

**Evaluation Report of the
UNICEF-NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child
Institutional Building and Capacity Strengthening Project
EGYPT**

Submitted to: UNICEF

November 2001

Maha Abdelrahman

I. Introduction

1. Background

The 1980s and 90s witnessed a heavy emphasis on the role of NGOs in almost all areas of development from poverty alleviation to enhancing processes of democratization. In this period, NGOs were surrounded with an almost reverential aura and their comparative advantage over governments went largely unquestioned. Despite the undeniable contribution of some NGOs, there was not enough critical appraisal of their work, which often tended to be fragmentary and limited in its impact. These shortcomings have been finally recognized and recently a new wave in development planning has begun to call for more networking, co-ordination and the building of coalitions among NGOs. Indeed, world-wide, coalitions of NGOs are starting to consolidate the work of individual organizations. NGO coalitions are now hailed for their greater efficiency and impact, and capacity to influence national policies and political environments.

In consonance with this policy of supporting NGO coalitions, the UNICEF signed a project co-operation agreement with the Egyptian Society for Child Protection, Alexandria, as acting secretariat for the NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child, on *Institutional Building and Capacity Strengthening*. One of the main objectives of the project was to support the organizational capacity of the coalition and its competence in establishing a social base of self-motivated civil institutions that actively endorse child rights. The terms of the agreement indicated that the work was to start on 1 December 1998 and end on 31 December 2000. In view of certain amendments to the agreement, suggested by the coalition and approved by the UNICEF, the actual work on the project ended in June 2001.

2. Scope of Work

The project agreement between the UNICEF and the coalition stipulated that a final evaluation be carried out in order to document and appraise the experience of the coalition, which has been exceptional in the Egyptian and regional context. The terms of reference for this evaluation specified three tasks:

- To assess the achievements of the coalition in light of the objectives agreed upon in the initial phase,
- to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the coalition's modes of operation and
- to provide a comprehensive record of the process of the development of the coalition and make projections regarding its future direction including its relationship with UNICEF.

To cover these tasks a number of methodological tools are used:

a) Assessing the achievements of the coalition

The main document against which the achievements of the coalition are assessed is the Plan of Action for the *Institutional Building and Capacity Strengthening Project*, which outlines a wide range of objectives that should have been achieved by December 2000. In conducting this assessment, the evaluation takes into consideration the far-reaching nature of these objectives and the limited period of

time (two years) assigned for their completion. The evaluation, therefore, does not concern itself with quantifying in exact details the adherence of the coalition to each of these activities, but stresses a more critical approach to evaluating the quality of these activities and their potential.

b) Process analysis

In contrast to project-based or service-delivery activities, the work of the coalition is not only concerned with delivering short-term, quantifiable services. Rather, the coalition has been engaged more in building its own capacity and the capacity of a wider social base, and in lobbying and influencing public policies and the wider socio-political environment. In this regard, the current evaluation puts emphasis on the process by which the coalition has developed into an autonomous structure, which commenced before signing the project agreement with UNICEF, the different organizational and decision-making structures it has employed, and its internal mechanisms for co-ordinating its constituting organizations. While Sections II and IV of this report concentrate solely on the process of coalition-building and the coalition's organizational structure, respectively, these issues resonate throughout the document.

c) Impact Assessment

Measuring the impact of any project, a complex project in the present case, always manifests serious methodological problems. These difficulties are dealt with in detail in Section V of this document. In general, however, the present evaluation concentrated on identifying the most appropriate levels for conducting the impact assessment from among the various partners the coalition has worked with. The study focuses mainly on the impact of the coalition on two groups: individual NGOs and children.

Research Methods

In accordance with the objectives and framework of the evaluation, research for this report relied on a number of methods:

- Field visits to a group of twelve NGOs affiliated with the coalition, both from member NGOs and NGOs which only participated in the work of the coalition. The NGOs were selected to cover most of the geographical areas in which the coalition has been active: Cairo and Giza, Alexandria, Port Said, Sohag, Minia, and Beni Suweif
- Semi-structured interviews and informal discussions with key informants at various levels:
 - Members of former and current steering and executive committees.
 - Groups of children from the Child Rights Clubs, organized by individual NGOs at the initiative and along the model designed by the coalition, and from those who participated in other coalition activities, mainly children and youth camps.
 - Members of NGOs who participated in the coalition's activities. These were often employees of the NGO, and are cadres trained by the coalition. In a few cases, they were members of the boards of directors.
 - Representatives of partners in the government, mainly at the local government level.
 - Representatives of some donor agencies and development partners involved in the work of the coalition.

- Analysis of available documents related to the coalition's work, for example, reports of activities, correspondence with different agencies, proposals for funding and research projects, minutes of meetings of the coalition's different organizational bodies, material produced by the coalition (guides for trainers and facilitators, and awareness-raising kits), and financial reports.

Two peer consultations were held during the course of the evaluation in which the evaluator shared, initially, the plan of the evaluation and later the findings of the evaluation with a group of specialists in the field. The purpose of the consultations was to sound out ideas and get feedback and inputs towards the design of the evaluation as well as the final formulation of the report.

II. Process of Coalition Building...A History in the Making

The history of the coalition reflects a very dynamic process. The coalition was born out of a vibrant dialogue among a group of twenty-two NGOs actively working in the fields of childhood and the UNICEF over the issue of the implementation of programs to realize the rights of the child. Initial discussions between the NGOs, with the support of UNICEF, which lasted over a period of 13 months (from April 1995 to May 1996), voiced concern over the inability of individual NGOs to undertake effective and lasting changes in this field. The absence of a co-ordinating body capable of working to this effect meant that the more traditional service delivery approach towards children issues would continue to prevail. Reflecting this concern and also the belief that achieving any substantial results in the field of the rights of the child required the collective work of different organizations, the debate focused on possible mechanisms for consolidating the efforts of this group of NGOs. Throughout this formation phase, the UNICEF contributed to the efforts of this group by providing them with background material on the Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other concepts and methodologies on working with children. In fact, it was through a series of UNICEF-supported workshops to examine the issue of child rights in the Egyptian context that the idea of forming a coalition crystallized.

This period of intensive discussion and brainstorming concluded in the signing of a 'Declaration of Principles' by fifteen NGOs envisaging co-ordination among them in January 1996, (see annex I). After the declaration was signed, a steering committee of five members was formed to oversee the co-ordination mechanisms, and a plan of action was drafted for the years 1996-1997. Several of the planned activities were executed in this period including the publication of two issues of the 'Child Rights' newsletter, holding a number of awareness-raising workshops, participation by some of the coalition members in a number of regional and international workshops, and convening a workshop on the problematic of implementing the CRC in the Egyptian context. These activities are discussed in detail in section III of this report.

Once the coalition and its work commenced, it was necessary to investigate the possibility of acquiring legal status. Since Law 32 of 1964, under which all Egyptian NGOs have to operate, does not grant coalitions independent legal status nor allow for the formation of competitive specialized federations, the coalition had to search for an alternative. A renowned legal expert was invited to discuss possible options with coalition members. Initially one course of action was followed but then abandoned. It entailed recording the declaration of principles as a contract between the NGOs which

still would not have rendered the coalition a legal entity. Later, a decision was made to choose one of the member organizations as a pivotal NGO representing the coalition in any legal agreement and in addressing any official authority. In the process, a rotation system, by which a different NGO plays the role of the pivotal organization for a specified period of time, was suggested. However, this suggestion was rejected due to its possible shortcomings. By July 1997, the core founders of the coalition had agreed on an initial statute (see annex II) and decided on an expansionist strategy that would enable the objectives of the coalition to be spread among a large number of NGOs, thus, opening the door to greater membership.

