Kendall and Knapp (2000) adopted this perspective with the concept of resource acquisition and utilization. In this framework, scholars studied how well organizations were able to acquire resources to generate social value. One approach used was resource performance metrics to measure how resources were used to meet the organizational objectives (Berman, 2006). Other scholars focused on the importance of wise spending of resources and put more emphasis on expenditures and compared them to outputs as a way to evaluate efficiency of organizational activities (Cutt & Murray, 2000)

The second framework is *Organizational Capacity* where scholars focused on the effectiveness of internal processes and structures; this framework examines the organizational capability to use resources effectively and efficiently to generate outputs and outcomes, and its ability to adopt necessary learnings and innovations to meet changing needs (Kaplan, 2001; Moore, 2003). In addition, and in line with this approach, some scholars encouraged more focus on management and program capacity (Sowa et al., 2004); they argue that in order to improve the organization's performance, the effect of management capacity and program capacity on achieving outcomes has to be evaluated.

Thirdly, is the *Output* framework where scholars emphasized the importance of quantitative measures for the outputs that are highly linked with the organizational mission; these outputs are to be analyzed with the inputs to assess the organization's efficiency and productivity (Sawhill & Williamson, 2001; Bagnoli & Megali, 2011). For example, countable goods, products and services obtained as a result of the organization's activities to achieve its mission (Lee & Nowell, 2015).

The fourth framework in the literature measures the *Outcome.* Scholars who used this approach measured outcome in three approaches: the first is the *behavioral changes in their target groups and the environmental changes* (Greenway, 2001; Berman, 2006; Penna, 2011); this approach differs from the output approach, where the impact on the targeted population is the focus beyond the outputs of the activities.

The second approach (and the fifth framework) is the *customer satisfaction approach* where scholars focused on measuring the quality of service through satisfaction surveys and customer complaints to assess consumers' perceptions (Penna, 2011; Poister, 2008). Following the same approach, Kaplan's Balanced Scorecard (2001) focused on the value the organization creates to its targeted beneficiaries and what this value adds to them and to what extent they are satisfied.

The third approach (and the sixth framework) to measuring outcome is the *Public Value Accomplishment* where scholars studying performance of non-profit organizations (NPOs) highlighted the importance of public value produced to the society unlike the for-profit sector that mostly focus on profit maximization (Moore, 2003). Several scholars argued that NPO's contribution to the public value should be their main role (Salamon, 2002; Anheier, 2009; Moulton & Eckerd, 2012). Hills and Sullivan (2006) suggest that public value perspective focuses on the community-oriented outcomes and the benefits of the society; they also suggested that the public value measurement framework should measure things like quality of life, safety, equality, democracy and civic engagement through methods like conferences, surveys, citizens' panels and polls. In the same line, Moulten and Ecker (2012) categorize nonprofits public value into six dimensions: (1) service delivery, (2) innovation, (3) advocacy, (4) individual expression, (5) social capital

creation, and (6) citizen engagement; they suggest different survey items to assess these dimensions.

The seventh and last framework scholars referred to is *the network and institutional legitimacy of the organization*; how the organization manages relations with other stakeholders and its institutional legitimacy, which can be considered as a key component in the performance measurement of the organization (Lee & Nowell, 2015). Scholars referred to three perspectives to this: first, some scholars put an emphasis on the inter-organizational networks and network-level effectiveness where it all depends on the effectiveness of other organizations and the people with which they are interconnected (Herman & Renz, 2008). For example, Moore (2003) believes that organizations can improve their mission by collaborating with other organizations sharing the same goals. Second, some scholars studied the efficacy of development projects in light of the support and authorization from donors, government regulators, media reputation and general public (Moore, 2003). And lastly, other scholars studied the institutional legitimacy where the organization adheres to its mission and mandate (Bagnoli & Megali, 2011).

From this review, it is clear that scholars viewed projects performance in different phases of the project, from different perspectives and with different criteria. In the following section, a literature review zooms on the management of international development projects. The section starts by defining international projects, followed by an integrative literature review on how scholars studied project success criteria, and lastly, a systematic review on what critical factors affect the success of international development project is presented.

2.3   International Development Projects

Before examining the literature about IDP management success criteria and critical success factors, the term "international projects" or "foreign aid" is defined. According to OECD (2003), official development assistance (ODA) definition that was offered by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), foreign aid is the measure of aid from national governments with the aim of achieving economic development and welfare in low-income or developing countries. The concept of ODA was developed to act as an indicator for measuring the flow of international aid by donor governments, bilateral donors and multilateral institutions (OEDC, 2003).

In agreement with OECD, Lancaster (2008, p.9) claims that foreign aid (also referred to as international aid) can be defined as the "voluntary transfer of public resources from a government to another independent government, to a non-governmental organization or to an international organization such as the World Bank or the United Nations Development Program".

Generally, the term "international development projects" (IDPs) refers to medium or large projects and/or programs funded by developed countries and multilateral agencies (donors), multilateral development banks, the United Nations associated agencies, bilateral agencies and non-governmental organization through international aid to less developed countries (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005; Hermano et al., 2013).

 In a recent study, Montes-Guerra et al. (2015) introduce a comprehensive view of development projects; the authors view development projects as those projects that contain a proposal of activities to serve a specific objective in a geographically defined

area, for a group of beneficiaries, in a certain period or interval of time, with the purpose of solving a problem or improving a situation.

IDPs introduce goods and services that are also called "hard" projects, like civil works, railroads and power plants, but can also deliver "soft" outputs and outcomes like education, health, human development, capacity building, etc. (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005). In the same line, Lancaster (2008) states that the aid should contain a grant of at least 25 percent that aims to the betterment of human conditions of the recipient country and identifies five important aspects of foreign aid:

1) Intended purpose of aid referring to the objectives of the aid whether program or project aid, sector-wide approach, food aid, technical assistance or international research aid.

2) Terms and conditions of the aid between the donor and the recipient country about the circumstances of the aid, whether it is a gift, a grant, a low or an interest-free loan.

3) Source of the aid, bilateral sources (transfer of aid from one government to the other) or multilateral sources (pooling of the aid from various sources then disbursement of aid from the pool to many recipients, for example: World Bank and UNICEF).

4) The intended use of the aid.

5) The level of urgency of the aid, whether emergency aid like relieve suffering due to a war or natural disaster or development aid like social development or economic development aid.

IDPs can be implemented by the government of the recipient country under a bilateral agreement with the funding country, or through an implementing partner (a non-governmental organization or a contractor) (Crawford & Bryce, 2003). IDPs can also be

managed by national management units, teams in ministries, national departments or institution and can be delegated to executing agencies (private companies, NGOs, international cooperation departments) (Diallo & Thuillier, 2005).

Scholars agree that IDPs consist of a complex network where different stakeholders interact: project coordinator, project team, task manager, national supervisor, beneficiaries and other various firms (Crawford & Bryce, 2003; Diallo & Thuillier, 2004; Khang & Moe, 2008), and emergence of new scenarios and multiple players is possible (Ogunlana, 2010).

2.4   Project Success Criteria

In an integrative literature review about project success criteria, scholars included the so-called "iron triangle" and that is measurement of cost, quality and time in their criteria of measurement of development projects (Atkinson, 1999; Wi & Jung, 2010). Though project conformity to cost, quality and time constraints have been indicative for project success for a long time, however, scholars like Shenhar et al., (2001) argue that measurement of project success should go beyond the iron triangle to include project efficiency, impact on customer, business and direct success, and contribution for the future.

Many scholars referred to defining criteria to measure project success as a difficult and controversial task; this is due to the varying perceptions that lead to disagreement about the project success (Baccarini, 1999; Liu & Walker, 1998) while other scholars attempted to identify certain dimensions that constitutes project success.

Pinto and Mantel (1990) propose three dimensions to define project success. The first is the *efficiency of the implementation process* in terms of the project team

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performance, staying on project schedule and budget, meeting project goals and maintaining smooth team relationships. The second dimension examines *the quality of the project deliverables and the value added* as perceived by the project team, while the third and last dimension examines *the client's satisfaction*. Though these dimensions are essential for project success and can act as performance indicators, however, they are missing the relevance of the project to the targeted audience and the project's alignment with the country's agenda.

Baccarini (1999) proposed that project success consists of two components: product success and project management success. The product success component is concerned with achieving the strategic objectives and goals of the project, as well as the satisfaction of key stakeholders, while project management success focusses on how the management process was conducted and whether it takes into consideration the traditional time, cost and quality aspects at the completion of the project. This separation between product success and project management success is critical; it sheds light on the independency of the success of project management processes from the success of the final product. For example, project managers can interpret project failure as one that did not meet budget or schedule, while the same project can be considered a success for the beneficiaries for delivering a useful product in spite of exceeding time or budget. In other words, the success of project management does not necessarily mean product success and vice versa.

Some authors including Baccarini (1999) and Cooke-Davies (2002) have adopted the Logical Framework Methodology (LFM), also known as the Logic Framework Approach (LFA), to understand and analyze the concepts of project management success

and product success. The LFM was developed by the American Aid Agency in 1960s to improve management of development projects (Couillard, 1995; Youker, 1993); LFA was applied by many international aid donors as the methodology to manage ID projects (Baccarini, 1999) The LFM uses a top-down approach where project objectives are placed in different levels; at any given levels, achieving its objectives satisfies reaching the higher-level objectives until achieving the ultimate objectives of the project (Baccarini, 1999).

In this line of research, Andersen and Jessen (2000), cited in Khang and Moe (2008), emphasized on the importance of separating the task-oriented aspects from the people-oriented ones while examining project success. Authors investigate 10 project elements to give a more comprehensive picture of the outcomes of the project. These include time, budget, quality, as well as the usefulness of product, stakeholders' satisfaction, learning experience, motivation for future work, knowledge acquisition, final project report and project closure.

In their survey for African national project coordinators, Diallo and Thuillier (2004) suggest ten project success criteria that can be grouped in three broad categories: project management success (meeting objectives, staying on time, staying on budget), project success or impact (beneficiaries satisfaction from deliverables, impact on beneficiaries, institutional capacity for the country), and project profile (conformity of the goods and services delivered, national visibility of the project, project reputation among donors, and probability of additional funding). This model has built on Baccarini's (1999) theory in differentiating between project management success and product success, but

also adds an essential component for development projects that examines the project profile in relevance to the country and the donor.

Furthering the work of Diallo and Thuillier (2004), Khang and Moe (2008) added some success criteria for international development projects carried out by NGOs in Vietnam and Myanmar in the project life-cycle phases including: clear understanding of project environment, project team competencies, effective consultation with stakeholders, commitment to goals and objectives, clear donors policies and adequate local capacities.

By combining the work of Diallo and Thuillier (2004) and Khang and Moe (2008), the model of Ika et al. (2012) for project success criteria of international development projects includes: 1) relevance in meeting needs and priorities of the country, 2) efficiency of cost while meeting project objectives, 3) effectiveness which is the extent to which the project meets the desired objectives, 4) impact which is the indirect positive or negative changes generated by the project ,and 5) sustainability where the benefits of the projects are institutionalized and will continue after project completion. This model acknowledges the different factors that affect the success of development projects and the unique nature of such projects in light of country priorities, donors' policies and sustainability objectives.

2.5   Critical Success Factors

Beginning with the definition of critical success factors (CSFs), Andersen et al. (2006) defined CSFs as those features that are identified as necessary to be achieved for the project to make excellent results; the absence or inconsideration of such factors can cause project failure or barriers to achieving project success. Different scholars agreed that while project success criteria establishes measurements of project success, the

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occurrence of CSFs of inputs, events, conditions and circumstances in project management influence the project success (Lim and Mohamed, 1999; Cooke-Davies, 2002; Ika, 2009).

In a systematic and integrative literature review about CSFs that influence project success, Slevin and Pinto (1986) addressed project success as a multi-dimensional concept and proposed that the critical success factors for a project are ten internal factors: project mission (goals and ultimate benefits of the project), top management support (such as allocation of resources and top management's confidence in project manager during the event of crisis), project schedule/plan (formulation, conceptualization, detailing and evaluation), client consultation, personnel (recruitment, selection, training), technical tasks (for example, technology and technical expertise), client acceptance, monitoring and feedback, communication, and troubleshooting.

In a later study by same authors, Pinto and Slevin (1998), four additional external factors were added that correlate to project success: characteristics of the project team leader, power and politics within the organization, environmental events, and urgency of the project.

Morris and Hough (1987) provide a comprehensive framework depicting the pre-conditions related to project success. They identified six elements that impact project success; these are having a positive attitude to success that is shared by all parties, having a workable and properly defined project, careful monitoring and management of external factors that influence the project, clear understanding of the project work on the schedule and finance, organization and contract strategy, clear communication and controls, and human qualities and tolerance towards errors. However, Rae and Eden (2000) criticized

these elements for being too general and assuming an ideal world that is clear from complexities and uncertainties.

