



Good Practice:

**The School Improvement Program
in Assiut and Sohag, Egypt**



**1-In a principal's office:
The life cycle of school improvement**

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SUMMARY

The UNICEF School Improvement Program (SIP) in Assiut and Sohag governorates was designed to empower the Ministry of Education's capacity to manage its School Based Reform for Accreditation program. The Ministry's national goal requires all schools to receive accreditation of their quality of education by the independent National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAEE).

This UNICEF intervention targeting comprehensive reform through partnership with the Ministry is aligned with children's right to a quality education, as stipulated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is also aligned with the UNICEF Medium Term Strategic Plan Focus Area Two: *Basic education and gender equality*; *Key result area three: Support national capacity to improve educational quality and increase school retention, completion and achievement rates.*

The Ministry's comprehensive broad-based education reform program required extensive technical assistance to achieve two primary objectives that would facilitate its effectiveness: 1. To develop the individual capacities that would lead reform processes at the school level within an institutional structure of monitoring and support, and 2. To develop the framework and guidelines required by school-level capacities to manage comprehensive reform. The two objectives translated into: Developing a cadre of "Change Facilitators" and providing training and technical assistance on "School Improvement Planning," respectively.

The program began in 2007 by training a well-selected group of 81 ministry staff members, including teachers and administrators, as Change Facilitators. The training spanned five months during which field implementation took place and ongoing monitoring and assistance was received from UNICEF. Change Facilitators were assigned to support school improvement processes in primary schools in seven districts in Assuit and Sohag. School Improvement Plans were developed and implemented in 105 schools of which 35 have been accredited and 70 are in different stages of progress towards accreditation.

In response to the needs identified through the school self assessment exercise conducted at school level, SIP trained school principals and senior administrators on leadership and trained teachers on active learning.

At the school level, cultures were transformed. Many best practices in education that ensure quality and student benefit became firmly established. These include good governance, community participation, student-centered pedagogy, student participation, extracurricular activities, and ongoing teacher development.

Finally, four results are most important for sustainability and enhanced impact:

1. The Ministry of Education adopted SIP's structure for monitoring and supporting school-based reform and established its own Technical Assistance and Quality Assurance Units at district levels to support schools through the reform and accreditation processes.

2. SIP's Change Facilitators, due to their attested competence, are assigned by Ministry of Education as Technical Assistance and Quality Assurance specialists and assigned by NAQAA as external auditors of quality.
3. The Ministry, with support from UNICEF, has commissioned refresher training for the Change Facilitators in Assiut and Sohag to update them on new rules and procedures for accreditation. This training was concluded in December 2009.
4. The Ministry of Education distributed the SIP manual, *The Quality Guide for Educational Institutions*, and conducted training workshops nationwide for TA and QA Units nationwide.