In November 1998, the UNICEF signed a two-years project co-operation agreement with the pivotal NGO representing the coalition (The Egyptian General Society for Child Protection in Alexandria). The long-term objective of the project was to establish a social base comprising a number of self-motivated civil institutions that actively support child rights. The agreement specified six general objectives:

- To promote awareness and form public opinion supportive of child rights among 120 NGOs and some governmental institutions concerned with childhood in 8 governorates (Cairo, Alexandria, one Canal city, Beni Suweif, Minia, Assiut, Sohag and Qena) with the aim of setting up co-ordinating centers for the coalition at the sub-national level.
- To establish the coalition as a reliable knowledge base and an active information center in fields related to children's rights.
- To develop regular assemblies for children in the eight governorates to allow children to express their views and to work towards the achievement of their ideas within the framework of participation as stated in the convention for the rights of the child.
- To strengthen the capacity of the coalition in influencing decision-making institutions in fields related to children's rights.
- To develop links between the coalition and other similar entities at both the local and international levels for the purpose of learning from relevant experiences, particularly in countries with similar circumstances to Egypt or countries that have made headway in the field of children's rights.
- To support the organizational capacities of the coalition and to aid it in developing and administering work among NGOs in the eight governorates with the aim of forming co-ordinating geographical centers that would guarantee sustainability for the coalition beyond this stage.

For each of these objectives a set of implementation strategies and a number activities were drawn up in close consultation between the UNICEF and members of the coalition's steering committee. Most of these activities, despite their far-reaching range, were executed to the satisfaction of the ongoing monitoring system of the UNICEF.

During the period of the agreement the coalition continued to explore different options for its institutional identity. Under the Law of 1999, it would have been possible for the coalition to proclaim itself a federation. However, this law was soon overruled on the ground that it was unconstitutional. The coalition has retained most of its governing structures decided upon with UNICEF in the project agreement, which comprises: a general assembly, executive committee, and

executive secretariat. The number of member NGOs has expanded to 78 organization, some with branches in different governorates. By September 2000, the executive committee revised its action and financial plans and suggested some modifications to the original plan. The UNICEF approved the amendments whereby certain activities were not carried out, while new ones were introduced. Due to these amendments, the work of the coalition lasted beyond the end of the agreement and well into 2001. This brief exposition of the history of the coalition reveals its dynamic character which establishes the coalition as a unique experience in the Egyptian context. The ability of the coalition to survive under unfavorable legal conditions and to adapt its organizational structures to different circumstances shows a great deal of flexibility and innovation. The history of the coalition also highlights the environment of partnership which the UNICEF provided for its growth. The main focus of this evaluation, the UNICEF-coalition project, reflects this partnership. The project is not characterized by a top-down structure imposed by the UNICEF, nor has it been a specially 'tailored' proposal by the coalition to fit within the donor's agenda. On the contrary, it has developed out of an intensive dialogue and discussion.

III. Coalition Activities

1. Working with Children

One of the strongest features of the coalition has certainly been its rich experience in working with children. Not only has the coalition carried out activities that are unique in their design in the Egyptian context, but it has also made the involvement of children in almost all of its other activities a regular feature. Unlike traditional projects for children that have been designed and implemented by official, or even non-governmental, agencies in which only lip service is given to the involvement of children, children's participation in the coalition's activities has been truly genuine. The coalition has been very successful in incorporating children's views and contributions in its work in general.

The basic principles on which the coalition has developed its work with children is the 'ladder of children's participation' model drawn from Hart's work (1992) *Children's Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship*. The underlying argument of this work is that projects for children can be designed and run by adults yet still have virtue as participatory projects, and that a genuine participatory approach for working with children should have a number of criteria: that children understand the process and be informed fully of the purpose of the activity, are consulted, and have their opinions treated seriously. Furthermore, the best opportunity for democratic experience for children comes from sustained involvement in a group. The coalition's work with children, along these lines, could be divided into three areas: camps, child rights clubs, and other activities.

a. Children and Youth Camps

The coalition organized several camps for children and youth in 1999 and 2000. While the underlying theme in all these camps was the concept of child rights and the CRC, each camp adopted a specific focus. These camps were designed to incorporate

a mix , in terms of socio-economic backgrounds and mental and physical abilities, of children and youth who were drawn from its network of NGOs working with children. The participants always included urban and rural children as well as working and street children. Camps were designed along participatory lines with general rules being drawn up on the basis of a dialogue between adults and children prior to and at the beginning of the camp, and later amended, when necessary, also in close consultation between the participants and adults. These camps were run by groups of facilitators - young cadres who had been trained by the coalition in working with children. A preparatory workshop preceded each camp. In these workshops, representatives of the coalition and the cadres who were to oversee the camps agreed on the best methods of organizing the camp and identified different responsibilities which were allocated among the various actors. Every camp was organized to include child rights or other theme-based activities, as well as entertainment and creative activities.

- In June 1999, the coalition held its first camp at Abou Qeer (Alexandria) in which 190 children between the ages of 8 and 14 representing 19 NGOs participated. The camp focused on themes of democratic participation and diversity. By using an active learning approach and employing various models, the camp was designed to convey to the children the importance of understanding differences and accepting others.
- Following the success of its first camp, the coalition was approached by the German Development Agency (GTZ) to organize a youth camp focusing on adolescent issues and youth rights. As a result, the St. Mark youth camp was held in Alexandria from 25 August to 1 September 1999. Seventy-six youth representing six NGOs participated in the camp, which specifically focused on gender, women's rights and power relations.
- Later, three four-day camps were held in Port Said during August and September 2000 in which 305 children representing 20 NGOs participated.

Reports on these camps, both from organizers and facilitators as well as children and youth, testify to the success of the experience. Among the main positive features of the camps, three points were stressed, particularly by the children and youth:

- 1) The participatory nature of the camps and the larger role given to children and youth in the organization and actual running of the camps. This participatory approach was exemplified by consulting children and youth in drawing up daily plans and guidelines, and in giving them the opportunity to select a committee from among themselves which held a daily meeting with the camp facilitators to reflect on the day's events and express the general experience of the participants.
- 2) The non-conventional approach to learning and translating information into accessible and interesting activities. The camps used various methods to deliver messages and information on certain topics, from child rights and the CRC to specific topics as gender and adolescence issues. Instead of traditional forms, the camp organizers used peer education and learning through activities and real experience to convey their messages.
- 3) Involving children from different social and economic backgrounds as well as children with physical and mental disabilities. This is an unprecedented approach in Egypt where there has often been an emphasis on the separation of children with special needs which has, hence, deepened their isolation as well ignorance of their conditions and needs among the larger population. Despite the progressiveness of this

strategy and its demonstrably positive effect in educating the mainstream population of children regarding the circumstances of children from poorer backgrounds and children with special needs, it is important to devote more thinking to its other implications particularly with regard to its impact on street and working children.

b. Child Rights Clubs

The coalition has developed a model for child rights clubs to be run by individual NGOs which would provide space for children to express their views and practice their right to participate. The coalition drew on the experience of a group of educational experts, as well as NGO practitioners, to produce the guidelines for this model. Young cadres, or CR club facilitators, have been trained to use the guidelines and establish CR clubs in NGOs. Many NGOs had adopted the Child Rights Club model and field visits show that some of them have already become active. Among the active Child Rights Clubs, two in particular have been successful in setting up a board of directors of children whose members meet regularly to discuss children's needs as well as to identify problems in their communities and develop and execute campaigns for tackling them.