In agreement with the work of Pinto and Slevin (1989) about the ambiguity of defining project success, Belassi and Tukel (1996) agree that one main reason behind this ambiguity is that different parties involved in the project perceive project success or failure differently. The second reason Belassi and Tukel recognize is the variability of lists of success and failure factors from one study to the other. In their study, Belassi and Tukel argue that grouping factors according to some criteria help analyze the interaction between them rather than identifying individual factors that might vary in different projects. The authors suggest a new framework that group critical success factors and identify their possible effects on project performance. This framework suggests grouping project success factors into four areas: 1) factors related to the project (the size and the value of a project, the uniqueness of project activities, the density of a project network, project life cycle and the urgency of a project outcome); 2) factors related to the project manager and the team members (the skills and background of the project manager and the team members); 3) factors related to the organization (for example, the management support and the organizational structure); and 4) factors related to the external environment (for example, the political environment).

By comparing the work of Belassi and Tukel (1996) with Pinto and Slevin (1986) discussed here earlier, unlike the later, Belassi and Tukel identify some factors as the effects of others or what they called "system responses". For example, resource availability is a systems response to organizational, environmental and project

management-related factors such as top management support, project managers' negotiation skills and the general economic situation.

In a more recent review of literature on the critical success factors (CSFs) for international development projects in Africa, Kwak (2002) acknowledges that the environment of international development projects is far more complex than domestic projects. The author attempts to identify visible and invisible factors that influence the project environment and challenge completion of development projects and classifies them into ten categories. These categories cover issues of political factors (like political instability, laws and regulations, policies, war or revolution), legal factors (like changes in government policies, convertibility of currency, taxation rules), cultural factors (like socio cultural backgrounds, traditions, values and beliefs), technical factors (use of technology), managerial factors (like quality and effectiveness of project management), economical factors (like changes in economic conditions), environmental factors (like pollution), social factors (like religious fragmentation, social uprisings or riots), corruption factor (like lack of regulatory institutions, lack of transparency and bribery), and physical aspects (like natural disasters, military coups, wars and acts of terrorism). In addition, the author recommends that project managers of IDPs should maintain flexibility and should be competent to analyze problems and their effects on the project, as well as respond promptly in solving them (Kwak, 2002).

In agreement with Kwak (2002) about the importance of the project manager's competencies, Diallo and Thuillier (2005), in their empirical study on the World Bank projects in Africa, found that two factors: trust and communication, between the project team and the local project coordinator influence project success.

From another approach, Khang and Moe (2008) proposed a project life-cycle-based framework model for international development projects addressing critical success factors corresponding to the various stages of the project life cycle phases, namely, conceptualizing, planning, implementing, and closing. In their study, Khang and Moe (2008) suggested 18 critical success factors that are expected to influence project success. According to Khang and Moe (2008), the CSFs of the conceptualizing/initiation phase are: clear understanding of project environment, competencies of project designers, and effective consultation with primary stakeholders. In the planning phase, the CSFs are: compatibility of development priorities, adequate resources, competencies of project planners and effective consultation with key stakeholders. While the CSFs of the implementation phase are: compatible rules and procedures, continuing supports, high motivation and interest, adequate knowledge and skills, and effective consultation during implementation. In the closing phase, the CSFs are: adequate provision for project closing, competencies of project manager, and effective consultation with key stakeholders. And lastly, in the overall project success: clear policy of donors and governments, adequate local capacities and strong local ownership and institutional commitments.

Viewing the work of Slevin and Pinto from a different perspective and with the same approach of grouping CSFs like Kwak (2002) and Belassi and Tukel (1996), Steinfort and Walker (2011, pp.11-12) regrouped project critical success factors into four different groups. There suggested groups are: 1) leadership related factors (project mission, top management support, communication), 2) stakeholder engagement factors (client consultation, communication, client acceptance), 3) technical expertise factors

(personnel, technical task, trouble-shooting), and 4) operational planning and control factors (project schedule/plans, monitoring and feedback, trouble-shooting).

In their study in IDPM, Ika et al. (2010) highlight a specific set of CSFs for the World Bank development projects: monitoring, coordination, design, training, and project supervision. The study suggests that project supervision has differing significant influences on the two project success dimensions and that project management success does not significantly affect deliverable success. The authors propose that project supervisors and managers should aim to strengthen project design and monitoring and thus improve project implementation as well as the chances for project success.

Later in 2012, same authors, Ika et al. (2012), resume their studies on World Bank projects and attempt to find the correlation between project critical success factors and project success. The findings of their empirical study affirm a positive correlation between five critical success factors and project success; these are monitoring, coordination, design, training and institutional environment.

Below is a summary of the literature review on CSFs:

Table (1) Summary of literature review on CSFs

Slevin and Pinto (1986)	Morris and Hough (1987)	Belassi and Tukel (1996)	Khan et al. (2000)	Kwak (2002)	Steinfort and Walker (2011)	Ika et al. (2012)
Internal: * project mission * top management support * project schedule/plan * client consultation * personnel * technical tasks * client acceptance * monitoring and feedback * communication * and troubleshooting. Four additional external factors were added: * characteristics of the project team leader * power and politics within the organization, * environmental events * and urgency of the project	* attitude * project definition * monitoring of external factors, * clear understanding of the project work on the schedule and finance * organization and contract strategy * clear communication and controls * human qualities * and tolerance towards errors.	Suggest grouping project success factors into four areas: 1) factors related to the project 2) factors related to the project manager and the team members 3) factors related to the organization 4) factors related to the external environment	* project planning * implementation approach * awareness and sense of urgency for change * publicizing success stories * creation of a powerful group to lead change * networking and team building * anchoring changes in the organization's culture * project management structure * project team	* political factors * legal factors * cultural factors * technical factors * managerial factors * economical factors * environmental factors * social factors * corruption factor * and physical aspects	* leadership related factors * stakeholder engagement factors * technical expertise factors * operational planning and control factors	* project monitoring * project coordination * project design * training * institutional environment

Source: Compiled by the author

To summarize the authors' views on critical success factors of IDPs, it is clear that no standard set of factors is common in all studies, which can go back to the project purpose, context and other factors. Nevertheless, we can conclude that project success is not only affected by internal factors that are under the control of the project management, like monitoring and evaluation or technical factors, but also external factors that are beyond the project management control can also facilitate or hinder project success like political, economic and environmental factors. It is also worth emphasizing that three factors are mentioned in most of the literature; these are leadership or project management factors, stakeholder engagement and coordination, and monitoring and evaluation.

Generally, scholars agree on the presence of critical success factors that are strongly correlated to project success. Despite the various views on project success

criteria and the various definitions to project success, drawing conclusions on reasons behind project success or failure is complex.

To conclude this literature review, scholars identified different critical success factors of development projects in diverse contexts. However, literature on critical success factors about management of IDPs in the education sector in developing countries are few. The core concepts of critical success factors and project success criteria are frequently questioned (Mishra, 2016). In addition, principles and tools of project management applied in one field and/or in a single country can not necessarily be applied to the donor-funded development projects in all countries. Lastly, and after reviewing the existing literature, it is clear that there is a gap in the literature on donor-funded projects in the education sector in Egypt. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the academic literature in its study of donor-funded development projects in Egypt and aims to guide practitioners and implementing agencies to boost project success.

Chapter Three: International Experience in Assessing Critical Success Factors of

International Development projects

This chapter introduces a brief overview on four similar studies that were done in other developing countries; namely Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India and Ghana. The researcher selected these countries for their similarities to Egypt, being a developing country and a recipient of ODA. The chapter displays the scope, methodology and findings of sample studies in the mentioned countries with the aim of providing a wider understanding of the IDPs context.

3.1   Bangladesh

In an evaluation of a government public administration reform project in Bangladesh through a technical assistance project jointly sponsored by the government and the Department for International Development, Government of the UK, Khan et al. (2000) identify nine reasons for project success.

- **In project planning:** their research acknowledged the importance of creating a culture of change in organizational culture, habits and traditions. In addition, participation and involvement of stakeholders at the lower level (not only the top management) in the design and implementation phases was also found essential. And lastly, project purpose and outputs should be more focused and appropriately organized.

- **In project management:** efficient and effective team building, participation of stakeholders and training.

- **Implementation approach:** effective change management; creating an awareness and sense of urgency for change; publicizing success stories; creation of a powerful group of

'champions' of change; networking and team building; and anchoring changes in the organization's culture.

- **Project management structure:** forming a steering committee to supervise, monitor implementation and take key decisions, a task force for each project component, an operational management team, and selecting a 'right' project team.

3.2   **Ethiopia**

In their study to explore project success factors and criteria for development projects funded by the European Union (EU) in Ethiopia, Bayiley and Teklu (2016) followed an interpretive approach using a questionnaire and unstructured interviews for data collection. The study also aimed to explain the relationship between the critical success factors (CSFs) and project success as perceived by the project managers and team members of the participating organizations or EU funded projects from the period 2010 to 2014 that are completed and still ongoing.

The statistical findings of the study indicate that there is a positive relationship between five identified CSFs and project success. The first CSF is the intellectual capital including human capital, stakeholder capital and social capital as a critical factor in the success of EU funded projects. In addition, clear working policies along with compatible rules and procedures forming a sound project case, competency and abilities of key manpower (project designers, planners and managers), and effective stakeholder engagement were found as vital critical success factors to the complex nature of EU funded projects (Bayiley & Teklu, 2016).

Moreover, according to the respondents of the questionnaire, "relevance" to the targeted beneficiaries, "impact" on the beneficiaries or the broader sector, "effectiveness"

of projects results, "sustainability" of positive outcomes and "efficiency" of using

resources are ranked respectively according to their level of importance as success

criteria to evaluate the success of the EU development projects (Bayiley & Teklu, 2016).

3.3   India

Mishra (2016) conducted a recent study on managing IDPs in India through a

comparative case study approach to four development projects that were implemented in

different points of time and in different contexts. The study aims to understand how

project design, implementation process, and stakeholder analysis interact with one

another and how does this interaction affect the project outcome (Mishra, 2016).

At first, the study compared the four projects in terms of the fundamental

principles of project management: time, cost and quality. Moving ahead with the

implementation process being the focus of the study, the context associated with it also

included project design, management of human resources, policy guidelines, interaction

among stakeholders, monitoring, decisions and outcomes.

Matching the findings of Ika et al. (2012), Mishra's (2016) conceptual framework

suggests that apart from cost, time and quality, adding a flexible organizational design

and implementation dynamics are the important critical factors that determine the

outcomes of international development projects. Furthermore, the study implies the

importance of taking into consideration the dynamics of the implementing organizations

and the inter-organizational coordination while designing international development

projects (Mishra, 2016).

**3.4	Ghana**

Through an exploratory approach, Ofori (2013) conducted his study in Ghana to identify and assess the quality of project management practices as well as the critical success factors for projects. The study emphasized on the importance of knowledge of best practices to improve the quality of project management and consequently project success. Ofori's study used a survey method for data collection from Ghanaian organizations.

The conceptual model of the study embraces not only time, cost, scope but also social, cultural, economic, political, communication, competencies, stakeholder involvement and leadership among others. The model combines project management practices and success factors, and their expected outcomes that are influenced by the environment under which the project is being carried.

In analyzing the findings of the study, the author grouped the critical success factors into two groups: factors that *hinder* project success and factors that *facilitate* project success. The factors that hinder project success were found to be: lack of support/finance; lack of communication; lack of coordination and commitment; lack of experienced and competent personnel; high bureaucracy in government institutions; and lack of consultation with stakeholders. While factors that facilitate project success were found to be effective communication, coordination and commitment; top management support; effective planning; having experienced and competent project personnel; teamwork; and good leadership.

Respondents to this study were also asked to rank some of the critical success factors that were already identified in the literature review. The findings showed that:

Clear Goals and Mission, Adequate Resources, and Top Management Support as the three most important critical success factors for successful projects and project management, while Realistic Cost and Time Estimates, Appropriate Technology, and Standards and Regulations were ranked as the three least important critical success factors. The study also focused on the importance of documentation of project management practices that can guide project managers. Lastly, the author provided recommendations for improvement of project success.

Chapter Four: International Development Projects in the Education Sector Egypt

4.**1** **Education in Egypt**

Egypt has been classified by the World Bank as the largest education school system in the Middle East with more than 18 million students (World Bank, 2002). Boys and girls are enrolled in primary, secondary and intermediate levels with nearly equal rates. However, with the rapid growth of population, the current resources are not sufficient to provide quality education for almost one third of the population that are less than 15 years old (USAID, 2017). In addition, there is lack of practical training for school teachers with more focus on passing exams rather than developing critical thinking and practical skills; this led to a real challenge in the Egyptian education system.

During the recent decades in Egypt, the country has progressed in its development agenda like the increase in the average per capita income, decrease in child and maternal mortality rates, and reach of drinking water and electricity to a higher percentage of the population. However, more progress is required for the country's human development and the provision of essential services like basic education. Due to the political and social unrest after the January 2011 revolution, Egypt's economy has suffered and many donors and development agencies activities were directly or indirectly impacted. Moreover, direction and interest of development counterparts shifted (USAID, 2017).

According to MoE Strategic Plan (2014-2030), the problems of the education sector in Egypt can be summarized in three main categories. The first category has to do with the availability issues, and these are: limited availability and early preparation for education, poor accommodation, dropout, failure, educational buildings problems, absenteeism and cheating problems. The second category has to do with quality issues

like low quality of education, weak basic reading and writing skills, absence of school activities, evaluation and examination systems, and more. The third category has to do with educational organizational structure issues like the inefficiency of the organizational structures, weak application of the centralized and the decentralized policies, weakness of the communication, information and decision-making systems, and more.