However, the coalition has done little to document these experiences and to boost and stimulate the majority which remain inactive. Without follow-up from the coalition, at least in its initial phase, these structures may falter. The coalition has, therefore, signed a project agreement with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) which will focus on activating Child Rights Clubs in eight governorates.

c. Other Initiatives

In consonance with its philosophy of working with children as partners, the involvement of children in various activities of the coalition is evident. Some of these activities have been:

- The NGO Report On the Rights of the Child. The coalition organized a 'Children and Adolescent Congress' that reviewed a draft of the report which was to be submitted to the UN special session on children of the General Assembly. Children's comments and inputs were considered and included in the final report.
- The Child Rights Newsletter. In almost all of its issues, the Child Rights newsletter included contributions by children either on their experience participating in the activities of the coalition or on a topic or experience related to issues of child rights.
- The 'Children and Youth Congress' which produced a document of children's demands which was later presented in the National Conference for Childhood in November 1999 (see Annex III).

2. The NGO Report on the Rights of the Child in Egypt...A Case Study.

The objective of the NGO report on the Rights of the Child in Egypt, produced by the coalition in June 2000, was to provide an alternative view of the situation of children and their rights to that of the State report, and to fill in gaps that may exist in the latter. The process of producing the report was a complex experience through which the coalition attempted, and succeeded, in drawing upon the human resources and expertise of its various members, in order to reach a consensus on some of the most pertinent issues in relation to child rights. The process of producing the report was a rich learning experience for the coalition members, which was as valuable as the

document itself and the recognition it received from various quarters. The report was the outcome of a series of workshops whose workings reveal the different processes in its production.

A preliminary meeting was held for the purpose of explaining and discussing the guidelines for producing the report. The Coalition invited 27 NGOs to participate, of which only 16 attended the first workshop and remained involved until completion. In this initial workshop, responsibilities for different participants and a general outline for the report were discussed, and it was decided that sub-groups would be formed. In order to ensure the commitment and continuity of the work of all participants, each NGO was required to nominate one representative who was to attend all the meetings related to the work of the particular sub-group. Some NGOs had more than one member participating in the production of the report though each was in a different sub-group. An editing committee was also formed consisting of two members of each sub-group with the task of forming a coherent document from the three sub-reports. The executive committee of the coalition provided participants with all the necessary background material on the convention and on UN report guidelines. Certain areas were identified in which data was not sufficient. Subsequently, four workshops were held in which papers and case studies were prepared and presented by experts in the fields needed: street children, child labor, children with special needs, and the role of the local community in working on the rights of the child.

In the first workshop held in December 1998, a special session on children with special needs was held to introduce all participants to this area which was to constitute a major part of the report. Two papers on the 'Size of the problem of children with special needs in Egypt and available services' and 'handicapped and epileptic children' were presented.

A second workshop followed in February 1999 in which the executive committee of the coalition formed three groups to produce a sub-report in the areas of health and environment, education, and children in difficult circumstances. The last group was to include legal aspects and child labor. This division helped to specify tasks and to channel expertise optimally in the right direction. At a later stage, however, it was decided to include children with special needs in the health and environment area. In this meeting schedules were also agreed for the different groups to follow. A special session on street children was held and two papers were presented on 'Street children: conceptual issues and an innovative approach for intervention', and 'Hope village organization: an introduction to solving the problem of street children in Egypt'.

The third workshop, held in March 1999, discussed the process of formulating the report and work-progress, while at the fourth workshop, in May 1999, the role of the local community was discussed and three papers were presented.

Once each of the three groups had produced its sub-report, one member from each group was chosen to revise it. The report drafting committee collected and revised the three reports, filled in gaps and the editor of the document produced the first draft of the final report. The first draft was distributed among members of the editing committee and various departments of the UNICEF to benefit from their experience. Written comments were received on issues of language and style as well as of content, especially issues of sources of factual data. Comments and queries were taken on board and included in the revised second draft, which was then distributed among all

NGOs whose members had participated in the production of the report. Members of boards of directors of these NGOs were requested to send their comments in writing and to delegate a member of the NGO who was authorized to discuss and approve the report in a workshop held for this purpose. Not everyone sent their comments in advance, so a second workshop was held in which the whole report was discussed and detailed changes made. The final version was approved and a consultant (Dr. Adel Azer) reviewed the whole document.

The report was sent to Geneva in the same month (October 2000) in order to be put on the agenda of the preliminary session of the UN for NGOs. The committee of the preliminary session invited and funded one member of the executive committee, also the editor of the report, to attend the session and present the report.

Before travelling to Geneva, all NGOs which had participated in writing the report were invited to a launch of the report, along with representatives of various donors, the UNICEF and members of the media. The final report was distributed to all those attending and was also sent to a large distribution list.

One of the intended functions of producing country reports (to the Committee on the Rights of the Child) is for the process of reporting to serve as a facilitating agent, to provide an opportunity to involve governments and civil society organizations in a dialogue on rights at the national and international levels and to serve as a catalyst for growth. In this regard, a meeting was held between the Coalition and the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM). In May 2001, the NCCM invited members of the Coalition to discuss the final comments for the International Committee on both the national and NGO reports presented in Geneva.

Involving children

In consonance with its policy of involving children at all stages of its activities, the coalition designed and integrated the participation of children in the production of the report. This participation took place on two occasions.

The thematic sub-reports were simplified and presented to groups of children from different socio-economic backgrounds. Their comments and feedback were taken on board in drafting the final report.

A five day workshop was held in January 2000, in which groups of children were given training on problem identification and problem solving and were invited to identify their own problems and work out potential solutions for them. The outcome of this workshop was drawn upon in the process of writing up the NGO report.

Encountered difficulties

Producing a report that attempts to mobilize the efforts and achieve consensus of a large group of organizations and individuals on issues as diverse as health, education and legal frameworks cannot be without its problems. However, disagreements and friction are an expected part of the process, and are indeed part of the learning process itself. Individuals involved in the production of the report articulated some of the main problems encountered in the process, including the following:

- The discontinuity of the work of some members. Some members of the sub-groups dropped out for reasons mainly related to resigning from their own NGOs. In some cases, those who replaced them could not perform at the same level. While the coalition had put strict requirements on NGOs, demanding that the same members

attend throughout the process, the coalition could not fully guarantee that this occurred.

- Despite the importance of the legal aspect of the report, only one member of the entire group was a lawyer. There was clearly a need for a larger legal team.
- A larger technical team, in general, with expertise in various fields was needed. There was too much reliance on the expertise of NGO members, and on very few individuals for reference. The coalition is now aware of the need for drawing on more external expertise.

3. Research

Cutting down grants and subsidies for social science research at the expense of project-oriented and service delivery programs is a world-wide phenomenon. The coalition believes in the necessity of research for creating a scientific base for its mission and hence aspires to make research an integral part of its work. As early as 1998, the coalition, along with AMIDEAST, convened a seminar which brought together a group of intellectuals and activists in fields of human and child rights to discuss challenges of implementing the CRC in the Egyptian context. The proceedings of the seminar were published in a book in 1999 and distributed among the NGO community and key governmental and development organizations. The contents of the book reflect the coalition's engagement with and sensitivity to one of the most contentious issues in the literature and debate on CRC, namely, the universality of rights and specificity of local contexts.

In another initiative, the coalition signed an agreement with the Public Opinion Research Center of the Faculty of Mass Communication at Cairo University to conduct jointly an action-oriented research project titled Youth Looking Forward. The main objectives of the research are to acquire specific answers on how youth sees the future at both the personal and societal levels, and to establish a scientific base on which to design programs for this target group. After its launch, expected by the end of 2001, the findings of the research will be presented to the UN Special Session for Children.

In this attempt to make scientific research an integral feature of its work, the coalition has also organized a number of sessions in which conceptual debates and practical case-studies were presented in the process of producing the NGO report on the Rights of the Child in Egypt.

Future Research

In addition to the type of research carried out by the coalition so far, more could be done in highlighting certain social problems concerning children in Egypt, for example, domestic labour. With the assistance of an outside expert, more involvement by coalition members (NGOs) in the designing and implementation of this kind of research has the merit of using their access to and expertise of the local communities. The process itself can actively facilitate co-ordination among these NGOs, and also strengthen their conceptual and practical skills.

4. Awareness Raising Campaigns

In most parts of the world, there is a general failure to disseminate adequate information about the CRC, and there are consequently serious gaps in public awareness. The coalition has, therefore, adopted the cause of raising awareness of the Convention as one of its main objectives. This has been translated into a number of organized campaigns targeting various groups including NGOs, teachers, parents and children carried out in the following target governorates:

- Sohag, March 1999.
- Sohag, December 1999.
- Assiout, April 1999.
- Port Said, November 1999.
- Minia, November 1999.
- Beni Suweif, December 1999.
- Alexandria, April 2000.

In order to widen the range of its campaigns, the coalition has developed an awareness package on child rights, which has been tested and used in its previous campaigns. The package includes a set of presentation and active learning sessions demonstrating the contents of the CRC. The package emphasizes the relevance of the CRC in the Egyptian context and law. The coalition has been careful to take into account the homogeneity of its target groups and consider the differences in backgrounds and experiences of each of them. For example, while NGOs were more receptive to concepts of child rights and some of them had already had experience in working in this area, parents and teachers were not as easily convinced of the relevance of the CRC and required more effort and special approaches by the coalition.

In the course of its various awareness-raising campaigns, the coalition succeeded in forming a core group of cadres, trained to work as trainers and promoters for further CRC campaigns.

The coalition and the media

Co-operation between the media and NGOs has been recognized, by many analysts and policy advisors, as an essential mechanism for bringing about change in social attitudes towards children's issues. Involving the media in the work of NGOs and NGO coalitions could be organized on two levels: in shedding light on the coalition and its objectives as well as its work and activities in various fields, or as partners for the coalition's activities, for example in implementing media campaigns on the CRC. The coalition has so far adopted the first approach as its preferred method of co-operation with the media, by inviting representatives of the media to its various activities. However, the coalition has not yet been very successful in attracting enough media attention to its work. In this regard, the UNICEF could offer its experience with the media to the coalition.

5. Information Centers

Establishing information centers specialized in fields of children's rights was quintessential for serving one of the core objectives of the coalition; namely to *support its capacity for decision making and rapid intervention to address emerging child rights issues, grounded in a sound knowledge base, and for advocacy on child*

rights. The agreement between the UNICEF and the coalition stipulated that two information/resource centers were to be established, one in the premises of the pivotal NGO in Alexandria, the other was to be housed in an active NGO in Upper Egypt with a central location and easy accessibility. At the time of drafting the agreement, a number of NGOs in Upper Egypt was already being considered. At a later date, the Minia office of the Upper Egypt Association for Education and Development was selected to house the information center.

The information/resource centers which were to feature different data bases on the status of children in Egypt, a research library, a communication network with regional and international agencies, a documentation and publishing unit, and a web-site on the internet, had the responsibility of:

- Creating sustained channels for dissemination of information and resource materials on child rights, primarily serving NGOs working in the field of children.
- Disseminating information on the activities of the coalition.

Information Center Alexandria:

The information center in Alexandria was the first of the two centers to open and has been active since January 1999. It is located in the premises of Dar al-Hanan, a school for children with special needs operated by the pivotal NGO. The information center consists of a library containing 1600 books in fields of children's issues, child rights, and other more general topics, a data base of newspaper clippings, a computer and internet connection, as well as a data base on NGOs working on children issues. The center is operated by two employees, a librarian and the head of the center who is also responsible for updating the web-site and data base.

The library has a record of approximately 8 to 10 user visits per month on average. Among these, about six or seven are teachers from Dar el-Hanan, the host of the center, while only two come from outside, often graduate students from the university of Alexandria.

Information Center Minia/Cairo

The Upper Egypt Association for Education and Development was selected by the executive committee to host the information center in the premises of its branch office in Minia. By April 1999, a computer, printer, internet line, a video and television set had been installed in the space designated for the center. The librarian, who is also an employee of the NGO, attended a training workshop on the a.L.I.s (library system) together with his counterpart from Alexandria. Members of the executive committee visited the center and gave a session on creating a database on topics on child rights and children issues from newspapers.

After a period of seven months, a visit by the executive manager of the coalition and the director of the Alexandria information center to the Minia center revealed serious problems with its functioning. By June 2000, a decision was taken by the executive committee to transfer the physical assets of the center to the headquarters of the host NGO in Cairo, and its budget to the Alexandria center.

Despite the clarity of the objectives and implementation strategies formulated for the information centers, as well as the availability of a functioning infrastructure, the present evaluation shows that these centers are probably the least well-thought

through and least successful activity of the coalition. According to some members of the executive committee, even they themselves did not fully grasp the nature and extent of work involved in this activity. A diverse host of problems can be identified:

In the case of the **Upper Egypt** information center, the following conclusions can be made:

- The failure to take off is clearly the result of a lack of engagement on the part of the host NGO and its inability to ensure the commitment of its staff towards the activity.
- Procrastination by the executive committee in investigating the source of the problem and in taking corrective measures to either activate the center or move it to another destination indicates a weakness in its supervisory mechanisms.
- Transferring the center to the Cairo office of the NGO contravenes the original agreement which specifically provided for the second center to be based in Upper Egypt, and runs against the underlying thinking of the coalition which supports decentralization. It also violates rules of transparency which require that the decision to transfer the center should have been taken after providing an explanation to all member NGOs.

A serious review of the situation has to be carried out by the executive committee in consultation with the host NGO to reach a clear decision about the future of the center.