In an overview about development of primary education sector in Egypt, Egypt has achieved a significant progress towards achieving Education for All, a global movement led by UNESCO, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through expanding access to education and increasing girls' enrollment rates. According to the Ministry of Education statistical yearbook (2015), the net enrolment rate was 91 per cent in primary education with dropout rates 0.7% for males and 0.5% for females for the year 2014/2015.

According to MoE Strategic Plan (2014-2030), the strategic objectives of the primary education stage are:

- Providing quality primary education service for all children at the age of primary education
- Providing quality and equitable education service for primary stage students and to maintain the children at school until they finalize this stage
- Eliminating all gaps among schools in relation to performance and accommodation levels.
- Raising the efficiency of the primary stage management setup.

Conversely, due to socio-economic challenges, geographical constraints and gender disparities, 3% of children in primary school age never enrolled for school or dropped out of school (UNICEF, 2017). The quality of the education system remains a challenge to encourage students to reach their full potential and leads to low school completion rates where less than 10 per cent of schools in Egypt met national standards for quality education (UNICEF, 2017). According to UNICEF, 53 percent of elementary school students in Egypt do not have basic mathematical knowledge and 45 per cent do not recognize some basic facts from life and physical sciences (UNICEF, 2017).

In addition, among 140 countries, Egypt was ranked 139 in the quality of primary education in the 2015-2016 Global Competitiveness Report, published by the World Economic Forum.

4.2   International Development Projects in Egypt

During 2015, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) members of Development Assistance Committee (DAC) contributed with a total of USD 2,488 Million to Egypt in different sectors, of which 11.9% for the education sector (OECD, 2015). Millions of dollars are spent annually on development projects in the Education sector in Egypt; below is a brief example about some international agencies spending on basic education programs in Egypt:

Table (2) International Agencies Spending in Egypt

Agency	Year	Budget	Sector	Source	Sample Projects
World Bank	FY1993-2003	US 55.5 M	Primary Education	http://projects.worldbank.org/P005161/basic-education-improvement-project?lang=en	* Basic Education Improvement project: - MoE institutional development - Teachers training - School construction and rehabilitation - Related policy-oriented studies
CIDA	2014-2015	US 14.72 M	International assistance disbursements to Egypt	http://www.international.gc.ca/development-developpement/countries-pays/egypt-egypte.aspx?lang=eng	* Immediate Education and Child protection Needs in Host communities * Education in Harmony - supporting vulnerable children
USAID	FY 2015	US 12.4 M	Basic Education	https://results.usaid.gov/egypt/education -and-social-services/basic-education#fy2015	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) School Project
UNICEF	FY 2016	US 1.721 M	General Education & Education in Emergencies	http://open.unicef.org/map/?k=programme&q=Education-General	Three program components: three programme components: (a) equitable access to basic services; (b) child protection and adolescent/youth development; (c) social policy, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation
UNESCO	FY 2016	US 128,459	Basic Education	https://opendata.unesco.org/country/EG	* Leadership and Teachers Training in Egypt * Promoting Quality ECCE in Egypt for disseminating innovative teaching methodologies

Source: Compiled by the author

Whether or not the projects implemented using these funds have been successful, it is essential to identify what critical factors influence project success in the Egyptian education sector. The study also explains the relationship between critical factors and project success as well as presents recommendations and lessons learned from previous projects to improve performance of future projects in the Egyptian context.

4.3   Community Schools in Egypt

According to Farrell (2004), parents and local religious leaders did not object in principle to girls' education, but objected to specific conditions offered in the traditional schooling system. Among which are: safety of girls while walking long distances to schools, male classmates and non-local teachers, long school hours that kept girls from contributing to the household chores.

Egypt has promised EFA by the year 2015 with an effort to achieve universal primary education (UPE). In 1992, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education (MoE) have established the community schools project in three governorates in Upper Egypt, namely Assiut, Sohag, and Qena. UNICEF developed the model and implemented community schools project through local non-governmental organizations. The partnership was extended to include the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in 1994 and World Food Programme (WFP) in 2006 (UNICEF, 2010). The model inspired other international donors like USAID and other organizations, such as CARE, Plan International, Misr El Kheir and others to implement similar community school projects. Later, MoE established the "one-classroom schools" program based on the same model.

In 1993, ministerial decree 255 was issued to regulate the work in community schools (See Annex 1 for decree 255). The model was also supported by Suzan Mubarak,

the first lady at that time (Zaalouk, 2004). According to MoE, the mission of community

schools is to develop student's language, reading and writing skills, master basics of

mathematics, and to assist students in social adaptation, behavioral and vocational skills.

There are five different models to community based education. The first emerged

form was the one-classroom schools. Later, other models like Girls Friendly Schools,

Multi Grade Schools, Community Schools, and Parallel Schools appeared (Langsten,

2016). In 1995/1996, the number of community schools was 111 schools serving a total

of 2859 students, while in 1997/1999, the number of schools jumped to 202 and served a

total of 4656 children (Zaalouk, 2004). Recently and according to MoE, the number of

schools increased to 5397 schools and are serving more than 127,000 children (See

Annex 3 for more details about CBE schools in all governorates).

Zooming on the start of the community schools model, the agreement between the

Ministry of Education (MoE) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1992

launched the Community Schools project in Upper Egypt as a joint venture for quality

innovative education through genuine community participation (Zaalouk, 2004). MoE

agreed to pay salaries, provide teachers training, support curriculum and material, while

UNICEF developed a community based education model based on the needs of

underserved areas in Upper Egypt to expand primary school education access to deprived

communities in Upper Egypt.

- **Goals of the Model of Community Schools**

Primary goals of the model according to Sidhom and Al-Fustat (2004) include:

1. Enhancing national capacity of providing primary quality education for all, especially girls, through developing an effective and sustainable community schools model

2. Reaching out-of-school children by establishing girl-friendly, community-based and accessible education opportunities in deprived areas in Upper Egypt governorates: Assiut, Sohag, and Qena.

3. Developing management and technical capacities for sustaining a community-based, girl-friendly model based on the efforts of the local community.

The model provided an innovative "seedbed" model that introduced a structure involving different stakeholders, which was not the norm for public education. The model also introduced a child centered pedagogical model, and a strategy that targeted marginalized, underserved and rural population. The project was focused on three governorates: Assuit, Souhag, and Qena where the net enrollment rates for girls, reported as 63 percent, 61 percent, and 71 percent respectively in 1996-1997, which were well below the national average (Zaalouk, 2004).

Chapter Five: Conceptual Framework and Methodology

5.1   Conceptual Framework

The concepts used in this study are all drawn from the literature review above; the study refers to critical success factors as the inputs, events, conditions and circumstances in project management that influence the project success (Lim and Mohamed, 1999; Cooke-Davies, 2002; Ika, 2009).

The researcher adopts the critical success factors framework proposed by Khang and Moe (2008) to explore the critical success factors for development projects in different phases of the project life cycle:

- o **Conceptualizing CSFs:** clear understanding of project environment; effective consultation with key stakeholders; competencies of project designers (Slevin & Pinto, 1986; Morris & Hough, 1987; Steinfort & Walker, 2011)
- o **Planning CSFs**: compatibility with development priorities; adequate resources (Khan et al., 2000; Belassi & Tukel, 1996)
- o **Implementation CSFs:** rules and procedure; team-related factors (Morris & Hough,1987; Khan et al., 2000; Kwak, 2002)
- o **Closing CSFs:** local ownership and institutional commitments (Ika et al., 2012; Steinfort & Walker, 2011)

Figure (1): Conceptual Framework

Critical Success Factors

Conceptualizing
- Clear understanding of project environment
- Competencies of project designers
- Effective consultation with primary stakeholders

Planning
- Compatibility of development priorities
- Adequate resources
- Competencies of project planners
- Effective consultation with key stakeholders

Implementing
- Compatible rules and procedures
- Continuing supports
- High motivation and interest
- Adequate knowledge and skills
- Effective consultation during implementation

Closing
- Adequate provision for project closing
- Competencies of project manager
- Effective consultation with key stakeholders

Overall project success
- Clear policy of donors and governments
- Adequate local capacities
- Strong local ownership and institutional commitments.

Leads to Project Success

Case Study

Lessons Learned

Source: Adopted from Khang and Moe (2008, p. 76)

5.2   Methodology

This section describes the methodology used in this study. The first part describes the approach used, followed by a second section outlining the data collection methods, data sources, sample design and data analysis techniques.

In order to identify which critical success factors that directly impact the success of development projects in the basic education sector in Egypt, this research adopts a qualitative approach depending on both primary and secondary sources through a case study methodology.

The case study approach employs an exploratory design to identify the CSFs for development projects in the sector of education in Egypt as well as an explanatory design to explain the relationships between project success factors and overall project success.

The project selected for the case study is the Community Schools (CS) project launched through a partnership between UNICEF, the Egyptian Ministry of Education, NGOs and local communities in Upper Egypt. The selection of this CS case study is based on the success of the project. The community schools approaches have been overwhelmingly effective when compared to other educational enhancement and poverty reduction programs across the country (MoE, 2007; Zaalouk, 2004) ; the CS is a type of project whose results transcends improving access and quality of education to enhancing community development in the more general sense (UNICEF, 2010). In addition, best practices from CS (mainly in terms of curricula and teaching methods) have been extended to other education projects. This is clear in the objectives of the MoE Strategic plan 2014-2030 where one of the executive objectives is establishing a number of pilot specialized technical schools that adopt the community schools model to service remote areas (MoE, 2013).

Most recently, the community schools model has been recognized as a basis for all Community Based Education (CBE) initiatives in the MoE Strategic Plan (UNICEF, 2010). In page 14 of MoE Strategic plan 2014 – 2030, it states:

"As for the children who are over the age of primary school enrollment (eight years), or have dropped out, they are guided to join the one-class schools or community schools. These are public schools operating under the umbrella of the general education system. They were established in the nineties by UNICEF in collaboration with MoE and

the local community and are known as the second chance schools. Such schools are

usually opened in areas of limited population deprived from schools and educational

institutions3, and are characterized by adopting a flexible system that allows the teaching

of more than one level in the same classroom. Different forms of these schools have been

developed to respond to the specific needs related to the local community, the social

status or geographical location. Community schools in disadvantaged rural areas

provide an educational level equivalent to primary education."

5.3   Data Collection and Sample Design

The research depends on both primary and secondary data from desk research. Primary data is collected through conducting ten in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

The selection of interviewees was according to the relevant stakeholders to each critical success factor in the suggested conceptual framework and/or in the counterpart agencies or government institutes. For conducting the in-depth interviews, the study used a purposive sample of different stakeholders of the Community Schools project; more interviewees were approached using the snowball sampling technique. All participants are assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of their responses as follows:

- o   Interviewee 1: UNICEF project officer
- o   Interviewee 2: USAID education specialist
- o   Interviewee 3: USAID project officer
- o   Interviewees 4 & 5: M&E consultants
- o   Interviewee 6: An education reform expert and consultant
- o   Interviewee 7: CARE Egypt education program director
- o   Interviewee 8: CARE Egypt project officer

- Interviewee 9: Field supervisor in Assuit, UNICEF Community Schools
- Interviewee 10: CBE department head at MoE (See Annex 2 for MoE letter of approval)

Interviews were conducted during the period between March 21, 2017 and April 20, 2017. Each interview took from 30 to 60 minutes.

Whereas, secondary data sources included dynamic and critical reading to project documents and reports, monitoring and evaluation documents and literature review.

5.4 Data Analysis

The primary data collected through interviews were recorded and transcribed for thematic analysis based on the critical success factors provided in the conceptual framework. Whereas, other secondary data obtained from documents and reports were critically read and analyzed. Data was triangulated through obtaining the data from interviews and verifying them against project documents and evaluation reports. The data was then synthesized together and associated with the literature for identifying any similarities or discrepancies. This analysis aimed to deliver a comprehensive understanding of project CSFs for development projects in the education sector in Egypt.

5.5 Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This study is delimited to studying the CS project as a sample of development projects in the education sector in Egypt. This project was selected also on the basis that the researcher has access to and was allowed to conduct interviews with their staff. In selecting participants, the study is delimited to participants who have worked in the

project management team or the implementation team or participants who have been involved with the project's evaluation process.

The reason behind these delimitations lies in the researcher's interest in the topic and reflects on the conceptual framework of the research.

The findings of this study cannot be directly generalized to all projects in the education sector in Egypt or on different sectors without taking into consideration the variations among projects and sectors. They can neither be applied to all international development agencies as well without considering the different modes of project management and implementation of each of these agencies. The study is also limited to the data and documents available or provided by the targeted organizations and were allowed to be accessed by the researcher. The results of the study cannot be generalized to other organizations in Egypt.

5.6   Ethical Considerations and Challenges

The researcher provided the participants of the study with an explanation of the research goals and emphasized their voluntary participation and that the research for this thesis was scholarly in nature. Participants provided oral or written consent; the consent form is included in Annex 5.