Visits to the **Alexandria** information center and discussions with the staff members revealed a number of points:

- There are serious problems in the technical side of operating the center as a result of the lack of staff members with the requisite technical expertise. Initially, the center was headed by a computer specialist provided for by the terms of project agreement. However, after the termination of the project agreement with the UNICEF, the coalition has recruited a staff member of the host NGO, with no sufficient experience, to keep the place going.
- The head of the center, who is also responsible for the day-to-day operation of the web-site, is an employee of the host NGO. Time conflict sometimes arises as she devotes time to the center only when her workload at the NGO allows it.

The fact that the information center is hosted by the NGO gives rise to a wide range of structural problems:

1. The opening times of the center are those of the NGO, namely 8:30 to 1:45 which is very short and hence extremely limiting both for potential users and the amount of work needed to be done by the employees.
2. The location of the center is not central, rendering the library difficult to reach even by users from Alexandria. The librarian reported that most outside users discover the library by chance when visiting Dar el-Hanan for other purposes.
3. A conflation of the NGO and the center in the minds of the public results in identifying the center with issues of children with special needs which is the main focus of the NGO's work. Library users exclusively consult books on mentally and physically challenged children. No one requests books or materials on topics related to child welfare, let alone child rights.

Recommendations

- The first set of problems, regarding the technical side of work at the Alexandria information center, are not structural and can easily be remedied. Recruiting well-qualified staff members, who can choose and operate the best-suited programs for the type of outputs expected from the center should be the primary step taken. Furthermore, well-thought out and clearly-defined criteria for selecting staff members have to be drawn up by experts in the field, and not solely by members of the managerial body of the coalition, who themselves lack sufficient understanding of technical issues.
- Although the second set of problems is largely structural, they are by no means insurmountable. In the first place, the newly recruited staff members should work on a full time basis and be free of other commitments. The opening times should be negotiated with the host NGO in order to allow the center to operate beyond the NGO's fixed hours. A strong advertising campaign among NGOs, academic and research institutions, as well as other interested bodies, of the role and facilities of the center has to be designed and implemented. The bibliography of all contents of the library has been compiled. However, until now a lack of funds has not allowed the making of printouts for distribution. This list could be useful in the campaign to inform interested organizations of what the center has to offer.

6. Newsletter

One of the main objectives of the project has been to establish the coalition as a reliable knowledge base in fields related to children's rights. A key strategy for achieving this goal was the publication of a trimesterly newsletter entitled 'Child Rights', with the objective of disseminating information and promoting awareness of child rights among NGOs, governmental agencies and other academic and development institutions for which a distribution plan was put together to ensure wide circulation. More importantly, the newsletter was to serve as a communication channel among member NGOs as well as other NGOs and organizations participating in the activities of the coalition.

The guidelines set out in the agreement to ensure the quality of the newsletter include the following:

- The editor-in-chief of each newsletter is selected in accordance with the theme.
- A monitoring system was to be put into place, and an evaluation of the circulation and use of the newsletter to be conducted after the publication of the first four issues.

In order to avoid complex bureaucratic procedures, the coalition resolved to produce the newsletter on an occasional basis. Out of six issues, which the agreement listed, the coalition has produced only four. In total, however, five issues of the newsletter have been produced, one of which had already been published prior to the signing of the agreement between the UNICEF and the coalition which was then known as a group of NGOs concerned with child rights, also with the support of the UNICEF. A standard format was designed by which all issues of the newsletter were to be published in 15 pages in Arabic with a one-page English summary.

A review of the content of these six issues reveals an attempt to combine information on the activities of the coalition with messages and articles on issues of child rights in general, as well as glimpses of individual member NGOs. Working on the principle of child participation, almost all issues of the newsletter included contributions by children. The newsletter served the essential purpose of introducing the coalition as an autonomous body to a specialized audience by publishing its Declaration of Principles in its first edition in the March 1997 issue, and later the text of the agreement signed between the coalition and the UNICEF in its special issue of June 1999. Both of these documents clearly explain the nature and objective of the coalition.

Considering the dearth of knowledge of child rights issues in Egypt and the absence of any other forum where such issues are regularly brought into focus, the newsletter is indeed one of the main contributions by the coalition to establishing a culture of child rights awareness in Egypt. However, the newsletter encountered serious problems throughout its existence which eventually resulted in the termination of its production. Three main problem areas can be identified:

- Although the idea of assigning each issue to a different editor-in-chief was intended to guarantee commitment and allow for more flexibility, actual experience has shown that it had more negative consequences. It mainly resulted in a lack of consistency of work-style and levels of commitment and input, leaving editors-in-chief to devise their own mechanisms and schedules. The criteria for selecting the chief editor for each issue were not clear, which created competition between NGOs wishing to claim the function (and the concomitant financial compensation).
- The geographical factor contributed to complicating the production of the newsletter. While all work on the newsletter was carried out in Cairo, the actual printing of the issues took place in Alexandria under the supervision of the executive secretariat, located in the pivotal NGO. In effect, this meant that the editor and those working on the content of the newsletter had no role in supervising the final production of the output and, conversely, that those responsible for supervising the final product had no understanding of the content or the editorial procedures. This often resulted in dissatisfaction with the final product by those who designed, contributed and edited it. Moreover, the fact that the executive secretariat comprises employees of the pivotal NGO meant that they sometimes could not devote the time needed for supervising the final production stages.
- Among other problems encountered by the newsletter was the weakness of the ongoing monitoring system because of a low level of response from readers and the absence of a final evaluation.

Furthermore, the present evaluation, drawing on feedback from representatives of member NGO, identifies the following additional problems in the content and schedule of the newsletter:

- News was often old, referring to events dating back to as long ago as six months.
- Reports were not very informative and were formulated as brief points which did not reflect the interesting quality of the activity covered.
- No listing of upcoming events or activities which deprived readers from taking the initiative to make inquiries or participate.

- The long gap between issues and the irregularity of their production failed to create a pattern or a sense of anticipation.

Possible solutions for remedying some of these problems could be to:

- assign permanently the task of editor-in-chief to one person who should have minimum experience of editing a journal or similar publication. This person could, if possible, be drawn from within the constituting NGOs,
- institute an editorial board consisting of the editor-in-chief and at least two other members who have some publishing experience and/or content competence from different NGOs to meet once a month for example. This would enhance a better input of ideas and issues from the member NGOs to the newsletter and build in unobtrusive monitoring. The editor-in-chief remains responsible for the daily running of the newsletter,
- allow for the occasional appointment on a one-off basis of a special feature editor to work in co-operation with the editorial board on ad hoc issues concentrating on one special theme,
- institutionalize a system by which the editor-in-chief reports and is made accountable to the executive board or any other managerial body with respect to schedule and quality control,
- spell out more clearly mechanisms for regular evaluation and monitoring of the distribution and use of the newsletter. Interviewed members of NGOs stressed that they will be committed to responding to evaluation requests only when a pattern of receiving the newsletter regularly is established; and
- establish a better functioning link between the editor-in-chief and the secretariat.

These measures could, to some extent, ensure timely publication of the newsletter and a minimum level of quality.

IV. Organizational Structure

In April 2000, The British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND) held a workshop on *Mergers, Coalitions and Consortia – Leading Edge or over the Precipice?* with the objective of identifying the positive and negative aspects of coalitions and mergers among NGOs. While the workshop recognized that coalitions have several advantages, such as their greater flexibility and impact, higher profile, inherited support base and ability to cross boundaries, it also stressed that among their major problems are the unclear roles of their members and difficulties with their organizational structures. The CRC coalition, along with UNICEF, had invested time and energy in forming the most functional and efficient organizational structure to serve its purposes. However, the coalition is a living organism, a young one for that matter, and is still attempting to sharpen and develop its structures for its future work. The original organizational structure agreed upon by the coalition members in 1997, and later endorsed in the project co-operation agreement between the UNICEF and the pivotal NGO, included a number of what was meant to be governance and mobilization bodies. These were:

- The *general assembly*, serving as the governing, policy-setting organ;
- The *executive committee* (EC), serving as the management body;

- The *expanded executive committee* (EEC) which includes the EC + the heads of the ‘topical’ committees and serves planning and policy implementation purposes; and
- The *executive secretariat* serving as the administrative center. The executive secretariat was to be appointed by the pivotal NGO from within its full time staff to work for the coalition on a part-time basis.

With the exception of the EEC, which has never materialized, the suggested structure has been functional throughout the life of the coalition to date. A closer examination of these structures and their compliance with their intended purposes is an integral part of this evaluation. A glance at the way the organizational structure of the coalition has been acting reflects a number of serious problems. These problems could hamper the future work of the coalition unless an earnest and thorough restructuring plan takes place.

- The general assembly has not been active in policy formulation or as a governing body. It has neither been involved in the decision making-process nor in the monitoring of the coalition’s work. To a large extent, its role has been so far largely symbolic.
- There is a strong conflation between the coalition and the executive committee. The coalition has come to be equated with a few individuals who have been exceptionally active in the running of the coalition’s work. While this phenomenon speaks highly of the efforts of these individuals, it runs the risk of eroding the identity of the coalition as an institution that can have a durability beyond the involvement of these individuals.
- The identity and role of the executive committee is not clearly defined. In the absence of any other decision-making or governing body, the executive committee has come to function as the sole policy setter, and all decisions are taken by its members without any reference or accountability to a body outside of itself. In addition, members of the executive committee have mostly been the actual organizers and implementers of the coalition’s activities.
- Decision-making is concentrated within a few members of the executive committee. Often, important decisions related to the work of the coalition are taken by one or two members without consulting other members, or without providing satisfactory explanation and information. Some members feel excluded from the process and demand a greater share of participation and emphasis on transparency. The more active members, on the other hand, insist that nobody is intentionally marginalized but that the other members do not invest the same amount of time and energy they themselves put into the process. This, in their opinion, forces them to make decisions that could not wait until all the members of the executive committee are available. While there is no particular evidence to suggest deliberate exclusion of some members of the committee, the situation remains that not all committee members participate on equal grounds.
- The fact that the executive secretariat is appointed by the pivotal NGO from its full-time staff to work for the coalition on a part-time basis results in two problems. First, sometimes the executive secretariat does not devote enough time to the work of the coalition because of its workload at the NGO. Second, the executive manager for the coalition, who is also the manager of Dar-AIHanan, a school run by the pivotal NGO is over-worked in fulfilling his responsibilities and duties in both places.

- The executive secretariat does not report sufficiently to the EC. The unusual position of the executive secretariat, which is provided by the pivotal NGO under the conditions of the agreement with the UNICEF, creates some tension. The fact that the secretariat is shared between the NGO and the coalition restricts the EC's control over the secretariat. The situation is further complicated by the double role played by the executive manager who often serves as a representative of the head of the pivotal NGO in the EC, and who is himself an employee of the pivotal NGO. His unique position facilitates a lot of administrative work. However, it results in role confusion and in giving him more powers than intended for his position. A clear example of this confusion is that managing the financial resources of the coalition which was meant to be the sole responsibility of the EC, has been so far done by the secretariat, approved by the executive manager, but without always being reviewed by the EC.
- Although no particular evidence was encountered that the pivotal NGO was overstepping its role, apart from the above-mentioned confusion over the executive secretariat and the executive manager, some EC members expressed concern that in the future the pivotal NGO should recognize its role to be that of a member organization and not as manager of the coalition.

Recommendations:

- The only solution for guaranteeing equal participation of all EC members is that after first clarifying the role of the executive committee itself, terms of reference for all members of the EC are drafted and tasks for individual positions specified regardless of who is occupying them. For example, one position in the EC should be responsible for financial matters.
- Clearly explaining the role and responsibilities of the executive secretariat and its relation with the EC has to be a priority in any future re-structuring of the coalition. Ideally, the executive secretariat should be appointed on a full-time basis to carry out the work of the coalition and be only accountable to the EC.
- It is important to select a co-ordinator for each of the coalition thematic areas of work, for example working with children or awareness raising campaigns, who would be fully responsible for facilitating and monitoring activities under the specified thematic area and also for systematically documenting and reporting on these activities. Ideally, these co-ordinators should be selected from outside the EC members and report directly to the EC.
- An intermediary body between the general assembly and the executive committee, for example, a board of directors or a consultative board, might be created as a think tank or advisory unit to provide guidance and new sources of ideas and directions for the work of the coalition.
- The coalition should keep exploring possibilities for modifying its legal position in order to acquire an independent personality and status. In the absence of a legal framework favourable for such change and until the coalition could become a federation, the coalition has to continue working through the current system of a pivotal NGO. If the coalition manages to create an executive secretariat independent of the pivotal NGO and which will work on a full-time basis for the coalition, the coalition might reconsider the possibility of working with different pivotal NGOs to represent the coalition in signing agreements for different projects and with different donors, according to the expertise and capacity of different NGOs to work in certain areas.

A coalition of individuals or organizations?

One of the main features of the work of the coalition, identified by this evaluation, is a discrepancy between an active group of individuals and passive organizations, or boards of directors, which these individuals represent. This characteristic results in two problems. The first is that the coalition is growing more reliant on individuals whose contribution could make or break the coalition. The withdrawal of these individuals from the work of the coalition for whatever reason, personal or professional, could mean the end of engagement of their organizations with the coalition. This means that there is no systematic continuity or sustainability. The second problem created by the lack of synthesizing of boards of directors of member NGOs is that these boards do not fully understand the nature of the work of the coalition and, therefore, do not appreciate the nature or value of the participation of the NGO representative in the work of the coalition. This, in turn, has often led to unenthusiastic and even unsympathetic reactions by boards of directors to attempts by those members to integrate the concepts of the coalition within their individual NGOs. In more extreme cases, it resulted in sabotaging the participation of their members in the coalition's work.

Another related feature of the relationship between member NGOs and the coalition, as an umbrella organization, is a lack of a comprehensive understanding of the work of the coalition by its constituting member organizations. NGO members, even some of the more active ones, only have a partial knowledge of the scope and activities of the coalition. This is a result of the fact that NGOs participate only in activities which are already designed by the coalition but are not involved in the overall planning of the coalition and its activities, or even informed of all other activities in which they are not directly involved.