The researcher received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the American University in Cairo on March 19, 2017, prior to the start of the interviews.

While conducting this study, the main challenge the researcher faced was in the process of data collection, due to the busy schedules of potential participants.

5.7   Case Study: Community Schools Projects in Egypt

  The researcher selected the CS project as a case study for its achievements, sustainability and replicability of the model; the project served as a catalyst to a number of other CBE projects in Egypt (MOE, 2007; Zaalouk, 2004)

- **Dimensions of the UNICEF Model (1992 – 2009):**

  The structure of the project involved four main partners: MoE, UNICEF, NGOs, and the local community. Other partners contributed during the course of the project such as Faculties of Education in the various governorates, the Center for Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development (CCIMD), the National Center for Examination and Educational Evaluation (NCEEE), and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

  Roles and responsibilities of all partners were written and signed in a memorandum of understanding in April 1992. While roles and responsibilities of the NGOs are set out in the Project Cooperation Agreement between UNICEF and each respective NGO.

Table 3: Roles of key partners in the Community Schools Project, UNICEF

UNICEF	MoE	Local Community/Education Committees	NGOs
Participating in project management Designing and developing the model applied at schools. Training staff project Providing supplementary materials to pupils, facilitators and technical support staff Providing schools with furniture and equipment Monitoring and evaluating the schools	Paying the teachers/facilitators recruited and trained by UNICEF Providing guidance and assistance on curriculum matters Providing instructional materials and supplies Participating in training and technical supervision Providing health services to pupils (health insurance) Providing a dry meal to CS students Exams	Providing suitable location for classrooms, besides human resources Participating in school management through Education Committees in each hamlet EC mobilize local resources, identify potential pupils and facilitators, select school site, and convince parents to let their children join the school.	Manage, supervise and monitor community schools Carry out onsite training of the facilitators in schools and education committees in those same sites and in service training for facilitators and teachers from government and mainstream schools. Providing furniture, supplies and equipment to the CS Coordination with Governorate officials and MoE officials

Source: UNICEF (2004, p.22)

- **Achievements of the Model:**

The CS model has gone through three phases: the Pilot Phase (1992-1995), the Expansion

Phase (l996-l999) and the Sustainability and Mainstreaming Phase (2000-2006). Each

phase has had its specific objectives and achievements, all of which have built on each

other, developing, adding and deepening the structures, partnerships and network that have been built throughout the project process.

Phase I (1992-1995):

This phase was characterized by establishing and consolidation of the partnerships between UNICEF, MoE, NGOs and the local community. In addition, strong efforts were exerted in human resource development and capacity building. The project started with four schools in Assiut serving 121 students of whom 87 (74%) were girls. By the end of phase 1, a total of 100 community schools were established that served 1,037 students, of whom 69 percent were girls.

Phase II (1996-1999):

This phase witnessed the expansion of the model, increased training and capacity building. Several ministerial decrees were also issued to support the model and increased diffusion of the model into mainstream education. The second phase included 207 schools that served 4,684 students, of whom 70 percent were girls. A total of 580 or 70% of the community school graduates enrolled in mainstream preparatory schools were girls.

Phase III (2003-2009):

This phase aimed to complete the elements of sustainability and to ensure the key components of the project are fully adopted by MoE and local NGOs.

The project applied a Life Cycle Approach that combined services for the young child with an Early Childhood Development parenting initiative, a primary school initiative (the Community Schools) and an adult literacy initiative.

The community schools model used teachers, also called facilitators, from local communities who hold intermediate certificates and are usually less qualified than regular school teachers. Communities are also involved in this project by donating land, labor and places for the school. In addition, community members and local NGOs supervise and help in the school management.

In an evaluation report submitted to UNICEF by Sidhom and Al-Fustat (2004), the annual cost per student is LE 653 while the annual cost per student in public primary education in Egypt (1999/2000) is LE 664. This excludes the costs covered by MoE such as facilitators' salaries and schoolbooks.

In 2006, an evaluation was submitted to UNICEF for the CS project done by Dr. Samira Sidhom and Al-Fustat Center for Studies and Consultations. The findings of the evaluation demonstrated that the CS model has successfully provided a "home grown" model that integrated an innovative environment and a pedagogical framework.

- **USAID New Schools Program (NSP):**

USAID included the Community Schools model in its NSP project; the main goal of the project was to increase access and enrollment of girls in underserved communities in Minya, Beni Suef, and Fayoum Governorates. The project started in 2000 and extended for three phases to 2008 (USAID, 2010).

The project had a major focus on serving out-of-school girls (ages 9 to 14) in multi-grade schools to enable girls to complete their primary education and then they can enroll in preparatory schools. NSP achieved a percentage of 80-92% of girls enrolled in their schools which exceeded the project's stated goal.

NSP was very effective in activating the parent associations which encouraged more community participation. The project had a Community Mobilization Component in efforts to produce sustainable community support for education for all children and adults, especially girls and women. This was done through forming Community Education Teams (CETs) that mobilized the community for girls' education, carried out community assessment and encouraged communities to donate land for school buildings.

NSP has built and furnished 70 primary schools with 770 classes that offered 33,998 education opportunities mainly for girls while the Multi-Grade schools offered 6143 accelerated education opportunities for out-of-school girls. The total target beneficiaries of the project was 28000 girls between the ages of 5 and 18 as well as 1300 teachers in 72 communities in partnership with CARE and Vodafone foundation (USAID, 2010).

Chapter Six: Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents the research data from the community schools project on the critical success factors according to the methodology stated earlier in Chapter Four. It is divided into four sections; the first identifies the community schools project's CSFs through the project life cycle: conceptualization, planning, implementation, closure. It specifically identifies what are the essential actions, events, processes, inputs, and conditions that are necessary for the success of each project phase, with the aim of guiding project managers, implementing agencies, MoE and policy makers through project success. Whereas, the second section tackles the overall success factors for the project, with discussion on what ensures project impact and sustainability followed by the third section that sheds light on the barriers to success in the context of development projects in the education sector in Egypt. Finally, discussion and analysis of findings are presented.

All sections complement each other in answering the main research question, "What are the main critical success factors (CSFs) for international development projects in the education sector in Egypt?"

The analysis further helps to identify the obstacles such projects face and how different factors influence project success, enabling the researcher to come up with recommendations and lessons learned to guide project management team, key partners and policy makers to adopt better project management practices that contribute positively to the success of education projects in Egypt.

6.1   Critical Success Factors in the Project Life Cycle

This section presents the data found in the case study of the community schools model alternating between the UNICEF and the USAID projects.

- **Conceptualizing Phase:**

1. Proper needs assessment and clear understanding of project environment:

The most reported CSF in the conceptualizing phase that was reported by the majority of interviewees is the proper needs assessment and the clear understanding of the project environment.

Starting with the first phase of the project in 1992, UNICEF was aiming to meet an urging community need for educating girls in rural areas. UNICEF project officer (Interviewee 1) states:

"We work together to succeed together in meeting a real community need".

This process is essential and aims at identifying the root causes of the problems the project aims to address, rather than superficial interventions with shallow results. For proper needs assessment, interviewees suggested the significance of scientific research to recognize the feasible and realistic solutions in the given context of the project.

Building on the UNICEF's model, when the USAID initiated the project in 2000 in different areas, it carried out needs assessment to the new-targeted beneficiaries. USAID education specialist (Interviewee 2) states:

> *"Community schools is a fantastic idea, it addressed a genuine need where the MoE could not start formal schools and since education is a responsibility of the community, so they came up with this idea to start a class by the resources available in the community… [in addition] proper needs assessment guides you to use the environment in the project's vocational and professional training to be*

designed and tailored based on your governorate; for example, if you are in Alexandria you will study things differently than if you are in Aswan".

Reassuring the USAID's approach in needs assessment and in studying the project environment and context, another education expert (Interviewee 3) also adds,

> *"The context and environment of the project differs from urban to rural areas to city; it differs from Upper Egypt or Delta… and even within the same city it will vary from one place to the other. It is a case-by-case thing…. The donors come with solutions that have been tried and tested before. These solutions take various assumptions regarding context that not necessarily true. For example, teachers are dedicated, some others are not. Assuming schools are ready, some are and some are not, assuming there is a formal system in the MoE; I am not sure;"*

Needs assessment and situational analysis does not only guide the project to the suitable interventions, but also to utilizing the available community resources for the good of the project. Moreover, deep understanding of the project context saves the project from unnecessary costs and needless interventions.

While implementing the USAID model by CARE Egypt, it was essential to view information of previous work that was done by UNICEF or other organizations for proper conceptualizing and planning. An education program director (Interviewee 7) comments on the importance of information sharing from the ministry's side as critical to having a proper needs assessment; states:

> *"It is necessary that MoE shares the information they have and to allow us to access schools; I can do what they cannot do only if they allow me".*

On the other hand, implementing agencies and local NGOs should make sure they understand the donor's development priorities and policies.

While understanding the project context, interviewees also reported the importance of identifying regulatory issues, procedures, organizational structure of the ministry, decision makers in the ministry, the context of education in general, infrastructure, policies, decrees, and laws. This understanding guides the project's implementers to tailor the project design to fit the Egyptian context in the given social, political and economic backgrounds.

2. <u>Effective consultation with all stakeholders:</u>

According to UNICEF evaluation report (2004), one of the basic principles that have underlined the CS model was building partnerships among the different stakeholders. This was initiated since the beginning of the model in 1992; however, the report points that more efforts should be exerted in stakeholders consultation.

In the community schools model, there is a variety of stakeholders that could affect or could be affected by the project. This includes community members, project beneficiaries, class facilitators, project team, several MoE departments, parents, local NGOs, international organizations, civil society organizations and other service providers.

In a testimony by (Interviewee 8) who talks about the importance of working closely with community leaders and local NGOs, he states:

> *"Participation by education committee in each village is a critical success factor for the project; for example, community people interested in education, leaders, retired MoE employees, local NGOs"*

One of the main pillars to success of the UNICEF model in all its phases and which continued to the following models, is the partnership with the counterpart ministry. Is

was crucial to make sure the project fits the strategy and the priorities of the ministry; in this line a UNICEF project evaluator (Interviewee 5) states:

> *"They partnered with the respective ministry and asked for the priorities of the ministry and then, they designed the program in response to them"*

Working closely with MoE is also critical for the success of situational analysis and accordingly proper conceptualizing. Interviewee 6 states:

> *"Normally people prejudge the need and they go to the donor and GOE and move fast without deep assessment or consultation and feedback so they can design the program together."*

In addition, this partnership creates ownership at the partner's side that is being involved; a monitoring and evaluation expert (Interviewee 4) states

> *"Inclusion of the ministry in doing projects that they need and the problems they have is necessary to make them own the issue."*

UNICEF also collaborated with community members to mobilize their support. According to UNICEF evaluation report (2004), in the Dar El Salam district in Sohag governorate, community members have contributed money, raw materials and personal time and effort in constructing new schools and also in maintenance and repair of existing schools. A field staff, who points to the significance of community support to the project completion (Interviewee 9) reports:

> *"It is essential to get the community buy-in from the very beginning of the project, otherwise this project will never be completed".*

In the same line, an implementing partner (Interviewee 8) adds that community support were also helpful in recruitment of facilitators,

"We ask the community, how are we going to hire facilitators, consult PAT and other NGOs who worked on this and have lessons learned".

On a different perspective, another field employee (Interviewee 9) talks about the importance of consulting beneficiaries and parents:

"I am not sure whether parents were consulted in designing the community schools project or not; [I am] not sure whether girls were consulted or represented in the design".

Lastly, interviewees also referred to the importance of consulting other development partners for many reasons directly or through reading evaluation reports of previous projects. First, to avoid redundancy in providing the same service to the same audience. Second, to identify the lessons learned and avoid any potential challenges. And third, to avoid unintended competition and create a common goal instead.

All stakeholders should be very well identified and need to be listened to. This boosts the participatory approach where all stakeholders are involved, well heard and appropriately considered. In the conceptualizing phase, documenting relevant information regarding stakeholders' interests, involvement, expectations, power and impact on project success create a smoother partner relationship, create ownership and minimize the probability of future conflicts.

3. Competencies of project designers:

In the UNICEF evaluation report (2004) for phases I & II of the project, the report states that "The Vision and Design of the initiative, in addition to the method of Planning has been critical." All interviewees agreed that competencies of project designers affect the success of the conceptualizing phase. For example, their ability to identify the broad range of problems, their ability to suggest a variety of solutions and

multiple alternatives within the project context, the ability to work with limited information, and their facilitation skills.

An education specialist (Interviewee 2) talks about the UNICEF community schools project:

> *"All people I worked with were competent, dedicated and well educated and have a long history of development"*

4. <u>Start with "Sustainability" in mind:</u>

One of the main CSFs of the community schools model initiated by UNICEF was planning for sustainability since the conceptualizing phase. According to UNICEF (2004, p.37), the report states that "the issue of sustainability has been a primary component of the CS project since its inception and was built in into the model incrementally during each phase". The major sustainability elements UNICEF considered were: clear partnerships, acceptance of the model by MoE, NGOs and the community, affordability of the model, capacity building of MoE, capacity and ownership of local communities (UNICEF, 2004).

While asking interviewees about the sustainability of community schools projects, many agreed there is a challenge to secure funds that would sustain the project. Both the department head of community based education (CBE) at MoE and a senior education specialist at the donor's side suggest that sustainability should be planned and considered during the conceptualizing phase. MoE department head of CBE (Interviewee 10) states:

> *"Since the beginning of the project, we ask the donor about the sustainability plan of the project…we do not have enough resources and so we have to have plan otherwise the project will end after some years."*

In the same line, Interviewee 2 states

> *"You have to think of doing something to live long and will not end after the donor leaves…you have to consider the cultural, economic and social aspects. Get inside the budget of the government to plan for sustainability."*

When sustainability is taken into consideration since the beginning of the project, the design of the project and the partnership relations, roles of each partner and implementation plans of the project will all aim to serve this purpose. This was reflected in the CS project where MoE paid the salaries for facilitators, and later many facilitators got permanent jobs at the ministry.

While reviewing UNICEF evaluation report, the findings of the report shows the strategic plan emphasis on staffing and quality assurance provides a unique opportunity for policy dialogue towards securing capacity-building, oversight and staffing, as required in order to sustain community schools.

- **Planning Phase:**

1. Effective coordination among key stakeholders

In addition to effective consultation with all stakeholders in the conceptualizing phase, effective coordination with key stakeholders in the design face is also critical. For example, involving community members in the planning phase creates a common ground, increases community buy in and spreads awareness about project.

Interviewee 7 states

> *"We have to create community ownership by coordinating with them during the planning phase…we try to know if they were aware of their need and tell them how are they going to participate and agree about the techniques of participation. [In addition,] involve them in selecting education committees so not to have fake representatives."*

2. <u>Availability of data:</u>

One of the pillars of the pedagogic philosophy of the UNICEF model documenting all aspects of the student's performance to ensure the development of the student thorough data base and the development of a student's portfolio (Sidhom & Al-Fustat, 2004). The model also aimed at integrating technology through the creation of a database that includes detailed information of schools, students and facilitators.

In reference to the USAID model, interviewee 2 states:

"When it comes to planning, availability of data is essential on which many decisions and plans are based. There are different kinds of data that are crucial to be known. First, data about the project targeted beneficiaries and the project environment. Second, is data about different kinds of resources that are available for the project. Third, documentations and reports of similar or previous projects."

However, Interviewee 4 claims that such data does not exist

"Planning is about data; however, numbers vary and contradict from one source to the other. Major gaps in the data. I am almost certain that there is no complete database and how can you plan then!"

Availability of information about the human resources, financial resources, buildings and infrastructure, needs assessment outcomes and others, is crucial for project planning team to identify which locations should be targeted to build a community school and to identify the appropriate plan of interventions.

Lastly, interviewees agreed about the importance of availability of evaluation reports for previous interventions and other published materials documenting the lessons learned from previous or similar experiences.

While comparing this with UNICEF evaluation report, the findings of the report reveal that no formal database was in place with insufficient information about relevant aspects like desegregation of cognitive domains, competence of staff by rank, properties by school and governorate, and conditions in and around the CS project. This has resulted in a compromise of equity, quality, costing and efficiency all the way from the project strategy through to the classroom.

3. Competencies of the planning team

As mentioned earlier, method of Planning has been critical to the success of the UNICEF model. The planning efforts included holding regular meetings with the Girl's Education Secretariat, training local task forces, meetings with the National Education for review of the plan formulation, and monitoring and coordination with National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM). It is clear that the planning efforts involved representatives of key stakeholders like community members and MoE representatives. Competencies of the project planning team are essential for a successful planning phase. For example, they have to be trained in planning, formulating goals, writing objectives, designing timelines, designing activities and interventions, results-based management (RBM), measuring success, writing targets, dealing with data, and data crunching.

In reply to a question about the significance of the planning team competencies for the UNICEF model, Interviewee 1 said

> *"Of course, this is extremely important. They have to be competent enough to write the right plan according to the outcomes of the needs assessment to ensure project success."*

4. Practicality and feasibility of plans:

In some projects, the planning team can come up with great plans of which some interventions are not feasible or realistic to the project context. To attain success of the project planning phase, project managers have to make sure of the practicality and feasibility of the plans. This can be done through attention to logistics; in the UNICEF phases of the project Interviewee 1 said

> *"I have to see if the community school building is found in a safe place, no river is close to the school and the surrounding place is clean and healthy."*

In the same line the USAID model also considered practicality and feasibility of the plan, Interviewee 2 also adds

> *"the donor can give me great equipment and machines, but I will not be able to repair or maintain them; I have to plan for practicality."*

- **Implementation Phase:**

1. Monitoring and evaluation:

One of the recommendations by Sidhom and Al-Fustat (2004) evaluation report after phase I & II of the UNICEF model was developing a strategy for monitoring and evaluation to ensure sustainability and mainstreaming efforts.

The first factor affecting the success of the implementation phase that several interviewees reported as most essential is monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Interviewees suggested that M&E procedures should be applied from the first phase of the project and continue to various aspects in the implementation plan. Interviewee 7 stated

> *"...from the very beginning, I need to have tools to assess the community is convinced with the project, then tools to assess the quality of education provided,*

and tools to assess the character change in students as well as assessment tools for the class facilitators"

Another interviewee (Interviewee 4) agreed on the implications of assessment tools to measure the success of every step during implementation in detecting the lessons learned and talks about data collection efficiency. He states

"We need to have mechanisms for measuring success and this is a major CSF, because when you implement every intervention you tend to evaluate it and get lessons learned and you move accordingly but how efficient the data collection processing and reporting tools is very important".

In the same line, an M&E consultant (Interviewee 5) states

"M&E is not only about celebrating the achievement of targets, but also to come up with best practices".

Overall, interviewees suggest to have any sort of periodical assessment procedures that act as a check point where key stakeholders can ensure that the project is on the right track and is meeting the intended objectives. For M&E to fulfill its ultimate purpose, lessons learned and best practices must be documented in a document that one interviewee described as "*a live document"* and should be implemented by a neutral independent agency.

According to UNICEF assessment (2010), ineffective monitoring and evaluation interfered with the full realization of the full potential of the community school projects. However, many community schools have successfully met their founding objectives and even adapted to changing circumstances to some degree due to competent supervision and intervention at the school level.

2. Effective consultation with relevant stakeholders:

Effective consultation has been identified as a CSF since the conceptualizing phase of phase I of the UNICEF model. In the implementation phase, interviewees recognize the importance of consulting the "relevant" stakeholder of each step. Interviewee 1 states:

> *"During the work, if there is a problem, I have to consult with the relevant stakeholders to address it early enough, at the beginning and mid-way, not at the end…Don't shy away to identify the problem and consult with the stakeholders early enough"*

Interviewee 10 highlights the importance of consulting the beneficiaries of the project as the most interested stakeholder; he states:

> *"You have to consult the beneficiaries; everyone who benefits from the project because they are interested in the value of the project".*

One way this was achieved in community schools projects is by forming steering committees that have representatives of community members, parents and local NGOs so they can provide feedback to implementing parties and take the necessary actions in response.

3. Working closely with the government:

One of the lessons learned by USAID from the previous model was working closely with the counterpart government; Interviewee 2 states:

> *" For the community schools model to succeed, there is a need to widen the partnership base and promote better networking relationships with the counterpart government; this will make the project implementation smoother and successful".*

Most interviewees reported that coordinating with the relevant counterpart in the government, for example MoE, is key for success of implementation. An employee at one of the implementing agencies (Interviewee 8) mentioned:

"In a bureaucratic government like Egypt, you need MoE to issue approvals, decrees and laws for your smooth implementation; otherwise you might not get anything done."

Interviewee 4 shared his struggle with coordinating with MoE and its impact on the project, saying:

"Coordination with the Ministry of Education and the leaders becomes very tedious, you plan very well but the ministry do not accept it so you cannot proceed. You need them to issue a decree or something but they don't, the culture itself has some negativity".

In the case of community schools, implementing agencies need not only to work closely with MoE but also with the local education directorates and departments (Moderya and Edarah).

According to UNIECEF evaluation report, Qena's CS experience suggests that strong MoE involvement can effectively safeguard access and learning achievements; it also provided inspiration and confidence in the broader handover process.

4. <u>Team-related factors:</u>

In the community schools projects, interviewees mentioned several team-related factors that affect the success of the project. First of all, interpersonal skills of project leaders that can affect communication and coordination with other stakeholders.

In the UNICEF evaluation report for phase I & II, the report states that "the project management team and facilitators have attained a level of technical expertise that

have made them a resource regarding this educational model". The report also adds that

the project management staff is the backbone of the CS project.

A CS project evaluator (Interviewee 5) states:

> *"Interpersonal issues of project team are a CSF; project administrators have to be politically savvy and be in synch with the MoE, leadership issues, communication with the ministry".*

Another team-related factor mentioned by interviewees is the clarity of roles and

responsibilities to avoid work redundancy or work conflicts. A project officer

(Interviewee 3) states:

> *"We all should know who is doing what...sometimes work is not done because no one is responsible for it, while other times we all do the same tasks and of course this creates conflict."*

The third team-related factor interviewees had different views on, is the team motivation.

One interviewee (Interviewee 6) agreed on its importance but states that it will not affect

implementation; however confirms that it will affect project impact. He states:

> *"Team motivation is very important; without it, there will still be implementation and results, but not necessarily done very well or high impact but maybe less impact."*

The last team-related factor reported by interviewees is the team values. Interviewees

mentioned values like transparency, mutual respect, communication skills, good

governance, and participatory decision-making processes. These values affect the

smoothness and efficiency of project implementation and so is critical for project success.

5. Competencies of the implementation team:

The last CSF reported by interviewees for the success of project implementation is the competencies of the implementation team. A project consultant (Interviewee 6) states some competencies like facilitation skills, flexibility and agility, ability to adapt the work plan, ability to communicate with donors according to the circumstances, and monitoring and evaluation skills.

Another interviewee (Interviewee 4) talks specifically about the competencies of the project management team and compares this to the team motivation, stating:

> *"I believe the team's skills will affect project success. Because as I said skills and knowledge are more important than motivation…I believe that major failures of projects are the people, the project team … they just don't work as they should."*

Overall, interviewees agreed about the significance of having a good composition of project management competencies, in addition to their knowledge and technical skills to perform the necessary tasks.

In comparing this to the findings of UNICEF evaluation report, the findings showed that relevance and efficiency of supervision and training to the project team and the facilitators are questionable. This was highlighted given the limited skills and experience and experience of the facilitators in dealing with children at risk and with information technology.

- **Closing Phase:**

1. Ensure government's capacity for sustainability:

Many interviewees agreed that ensuring successful project closure requires assuring the capacity of the counterpart ministry to sustain the project. From the

perspective of an implementing partner to USAID model, Interviewee 7 states the

following in regards to successful project closure:

> *"I have to consider giving the project to MoE while closing the project; how MoE is going to manage it and if they are capable or not, as an implementing agency, I should know."*

In the same line, an employee at the same implementing agency (Interviewee 8) said:

> *"We should have exit scenarios for the project, for example, think of the local NGOs that are working in the schools and consider how are they going to continue working and who will follow up on the work."*

Another aspect of ensuring the government's capacity to carry on the community

schools projects in the UNICEF model is making sure class facilitators are well trained,

the community schools committees are well equipped and have means to continue

working with MoE. Interviewee 2 states:

> *"Many projects focus on building the capacity of the facilitators only, but we also have to consider building the capacity of the ministry itself so they can carry on the project work after the donor leaves."*

2. Competencies of project manager:

Like previous project phases, competencies of the project manager are critical for

a successful project closure. Interviewees reported that the project manager should ensure

smooth and complete successful closure, and that it is his/her responsibility to make sure

all monitoring and evaluation processes are carried efficiently and are well documented.

During the closure phase, it is essential that the project manager identifies the

critical best practices during the work of this project. An M & E consultant (Interviewee

4) states:

"During project closure, it is critical to identify the things that went well and those that were poorly done. As a project manager, you can then take some actions to ensure that lessons learned and best practices are going to be considered in future interventions."

Other field staff members also highlight the importance of closing all activities in a timely and adequate manner; one field staff (Interviewee 9) says

"...the project manager has to effectively close all project activities, and validate that all targets are done and key challenges are resolved, and to smoothly transition resources to new roles."

Finally, interviewees also highlight the importance of issuing a project closure report where all key stakeholders input is documented and improvement actions are reported to be considered in closure steps or in future projects.

6.2 Overall Critical Success Factors

1. Partnerships with key stakeholders

Throughout community schools project, interviewees agreed that a key success factor was building partnerships with key stakeholders; namely MoE and local NGOs. A project officer at one implementing agency of the USAID project (Interviewee 8) said:

"We formed a committee from NGOs who worked on this project together with representatives from the community based education unit at MoE ...they met periodically and discussed challenges and lessons learned and what to improve."