From the point of view of interviewed NGO members, activating boards of directors of member NGOs, and offering a more comprehensive view of the coalition, are imperative steps in sustaining the coalition, and mechanisms for realizing them have to be planned. Drawing on the feedback and contributions of the coalition and NGO members, some of the possible mechanisms for synthesizing NGO boards of directors and of overcoming the partial involvement of their representatives can be as follows:

- An initial meeting should be organized by the managing body of the coalition to which all board members of member NGOs are invited. In this meeting a review of the coalition's overall goals and the status of its achievements should be presented.
- Clearly-defined criteria for NGOs wishing to join the coalition have to be devised in order to guarantee the commitment of their boards as well as to identify their potential to become active in the work of the coalition. So far, the coalition has aspired to include as many NGOs as possible without following any specific or general criteria. Although this has meant including many non-active NGOs, it was a necessary step to spread knowledge of its objectives and to acquire greater experience with a wide base of NGOs, from which it can later select only those which meet its criteria.
- Prior, or probably parallel, to seeking or inviting new members, a process of elimination of inactive member NGO has to be conducted. This has to be done systematically and objectively. It should be based on a rigorous assessment of

member NGOs on the basis of their previous engagement with the coalition and of the newly-devised criteria for membership.

- Occasional or regular meetings should be held for all boards of directors to update them on the current situation of the coalition and get feedback and ideas. There is, however, a difficulty of bringing together such a large number of people on a regular basis. An alternative would be to hold regular meetings for representatives of the NGOs who would report to the board of directors.
- It has to be clearly explained whether member NGOs share a responsibility for the decisions and plans of the coalition or their role is only to participate in activities. If it is decided they play a role in the decision-making and monitoring processes, this role and its responsibilities should be spelled out and should be binding.
- Selecting representatives from individual NGOs to participate in the coalition's activities has to be done in close consultation with the board of the NGO, and conditions have to be placed to guarantee that the experience acquired by these individuals from their work with the coalition will be put into use in their own NGOs.
- A regular communication channel from the managing body of the coalition to the NGOs has to be established. Re-activating the newsletter, to operate in a more effective fashion, is probably the best possible device. Using e-mail as a regular means for disseminating and circulating information about the coalition and its constituent NGOs is another possible mechanism. However, it is not the most practical, as many NGOs do not have e-mail connections or functioning telephone lines.

Sub-Coalitions...a Necessary Transition.

Although the agreement between the coalition and the UNICEF recognized that the establishment of sub-national and local level coordinating NGOs was beyond its duration, it was left as a potential mechanism for the coalition's sustainability. By the end of the agreement period, the coalition had already begun exploring this potential, and established regional sub-coalitions in most geographical areas in which it had been working. The formula designed by the coalition for these regional groups comprised a core of four NGOs: a pivotal NGO, a communication and public relations NGO, a training NGO, and an NGO with the responsibility of co-ordinating working with children.

So far this attempt at decentralization and working at the local level has not taken off. The main problem with the idea of sub-coalitions is the lack of well-trained NGOs at the local level with enough expertise and initiative in group work.

The significance of the idea of sub-coalitions for the continuity of the coalition requires that the latter invests time and effort in establishing these sub-groups and devising the ideal structure for their work. Careful selection of NGOs to operate these sub-groups has to be carried out first. Some could already be identified from their previous involvement with the coalition. Systematic training and a clear explanation of the responsibility and work mechanisms of local sub-groups should follow. A practical way of preparing these sub-coalitions for working independently could be through assigning them a small project, which the sub-coalition would execute with the guidance of the mother coalition. This learning-by-doing process could help establish the mechanisms for coordination and group work among the sub-coalitions.

V. Impact Assessment

Assessing the impact, particularly the social impact, of a complex project on any population always presents serious methodological questions. For example, the difficulty in desegregating exogenous factors which might have significantly contributed to project outcomes from those associated with the project itself compromises the ability to attribute change to the project intervention. Furthermore, using a control group to overcome this weakness presents its own set of methodological problems, which are related to the selection of control groups. It is with these problems in mind that the current evaluation has attempted to measure the impact of the CRC coalition on a number of levels. The findings of this section are not, therefore, 'hard' quantifiable results. They serve, nonetheless, as indications of the impact of the coalition in areas where exogenous factors, which might have led to the same outcome were negligible. Two levels on which the impact assessment was carried out were selected among the heterogeneous target population of the coalition; namely, individual NGOs and children.

On the level of individual NGOs, two main criteria were considered for testing the impact of the coalition: the acceptance of the concept of child rights by NGO members and their knowledge of the convention, and the incorporation of the concept in the activities of the NGO. With regard to the first criterion, it is fair to assert that the coalition has been very successful in creating acceptance and knowledge of issues of child rights and of the CRC among a wide base of NGOs, most of which would have had no exposure to any source outside of its contact with the coalition. Interviewees from only one NGO in the sample for this evaluation study asserted that they had a clear understanding of the CRC and the concept of child rights before their involvement with the coalition. A few of the NGOs' members indicated that they had a leaning towards the concept of child rights although they could not have articulated it before their collaboration with the coalition. The majority, however, stated that they had no prior knowledge of the CRC and the concept of child rights. At a conceptual level, all interviewed members and employees of the NGOs displayed a genuine interest and understanding of the issues raised by the coalition's activities. Not all of these NGOs are dynamic organizations, suffering as they do from the usual apathy syndrome characteristic of the Egyptian NGO sector in general. However, the fact remains that an infrastructure of NGOs with a knowledge of child rights has been established and could be built upon later or activated by the coalition or any other catalyst.

Field visits to an array of member NGOs show that some of these organizations have been very active in utilizing the knowledge and experience they acquired during their work with the coalition and in incorporating them in their ongoing activities. Their members emphasized that the training they received from the coalition and their involvement with the coalition's activities were instrumental to their ability to conceive and design programs. Furthermore, the material they acquired from the coalition was essential to these programs. In this regard, however, NGO members expressed the need for more varied material to help them expand the range of their activities on child rights and the CRC. Selected examples of the NGOs incorporating the knowledge and material acquired from the coalition in their own work are:

- The Coptic Organization of Services and Training (COST). Since it began its involvement in the coalition's activities, it has been holding an annual festival for child rights in Beni Suweif governorate. Through its work in villages, it has begun organizing campaigns for the whole village on one of the rights indicated in the CRC. COST has devised this method of working on one right per campaign to make it accessible to the population. The NGO, also, institutes special awareness-raising campaigns and holds discussions for parents and teachers on child rights. Its members, who were trained by the coalition, now provide training to smaller NGOs on working with children on the principle of participation. In a more practical initiative, it has adopted the cause of the right of the girl child in education and initiated a campaign to put it into action in some villages by convincing and funding parents, who were unwilling or financially incapable of sending their daughters to school.
- The Coptic NGO for Family Care. Although not a member of the coalition, through one of its members who was invited to a number of the coalition's activities, the NGO has actively adopted the cause of child rights. Under the abortive Law of 1999, the NGO revised its objectives to include an article on working on child rights which was not part of its original mandate. In its work with children in slum areas, the NGO has introduced the concept of child rights. In addition to following the coalition's model of explaining rights to children, the NGO has attempted to demonstrate these rights practically. For example, on the child right to a clean environment, the NGO provided each child, participating in its program, with a basic hygiene kit. The NGO invited doctors to these areas to carry out basic health tests in order to translate the right for health care into reality.
- Businessmen Association, Sohag. Although its original objective is the support of small enterprises, the involvement of some of its members in the coalition's work marked a change in the association's work. The association shifted its focus from small workshop owners to children working in these workshops. The association held meetings with these children to identify their needs and devise programs accordingly. So far, the association has been providing these working children with literacy classes, helping them issue identify cards, offering them vocational training, and offering the older children loans for starting their own enterprises. In January 2001, the association embarked on the Working Child project which concentrates on raising awareness of child rights among working children, their families and their employers using the material acquired from the coalition and drawing on cadres previously trained by the coalition in Sohag. The project goes beyond the scope of work of the coalition by also including awareness raising of women's legal rights for the mothers of working children.
- The Coptic Evangelical Organization (CEOS). One of the larger NGOs on the national level and the more active within the coalition has been committed to involving the concept of child rights in its activities. In its various branches on governorate level, one day camps for children from its Child Rights Clubs have been held, and material acquired from the coalition on child rights (e.g. films and games) has been used to raise awareness among children on the CRC and also to focus on individual rights and themes related to them. Campaigns on child rights have also been occasionally organized in schools where CEOS have ongoing projects. CEOS has also been active in organizing training workshops on child rights for young cadres delivered by some of its members who had been trained as trainers by the coalition.