For these partnerships to work efficiently, interviewees agreed on the importance of having a written protocol or agreement, where roles and responsibilities are documented and clarified. For example, in community schools implemented by UNICEF, MoE was responsible to pay facilitators salaries and cover the cost of textbooks, UNICEF was responsible for project management, provision of teaching and learning materials,

equipment and furniture, implementing NGOs were responsible for project administration

and organization. While Education Committees (or local communities) were responsible

for providing a space for school, maintenance, in-kind/material contributions, input into

education. In addition, WFP provided food and nutrition and lastly, other organizations

from the private sector donated materials.

In reference to the UNICEF project phases, Interviewee 6 said:

> *"it was necessary to have the communities donate the locations… locations that MoE could not provide and it was essential to have committees for education in each village that follow up and support the schools."*

In the same vein, a UNICEF project evaluator (Interviewee 4) said

> *"A critical success factor is how participatory the processes were; to what extent stakeholders representation and involvement. Why? Because if the process is not participatory, it will not yield the major issues that needs to be addressed. You will always have what you may call symptoms of the problems but not the problem itself."*

About working closely with the ministry of education throughout the USAID project,

(Interviewee 2) states

> *"We work closely with MoE and we work with other donors, and help them develop a strategic plan. We support these programs that are aligned with their strategy, one key factor for success is to work with the benefitting organization [in this case, MoE] and so we have a very strong partnership with MoE."*

A partnership goal that one of the interviewees mentioned affecting the success of

community schools project is not to create a parallel system to compete with the regular

schools system. For example, (Interviewee 6) mentioned:

> *"the goal of CS is not to create a parallel education system but to create an education opportunity for those who dropped out of school or those living in rural areas with no access to public schools."*

In agreement on the importance of partnership, (Interviewee 3) views the significance of sharing resources in partnership, states:

> *"Participatory approach creates ownership with the counterpart in the government organization and allows you to make use of the government counterpart's resources and infrastructure".*

Although communications and networking between partners has been promoted, UNICEF evaluation report suggests that collaboration and inclusion of line ministries, private and cooperative sectors, service providers in-and-out of communities, past and present CS students and families need to be extended. Moreover, the report highlights the importance of relevance and clear vision for all partners, where all stakeholders are able fulfill their roles and are empowered to act at their level.

According to USAID (2006), partnership with MoE has ensured the Ministry's investment in the project's success and sustainability, as well as formally recognizing the community schools by issuing students official primary school certificates at the end of fifth grade.

2. <u>Community Participation:</u>

In a comprehensive analysis of community schools in Upper Egypt, The Pedagogy of Empowerment, Zaalouk (2004) identifies community participation as the first pillar of the UNICEF CS project.

Community participation lies in creating standards of participation and relationships between the school and the society; it is reflected by the Education

Committees. These committees are selected, trained and supervised by the field team and selection criteria is based mainly on ensuring diversity in gender, age, social class and geographic location (Zaalouk, 2004). The aim for this delegating tasks to community members to create the sense of ownership and so the level of work quality increases.

According to UNICEF evaluation report (2010), community participation is regarded as the true cornerstone of the project and its sustainability. The success of the community schools model lies in hiring local facilitators from the community; this encouraged parents to send their kids, especially girls to schools. In addition, having community members donate classes, building, or lands to the schools created community ownership and provided a need that the ministry could not cover.

This was also the case in the USAID project where Community involvement in NSP was one of its strongest components. The involvement of the community from the start and the establishment of partnerships with the community created a strong sense of ownership (USAID, 2010).

In addition, the education committees represented in community members had a major role in resolving problems; for this reason, an education projects consultant (Interviewee 4) mentions:

> *"Involve the local people in the very early stage of planning. Without the early buy-in, it won't be sustainable… in the community schools this was a critical success factor that encouraged community members to donate rooms for the schools."*

Education committees played an important role in the management of schools and mobilizing local human and financial resources as well as locating school sites,

identifying potential facilitators, screening pupils, assisting in solving school related problems.

According to UNICEF evaluation report (2010), integration of Parent's Councils, and mobilizing communities to support the education of schools thus became critical issues for ongoing reform efforts, and is presently identified as one of the domains of the National Education Standards. However, the report shows that interventions to increase local relevance of community schools, such as community education and the creation of income generating activities, were minimal and that student, facilitator and education committee engagement with community members should have increased. On the other hand, according to USAID, the communities ensure that education remains truly free for students enrolled in their schools.

3. Political will and relevance to country's priorities

The most reported CSF by all interviewees for the overall success of the community schools projects implemented in Egypt is its relevance to the country's priority and the political will of the government. A community schools project evaluator (Interviewee 6) states:

> *" Political will is the core of success…if there is no political will nothing will happen and if there is a political will a lot will happen… without political support you're in jeopardy"*

Interviewees agreed that donors have to get the ministry people on board, and to plan their projects to fit the strategy of the government and to meet the objectives of the ministry. An education specialist at one donor agency (Interviewee 2) states

> *"The political will and the development priority of the currently affect the success of the project".*

In the same vein, an education projects consultant (Interviewee 5) states

> *"... you should ask yourself about the project compatibility with the development priorities… both political and developmental priorities are critical."*
> UNICEF project officer (Interviewee 1) states:

> *"Political will is crucial, both partners have to be there… it is as if you are starting a journey and one person decided not to go; then the whole journey fails…it's a journey of work… it is not something I will do and then throw away"*.

Through political will and ensuring the project is relevant to the country's priority, the project can guarantee the government's support with resources (human, financial, and technical resources), availability of information, and support from civil society organizations. In addition, the government support can also result in change of policies, laws and decrees that would serve the project, which can also mobilize other resources to the project. An M&E consultant (Interviewee 4) states

> *"...it is essential to identify relevance not only to the need but also to make sure there is interest and willingness to adopt and own the results of the project, by this you know they will keep solving the issue."*

According to UNICEF evaluation report, handing over the CS project to the government offers a unique opportunity to optimize policy and societal relevance, along with providing opportunities for scaling-up through the Strategic Plan's vision of creating a CBE system.

4. Sustainability factors:

In regards to the UNICEF project, the replication of the model was achieved in the girls-friendly schools and the strategic plan of MoE calls for introduction of CBE following the model of the CSP (UNICEF, 2010). An agreement between CIDA and

UNICEF allowed for funding for the third phase, the sustainability phase 2003- 2009,

where the scope of the project shifted to mainstreaming good practices by consolidating

and expanding a community schools model to Egypt's mainstream educational institutes.

However, this was based on the argument that the Ministry of Education and partner

NGOs were unprepared for the gradual handing over of the CSP as originally intended

(UNICEF, 2010); this resulted in a delayed handover.

Looking at the capacity of MoE, the ministry has two sections directly related to

community schools, the CBE department to facilitate the creation of schools, and the

NGOs department for awareness raising, community participation and schooling

activities. . One field staff member (Interviewee 9) says:

> *"Many facilitators got permanent jobs in the ministry, while others finished their*
> *education and are now working as facilitators at community schools."*

According to USAID (2010), most of the CS project outputs have been sustained; this

includes teachers training, community involvement, schools in good condition, and multi-

grade schools that provide girls with second chance for education.

Interviewees agreed that there are several sustainability factors that key stakeholders

and the project management team should attend to in order to ensure project

sustainability and that sustainability should be studied from the beginning, however,

views about sustainability plans differed. One interviewee (Interviewee 9) said:

> *"Local NGOs did other activities besides running the community schools to*
> *generate money for their activities, this can be something like having a local*
> *clinic or selling handcrafts, etc."*

Another interviewee suggested that the ministry should look for other donors, said

"The ministry does not have resources and will not be able to provide what international donors do, they have to look for other donors to be able to sustain the same quality of the project".

Similarly, UNICEF evaluation report suggests creation of cost sharing modalities in order to rationalize the project costs.

A key success factor for sustainability of the community schools project is institutionalizing the project. Interviewee 1 states:

"Institutionalization can happen when you cultivate the ownership of the program in the ministry, otherwise the donor will leave and he has no belonging. In the CS project, it happened and many facilitators got a permanent job in the ministry."

Relatedly, UNICEF evaluation report agrees that it is hard to achieve project sustainability with the same management structure under UNICEF. Accordingly, UNICEF provided capacity building, focusing on management and financial skills, to project staff, NGOs and education committees in an attempt to create self-reliance in the day-to-day project management.

In the same vein, M&E consultant (Interviewee 5) suggests that sustainability of the project is about its practicality and feasibility to be replicated, states:

"Sustainability is all about creating a replicable model that your partner will be able to do after you leave"

From another perspective, an education specialist mentions the importance of other efforts that should go with education projects to achieve overall success. Interviewee 7 said:

"All these interventions might not improve the learning outcomes because other parallel interventions needed to be in place but they are not. You can't fix education in isolation to other social and economic factors... this should be part

of a main social reform like working on the economy, social insurance, and health."

Other interviewees added issues like creating harmony between different partners, clear division of workforce, documenting best practices, and community ownership as factors affecting project sustainability.

In the same vein, UNICEF evaluation report suggests that community schools should be connected with the mainstream opportunities in the national system at different administrative levels. Lastly, the report also suggests that the handover process to MoE should be closely monitored and lessons extracted in order to identify and maximize the application of best CBE practices.

6.3   Barriers to CS project success:

While asking interviewees about the barriers to success of community schools projects, the answers were variable and general. Some interviewees mentioned barriers related to community schools, while others had a more general response to barriers to education projects in Egypt. Below are the findings of both approaches:

1. Corruption and high bureaucracy in the system

Interviewees mentioned corruption as a general barrier to development projects in general. One interviewee said:

"Sometimes MoE does not care about the quality of the projects; all they care about is how much money they will take if they are part of it."

A project manager mentioned,

> *"In many cases, NGOs paid money for the teacher to attend the training, [because] the donor will be happy with the numbers. I call this creating a parallel system"*

An M&E consultant talks about the high bureaucracy in the system that discourages stakeholders to work together, states

> *"Bureaucracy, the system is very bureaucratic and complicated; look at the formal institutions of education, MoE, the cabinet, and the directorates…sometimes they want to work together, but it is very hard so they quit "*

Another interviewee mentions an incident he faced while working in a teachers capacity building project, said

> *"Instructions came from the central administration of the ministry saying "Do not apply what you learn in this project"… the MoE was not happy with the trainer because he was critical in response to questions in the training."*

In a similar incident, a field staff member mentioned

> *"Senior teachers who are not trained will stop the teachers from implementing the training."*

2. Unforeseen circumstances:

Another barrier interviewees mentioned was the occurrence of unexpected or unforeseen circumstances that can hinder the project continuity or completion. Among these were changes in the political will, changes in leadership positions and strategies, and conflicting political agenda among stakeholders.

These changes can affect the flow of funding which can delay or even end the project completion. Changes in the leadership positions like MoE result in changing of

the overall direction and strategy of the ministry. This not only changes the priority of the ministry, but also relationships and agreements that key partners have already established with previous leaders have to be revisited.

In addition, changes in the political agenda from the donor's side or the Egyptian side can also create conflict that might result in project alteration or even termination.

3. Absence of vision

Under this title, interviewees talked about the importance of having an overall vision for the education reform and that the strategic plan of MoE should guide the projects implementation. Interviewees agreed that without a clear vision, MoE will be driven to work in projects that do not fit in its strategy. Interviewee 7 states:

> *"Having a clear vision acts as a guideline to the ministry so they can see which projects fit in its plan".*

Relatedly, having a clear vision makes every project as a building block in the overall picture. An education consultant (Interviewee 6) states:

> *"Sometimes I see every project in its own island…where is the common vison … where does this fit in the big picture!"*

4. Lack of adequate resources:

Lack of financial, technical and human resources is a major barrier reported by most interviewees. Interviewee 10 said:

> *"The ministry does not have enough resources, most of the resources go to the regular schools but not to the community schools."*

Another interviewee from an implementing agency (Interviewee 8) states:

> *"Sometimes they bring very high end technological equipment to the school but they don't have internet to use them."*

Interviewee 10 talks about the human resources challenge and says

> *"Since 2011 the ministry froze hiring, we were more than 60 employees in the community based education department, but now we are only 10...we don't have enough human resources to do all the work."*

In regards to data, most interviewees agreed that no reference of data is available and easy to access. Interviewee 9 suggested that establishing a full database where all the schools, number of students, facilitators info and the training they have received is necessary. He said,

> *"At every start of a community school project, the donor trains the facilitators on the same thing again and again...why? Because there is no database they can refer to."*

On another perspective, (Interviewee 2) also talks about the lack of resources in training different staff members and facilitators to be well equipped to perform the necessary tasks, said:

> *"Class facilitators need a lot of training, they are told to do a different setup in the classroom so they can teach with new techniques but they are not trained to do so and they end up lecturing; however, not enough resources were allocated to train them."*

In addition, MoE interviewee also expressed the challenge in transportation and lack of resources to reach the unreached areas

Availability of resources is vital to ensure the quality of service provided to beneficiaries and the continuity of service provision. Resources not only allow continuity of work but also create room for improvement and better quality standards.

On a different perspective, in some cases resources are available but not utilized. For example, every class in the community schools has 3 facilitators, the have the time and the teaching tools. A field staff (Interviewee 9) says:

> *"Are these facilitators working full time and they use all the resources they have… you sometimes find one facilitator working very hard while the others are resting."*

Another interesting comment by one interviewee was about unfair distribution of resources, some schools had all they needed while others had nothing. Interviewee 9 said:

> *"Distribution of resources should go to the most needy areas…there is unfair distribution of resources".*

This was in line with the findings of UNICEF evaluation report (2010) where redundancies in school materials existed; for example, three quarters of CS in Assiut have meals, while a fifth in Qena rarely do, and a fifth in Sohag never do; the report suggests that WFP should consider retargeting its provisions.

In agreement with interviewees, the findings of UNICEF evaluation report show that more can be done towards enhancing cooperation between CS, other schools, service providers and communities to rationalize the harnessing of resources for CS and other education systems. The report reveals inconsistency in provision of school meals, some deficiencies in the provision of textbooks, supplementary materials, furniture, school

supplies and infra-structure services, and were encountered in as many as one third of schools.

6.4 **Discussion of Key Findings:**

The below figures summarize the findings drawn from the analytical approach of the case study. The factors affecting the success of development projects funded by international agencies in the education sector in Egypt are divided into: **1) Factors that facilitate project success,** and **2) Factors that hinder project success.** For the factors that facilitate project success there are a) **internal factors** that are within the control of the project management, b) **external factors** that are beyond the project management, and c) other **factors that require mutual cooperation** between the project management and other stakeholder.

Figure 2: CSFs that Facilitate project success
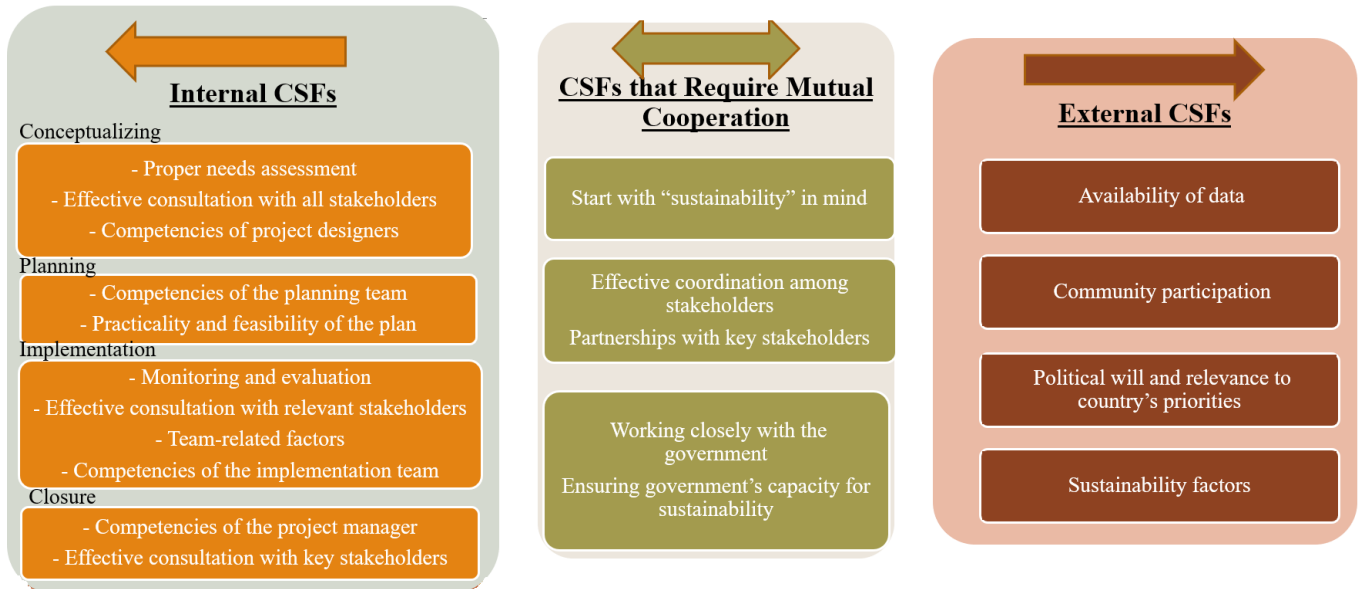
Source: Compiled by the author

Figure 3: Factors that hinder project success
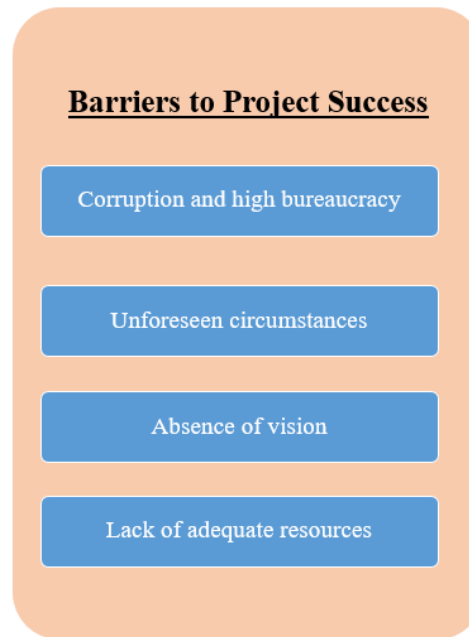
Source: Compiled by the author

1) **Factors that *facilitate* project success** as illustrated in Figure 2; these can be grouped in three main categories:

a) **Internal CSFs:**

These are summarized in the internal project environment, the organizational structure and the skills of the project management team. In each of the phases of the project life cycle: conceptualizing, planning, implementation and closure, these factors affect the project success.

Throughout all the project phases, competencies and skills of the implementing units are crucial for the success of the phase; namely, project designers, planners, implementation team and essentially the project manager. Similar to the studies in Bangladesh (Khan et al., 2000), Ethiopia (Bayiley & Teklu, 2016), India (Mishra, 2016), and Ghana (Ofori, 2013), the project management structure, the knowledge, skills and

competencies of the project manager, project designers and planners were found to be critical for the success of IDPs.

In the same vein, effective consultation with key stakeholders or relevant stakeholders to every activity also assures smooth processes throughout the project life cycle. For example, consulting end beneficiaries in the design phase ensures the project design fits the needs of the target group, while in the planning or the implementation phases, consulting the counterpart government ensures the plan fits the overall strategic plan and policies of the government. This is also similar to the findings of other international experiences in Bangladesh (Khan et al., 2000), Ethiopia (Bayiley & Teklu, 2016), India (Mishra, 2016), and Ghana (Ofori, 2013) in terms of stakeholders engagement and effective consultation with key stakeholders.

In the conceptualizing phase, the project management team has to carry out a proper needs assessment to the project context, environment and end beneficiaries to guarantee that the project meets an actual need that is relevant to the targeted beneficiaries.

In the planning phase, ensuring the feasibility and practicality of the plan is crucial for its success. For example, a plan that depends on high technological skills of the beneficiaries that are not qualified to do so will eventually fail.

Lastly, in the implementation phase, the ongoing monitoring and evaluation for the project activities ensures the project is being implemented as planned and that the project is on budget, on time and meets the desired quality. It also guides project managers to take necessary actions if things went off track. In agreement with the study of Yamin & Sim (2016) where "Monitoring CSF" was found to be the highest factor that influence project success.

b) External CSFs:

These factors can be related to the social, economic, cultural or political environment that are beyond the scope of control of the project management. In some cases, the project management team can take actions to deal with some of them, while in other cases they are totally uncontrollable. For example, the project management team can carry social marketing campaigns to boost community participation; however, in other cases like the 2011 revolution in Egypt, this is beyond the control of the project management team.

On the other hand, government policies and decisions play a significant role in guiding laws and practices of international development projects. The government can significantly stop, increase or decrease development projects through regulatory measures, approval or monetary policies. The political leadership and stability also affect IDPs; for example, the instability of education policies in Egypt due to the continuous ministerial changes. In Bangladesh (Khan et al., 2000), the study recommends creation of a powerful group that act as 'champions of change' to promote new policies and regulations.

In regards to the sustainability factors that are beyond the control of project management, this includes institutionalizing the project to be part of the counterpart ministry. Through institutionalization of education programs, the projects are country-led and managed by the central ministry, programs are integrated in the national strategic plan and budget.

c) **Factors that require mutual cooperation:**

In analyzing the data of this study, it was found that factors affecting project success are not only internal factors that solely depend on the project management team, nor external factors that are merely out of the project management scope. However, there are factors that lie in the middle of the spectrum where cooperation between two or more parties is essential.

This includes building partnership with key stakeholders, working closely with the government, effective coordination and starting the project with a sustainability plan in mind. The findings of the study point to the value of government cooperation not only in sharing resources, but also in facilitating the work of other partners like local NGOs, giving credibility to the project to encourage community participation, and eventually in institutionalizing the project. For this to happen, it requires cooperation from both, the donor agency or the implementing organization, and the counterpart government.

2) **Factors that *hinder* project success as illustrated in Figure 3:**

a. Corruption and high bureaucracy:

Corruption can hinder project success through slow processes, multiple approvals and high amount of paper work. This all can give room to 'speed money'. This also includes lack of transparency, high bureaucratic systems and unavailability of data. This is in line with the study in Ghana by Ofori (2013) where bureaucracy in government institutions was found as one of the barriers to project success.

b. Unforeseen circumstances:

There are several circumstances that act as barriers to project success. This can be political or economic circumstances, like the devaluation of the Egyptian

pound. In addition, other circumstances like cultural resistance to project, budget changes, and natural disasters. This goes in line with similar studies in other countries like Bangladesh (Khan et al., 2000) and India (Mishra, 2016) where having effective change management skills and flexible organization design were found critical to project success in dealing with unforeseen circumstances.

c. Absence of vision:

The absence of vision from key project partners can also delay project progress or even hinder project success. The vision aligns all project partners on one track for the aim of achieving project objectives; it also acts as a reference point in resolving conflicts.

d. Lack of adequate resources:

Adequate resources must be allocated by the project management to carry out the project activities and implement the project plan effectively. These resources include human resources, time, financial resources, support systems and functions, equipment, infrastructure, and external services. Resources are also essential to conduct proper monitoring and evaluation activities, such as availability of information, data collection tools and assessment methods. In agreement with a similar study in Ghana (Ofori, 2013), having adequate resources was found to be one of the most important critical success factors for successful projects and project management.

To summarize, the above barriers to project success can be transformed to CSFs to the project when efforts are exerted to avoid them or manage them vigorously. For example, flexible, transparent and corruption-free systems is an external CSF that will enrich the integrity of the process, while the capacity of the project management team to

deal with change and unforeseen circumstances is an internal CSF through suggesting

creative alternative solutions can increase the chance off project completion and

eventually its success. The presence of a strategic long-term vision can also be considered

as a CSF where development efforts are no longer random projects or waste of resources,

but deliberate and intended activities that aim to a bigger vision. Lastly, availability of

resources is also a CSF to IDPs. This includes human resources, funding, buildings,

equipment, and labor where utilizing current resources is essential and mobilizing new

resources is significant to project success.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1   Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to identify the critical success factors of international development projects in the education sector in Egypt, which are quite different from the conventional body of knowledge on project management in business projects. Reviewing the current literature, only a handful of studies was found in the field of IDP project management in general and in Egypt in specific. Although the findings of this research cannot be generalized to all types of projects in the education sector, nor to other sectors, lessons learned and best practices have provided a number of factors that highly influence project management practices, projects sustainability and overall project success.

Based on this, a case study on community schools projects funded by international donors, namely UNICEF and USAID, was carried out, in aim of identifying the project's success factors, barriers to success and lessons learned. The study examined the project life cycle with the purpose of identifying the CSFs of each project phase: conceptualizing, planning, implementation, and closure. In addition, the overall CSF and barriers to success were also analyzed and studied.

The findings are divided into factors that facilitate project success or CSFs and factors that hinder project success with further analysis to the CSFs into internal factors that are within the control of the project management, external factors that are beyond the project management, and factors that require mutual cooperation between the project management and other stakeholders.

The above findings reveal that these factors can not only affect the project success, but also the project sustainability. The findings are also aligned with previous literature emphasizing that these factors affect project success of which some are internal and others are external.

Hence, project managers, implementing agencies and project partners can consider the identified CSFs to facilitate project success. In addition, partnership with key stakeholders, alignment with the counterpart government, political will, relevance to country's priorities and sustainability factors are key elements in the overall project success.

Moreover, project partners and decision makers can take preventive actions to avoid facing the mentioned barriers that might influence project completion or success.

By and large, this study makes a theoretical contribution to the existing body of knowledge of project management of international projects implemented in Egypt; it has also provided useful insights in the identification of CSFs to development projects that researchers, practitioners and policy makers shall consider.

7.2 Recommendations

This section presents recommendations or areas for improvement for future projects categorized by stakeholder.

Recommendations to the international agencies and implementing partners:

1. <u>Commit to the project objectives and guidelines:</u>

Community schools project started with the purpose of teaching 9 to 14 year old girls who dropped out of school or those who live in rural areas with no access to regular schools. One of the failures mentioned by several interviewees and confirmed while

reviewing secondary data was taking six-year-old girls. This resulted in having parents pull their kids out of regular schools to admit them to community schools.

In addition, community schools were supposed to be in rural areas where the ministry could not build a regular school, however, in some areas the community school is a classroom inside the public school. This defeats the purpose of its existence.

On the other hand, the schools should be located in a distance of 2 kilometers in areas with no regular schools. However, in some areas, more than one of the community schools were built within the distance of 2 kilometers.

When looking at serving the right clientele, UNICEF evaluation report reveals that in some areas like Sohag, the CS clientele was not found to be the most disadvantaged, and even with the greatest proportion of socio-economically advantaged education committee members, the volume of donations were low which indicates the need to improve the role of the education committees.

In general, the report states that in changing the scope of the CSP to prioritize mainstreaming, the original objective of reaching remote and disadvantaged communities with quality education has been undermined where the target of the originally targeted beneficiaries is no more than 61 percent of CS children. The report recommends that characteristics of marginalized communities and individuals needs to be precisely determined with devising new ways to effectively meet their needs, in addition to more active and targeted outreach.

This responsibility lies on the shoulders of the project management team and the monitoring and evaluation team to strictly apply project rules and not compromise any standards that might have a negative impact or hinder the project success.

It is also recommended to put more thought in outreach efforts and proper recruitment processes to reach the deserving disadvantaged girls. And finally, strict procedures and approvals should be in place to avoid clustering more than one school in the same area or in the mother village and ensure fair distribution of schools.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation throughout the project life cycle with involving key stakeholders

The aim of this activity is not only to evaluate that activities are being carried as planed or to document project results, but also to make sure that the expectation of key stakeholders are met and to measure their satisfaction. This also ensures that all partners are on the same page and creates a channel of transparent communication to avoid future conflicts.

M&E is also essential for achieving the quality of education that should be equal or exceeds that found in regular schools.

This activity can also include updating the project database to guarantee an up to date information. In addition, recommendations and activities for improvement should be done here where needs assessment is revisited and the project team can ensure the project is addressing the correct need.

Recommendations to Project managers:

1. Enhancing project design and plan:

In project design, it is recommended to use different tools in situational analysis that will lead to better needs assessment. Among these are gap analysis and community asset assessment. These tools will guide the project to find the real gap

and will also promote community participation through capitalizing on the existing resources the community has.

Through proper planning, intended results are clearly articulated; hence, monitoring and evaluation of results are more effective.

2. Resource mobilization plan:

It is recommended that project managers create resource mobilization plan to secure new and additional resources to the project. The plan should also involve utilizing the use of existing resources and maximizing their better use. This plan supports the project's sustainability, allows for scaling up the project and improvement of the services provided.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of International Cooperation:

1. Initiate and approve projects according to the ministerial or national strategic plan:

The main aim of this recommendation is to have the education development projects as country-led initiatives and to avoid conflicts with donors agendas.

MoE should initiate projects that fit in its 2014-2030 plan and only approves donor funded projects that fit its objectives.

This ensures that every project fits the country's political, economic and cultural constraints and that all projects completes a bigger picture of long-term development. In addition, this prevents international donors from creating conflicting projects or implementing more than one project for the same target group.

2. <u>Establish a complete database:</u>

In addition, this database should include the needs of the school so when there are improvement plans or new funds come, they can be allocated to the right place. It should also be accessible and available to different stakeholders and donors. This promotes transparency and attracts donors to invest in similar projects in Egypt.

This database will help future projects not to reinvent the wheel but to build on the efforts and interventions of previous projects. In this database, recommendations and lessons learned should also be documented so policy makers can refer to. This will save future projects a lot of time, money and effort and will help future donors with needs assessment while conceptualizing any prospect interventions.

In the same vein and quoting from the UNICEF evaluation report about the importance of information "*initiative based on partnership needs to have the capacity not only in terms of research but also for planning and implementation at all management levels to effectively gather, digest, communicate and react to information.*"

3. <u>Secure adequate resources to sustain project quality</u>

In the protocol between UNICEF and MoE, MoE agreed to pay the salaries for the facilitators while UNICEF was in charge of the training and the interactive teaching materials; however MoE could not afford to sustain all the salaries after UNICEF finished the project. For international donor-funded projects, the counterpart ministry should have a plan for the adequate provision of resources after the funds end.

It is also recommended that MoE partners with Ministry of Finance (MoF) and ministry of international cooperation to plan for financing the project as part of the ministry's strategic plan in the future.

Relatedly, UNICEF evaluation report recommends more efforts of improvement in terms of access, to reach the hard to reach, which should be integrated into the planning phase.

All of these recommendations enable different stakeholders of international development projects to enhance project success. They also guide policy makers to align international projects to the national strategy and prioritize projects that are more country-relevant.

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Annex 1: Decree 255

جمهورية مصر العربية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
مكتب الوزير

التاريخ / / ١٩

٢

المادة الثالثة :

تقتصر الدراسة في هذه المدارس على الفتيات في الشريحة العمرية مابين
بين ٨ ــ ١٤

المادة الرابعة :

تقوم بالتدريس في هذه المدارس مدرسات فقط ويفضل من هن من للسكن
الكفر أو الجمع .

المادة الخامسة :

يجوز حسب المستوى العقلي للدارسات أن تختصر الصفوف الدراسية الخمس
بدلا ثلاث صفوف .

المادة السادسة :

يجوز قبول الدارسات حسب الصفوف التي سبق أن اتمن دراستها في سنين
سابقة .

المادة السابعة :

تكون العطلات الأسبوعية أيام الأسبوع الجمع والأعياد .

المادة الثامنة :

يحدد اليوم الدراسي بدءا ونهاية حسب ظروف الدارسات في الكفر والحضر .

المادة التاسعة :

تنشأ إدارة عامة بالوزارة لهذه النوعية من المدارس احلالا للإدارة العامة لسعيدون
اول ومدير مرحلة في المديريات ذات المستوى الثاني يقابلها مدير ادارة في المديريات ذات المستوى
المستوى الثالث كما يتم تدبير عدد من الموجهين المتخصصين ويدخل في المديريات حسب
لبني الكفر أو العلمية ويفضل من هن

جمهورية مصر العربية
وزارة التربية والتعليم
مكتب الوزير

التاريخ / / ١٩

※ ٣ ※

المادة العاشرة :ـ

يصرف حافز مادى قدره أربعون جنيها لكل من هيئات التدريس والتوجيـــه
والادارات شهريا ، كما يصرف نفس الحافز للعاملين بأدارات المدارس ذات
الفصل الواحد فى الادارات والمديريات .

المادة الحادى عشر :ـ

تعتبر هذه البوعيه من المدارس مرحلة متممة فيما عدا اللاتى يظهرن طوقهــــا
ومهارة ورغبة فى استكمال التعليم فيمكن لهؤلاء الفتيات مواصلة الدراسة فـــــى
مدارس الاعدادية المهنية والثانوية المهنية .

المادة الثانية عشر :ـ

تمنح الدارسات فى نهاية الدراسة شهادة اتمام الدراسة بمدرسة الفصل الواحـــد
تعادل الشهادة التى تمنح عند انتهاء الدراسة بالحلقه الابتدائية .

المادة الثالثة عشر :ـ

تكون الدراسة بهذه المدارس بمطبه كالدراسة فى التعليم الابتدائى بضـــاف
اليها التكوين المهنى ومشاريع انتاجية تعود من دخل التلميذ .

٠٠٠/٠٠٠

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

التاريخ / / ١٩

٭ ٤ ٭

المادة الرابعة عشر :ـ

خطة الدراسة كالجدول التالى :ـ

عدد الحصص اسبوعيا					المـــــــواد
صف خامس	صف رابع	صف ثالث	صف ثانى	صف أول	
٣	٣	٣	٣	٣	التربية الدينية
١٠	١٠	٥	٥	١١	اللغة العربية
٥	٥	٣	٣	٦	الرياضيات
١	١	―	―	―	العلوم
١	١	―	―	―	الدراسات الاجتماعية
١٠	١٠	١٠	١٠	١٢	التكوين المهنى
٦	٦	٦	٦	٨	المشاريع الانتاجية
٣٦	٣٦	٢٧	٢٧	٤٠	جملة الحصص

المادة الخامسة عشر :ـ

يحدد عدد من المشروعات الانتاجية ليتسنى للمحافظات انتقاء مشروعا أو اكثر
بشرط أن يتناسب وطبيعة هذه المحافظات .

المادة السادسة عشر :ـ

على جميع الجهات تنفيذ ذلك كل فيما يخصه

وزير التعليم

(د . حسين كامل بهاء الدين)

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Annex 2: MoE Letter of Approval

وزارة التربية والتعليم

مكتب الوزير

الإدارة المركزية للأمن

الإدارة العامة لأمن المعلومات

ووسائل الاتصال

الصادر : ٣ / ١٦٦١

التاريخ : ٩ / ٤ / ٢٠١٧

السيدة الأستاذة/ رئيس الإدارة المركزية للتسرب التعليمي

تحية طيبة وبعد ،

بالإشارة للكتاب الوارد للإدارة بتاريخ ٢٠١٧/٤/٦ بشأن الباحثة / ماريــان ميشيــل – قسم السياسات العامة والإدارة – كليـة الشـؤون الدوليـة والسياسات العامة – الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة ، وذلك لإتمام رسالتها البحثية حول تعريف العوامل الأساسية لنجاح مشاريع التنمية في مجال التعليم في مصر ، وترغب فـي الحصول علـى المعلومات والمطبوعات المتاحة المتعلقة بالدراسـة والسماح لها بإجراء مقابلات مع السادة /

* أ / وكيل الوزارة للتسرب التعليمي .

* أ / مدير الإدارة العامة للتعليم المجتمعي .

نفيد سيادتكم بأنـه ليس هنـاك- مـا يمنـع مـن وجهــة نظـر الأمـن من الموافقة على ذلك ، بعد موافقة سيادتكم وبعد التأكد من شخصية الباحثة وفيما هو متاح للنشر العام فقط .

وتفضلوا بقبول وافر الاحترام ،،

المـديـــر الـعـام

(ياسر محمود)

رئيس الإدارة المركزية للأمن

(لواء / محمد عمرو الدسوقي)

Annex 3: Numbers of CBE Schools, 2016

Annex 4: Memorandum of Understanding between the MoE and UNICEF (1992)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND UNICEF

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROJECT

1) UNICEF, in the context of the Jomtien Declaration and Egypt's policy of providing quality education for all children, is committed to a program of support for basic education.

2) The subject of this memorandum is to initiate a project of community schools in rural areas - ezab - where children do not attend schools, and which are far from existing schools.

3) There are three phases to the project. The strategy is to start with i) a **development phase** for creating appropriate methods, materials and techniques, then move to ii) a **pilot phase** to test out the model on a larger scale, and finally to iii) an **expansion phase** to establish the model over a wide area. By the third phase there will be approximately 100 community schools established in Upper Egypt.

4) The following is agreed:

UNICEF will organize and finance:

   i) consultants and technical staff;
  ii) teacher training;
 iii) supplementary materials for teachers and children;
  iv) school furnishing and equipment; and
   v) an evaluation of the community school model.

COMMUNITIES will provide facilities for the classrooms, and support for school developments. Each ezbah will establish an education committee, composed of community leaders, to organize the support for the school.

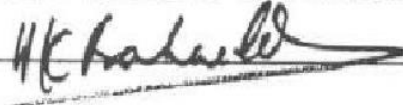**THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION** will support the project by:

   i) paying teachers recruited and trained by UNICEF;
  ii) providing guidance and assistance on curriculum matters;
 iii) providing instructional materials and supplies; and
  iv) participating at the regional level in training and supervision.

The curriculum framework provided by the Ministry of Education for primary education will be used by the schools. UNICEF will work with the Center for Curriculum and Instructional Materials Development to develop methods appropriate for the small, rural, multi-grade classes.

6) Based on the experience and evaluation of this pilot project, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF will examine strategies for the expansion of the model to all locations in Egypt where children do not have access to basic education. This will include building on existing community efforts such at the Kutab.
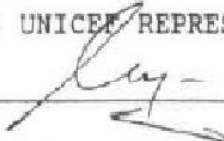
7) The full project description, with the UNICEF budget is attached.

SIGNED: MINISTER OF EDUCATION

DATE: _____

SIGNED: UNICEF REPRESENTATIVE:

DATE: 29-4-92

Annex 5: Participants Consent Form

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: Critical Success Factors of Development Projects in the Education Sector in Egypt

Principal Investigator: Marian Michel Reda Mohareb – marian.mohareb@aucegypt.edu

*You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is identify the critical factors that affect the success of international development projects in the Education sector in Egypt, and the findings may be published and presented. The expected duration of your participation is 45 minutes to one hour.

The procedures of the research will be as follows:

Primary data will be collected through conducting a number of in-depth interviews. While secondary data sources will include project documents and reports, monitoring and evaluation documents and literature review.

*There will not be certain risks or discomforts associated with this research.

*There will not be benefits to you from this research.

*The information you provide for purposes of this research is confidential. Information will be kept at a password-protected computer.

Questions about the research, my rights, or research-related injuries should be directed to Marian Mohareb at 012-80811187.

*Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature   _____

Printed Name   _____

Date   _____