- Intellectual Education Organization, Port Said. In a pioneer effort to scientifically study a core issue within the CRC, the rights of physically and mentally challenged children, the NGO collaborated with the Institute of Social Work to conduct a comprehensive survey of this category of children on the level of the governorate. The first phase of the survey commenced in November 1999. The survey is meant to provide data necessary for any intervention to tackle this problem, particularly from a rights perspective.
- The Egyptian General Society for Child Protection, Alexandria, which has served as the pivotal NGO for the duration of the project agreement between the UNICEF and the Coalition has recently signed an agreement with the *NGO Service Center* to carry out a project on capacity building for NGOs working in the area of Child Rights advocacy. The experience which the NGO has gained through its involvement with the coalition has qualified it to be recognized as a body capable of organizing capacity building support for NGOs in the field of child rights.

In addition to these examples, many NGOs whose members participated in the coalition activities have been active in working with issues of child rights, especially in organizing children and youth camps and awareness raising campaigns in areas and communities where the NGO has ongoing programs. Members of these NGOs expressed the importance of the coalition establishing a follow-up mechanism. They would like to meet members of the coalition's management to report on these activities and get feedback and suggestions. They expressed their need for more support from the coalition especially in terms of material and ideas.

Measuring the impact of the coalition on the level of children themselves is even more difficult to quantify. However, meetings and discussions with five groups of children from various socio-economic backgrounds from rural and urban areas revealed these children's understanding of the CRC as well as an ability to articulate their views with confidence. There are also some examples of attempts by children to replicate some of the experiences they gained from the coalition's activities in planning and organizing their own activities within more sustainable structures of the NGOs. Child Clubs, and in some cases Child Rights Clubs, of individual NGOs have served as such venues. In a few of these clubs, children have elected boards of directors from among themselves, with clearly specified responsibilities for each member. These boards hold regular meetings to discuss children's needs in their communities and communicate to the NGO board their demands. In other places, as in a small village in Beni Suweif, the children with the guidance of cadres trained by the coalition identified the more pressing problems of their village and designed plans for tackling them. They also organized campaigns to raise awareness of some of the CRC articles among village members and especially children who did not in the coalition activities.

Although this evidence is more anecdotal, it is a telling indication of the success of the coalition in at least creating a knowledge of the CRC among groups of children and in training them to express themselves and think scientifically about identifying and solving problems.

On another level, it could be said that the coalition has begun to have some impact, albeit in a limited way, on governmental bodies particularly in local governments. On the national level, the coalition's main success in this regard is its engagement with

the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM). Section VI, 2 of this report deals with the relationship between the NCCM and the coalition. Furthermore, interviews with representatives of local government, e.g. officials of the department of education and health, revealed not only the endorsement of these members of concepts acquired in their participation in coalition activities, but also their attempt to incorporate this experience within their own work. In one case, the head of the education department of Port Said reported that he organized a series of workshops in his department on working with children with special needs in which he invited social workers trained by the coalition to conduct some sessions on the CRC. However, much more effort is needed in the future to synthesize and orient governmental organizations towards the objectives of the coalition.

VI. Coalition Potentials

1) Coalition and Donors

One of the initial indicators for evaluating the success of the coalition, as identified in the agreement between the UNICEF and the coalition, is the list of project proposals presented by the coalition to donor agencies, apart from UNICEF, particularly the number of successful ones. Evidence shows that the coalition has been extremely active in seeking various sources of finance and has acquired the experience of working with different donor agencies. This has been reflected in its efforts to present proposals to a number of agencies. Since its inception, the coalition has been active in designing proposals, negotiating with donors, and co-operating with different agencies requiring different styles of work and reporting systems. Not only have these efforts allowed the coalition to tap into available sources to ensure a degree of sustainability, but also has established it as a solid body capable of negotiating conditions and adapting to different circumstances and work styles. In total, the coalition has designed and submitted five project proposals to four donor agencies, four of which have been accepted. Two of these projects have already been executed, while two remain in the pipeline although approval from the donor has been secured. The four accepted proposals:

1. The British Council funded an NGO workshop on Lobbying Opportunities in January 2000. The proposal was presented by the coalition to secure funding for a three day workshop to provide 20 NGOs with training in lobbying techniques and opportunities relevant to the work of the NGOs, and sensitive to the environment for lobbying in Egypt. The workshop, held in Fayoum, devised designs for four possible campaigns. The consultant who conducted the workshop presented a positive report on the active participation of NGO members and the potential of the coalition and its members to build on the training they acquired.
2. The German GTZ funded a summer youth camp proposed by the coalition in August 1999. The idea behind the project was to incorporate youth participants from a previous GTZ camp in 1998 with youth from the coalition's June 1999 summer camp, with the objective of developing the capacity of Egyptian youth to plan and implement gender-sensitive programs that incorporate issues of rights, especially women's rights. The camp was designed in consultation with the youth themselves. The final report on the camp states that the GTZ selection of the coalition was based on the latter's approach which is 'more progressive, participatory and gender sensitive than most local non governmental organizations'. In return for its contribution to the preparation and management of

- the camp, the same report indicated that the experience enhanced the coalition's ability to translate theory into practice.
3. The GTZ approved a project proposal by the coalition on Gender Sensitive Adolescent Development in Egypt in May 2000. The objective of the project is to contribute to the empowerment of girls and boys to achieve equitable, gender-sensitive and sustainable social and economic development of their communities. The project funds have already been disbursed to the pivotal NGO of the coalition, but the implementation of the project awaits the approval of the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA).
 4. A proposal for a Children and Youth Participation Project has been approved by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and its implementation is imminent. The objective of the project is to develop regular assemblies for children in eight governorates to allow children to express their views and work towards the achievement of their ideas within the framework of participation as stated in the Convention for the Rights of the Child.

These successes, however, remain isolated ad hoc initiatives, covering only individual activities. Useful as they are, they have not provided an alternative to the support offered by the UNICEF which was essential for the coalition's holistic approach and for contributing to the capacity building of its structures. The project-based approach to funding runs the risk of restricting the coalition's capacity to implement integrated projects with a wider impact.

2. The Coalition as a Center of Excellence

Probably one of the stronger indicators for the success of the coalition is the fact that it has managed to form a nucleus for a center of excellence, in which the expertise of its members in various areas of child rights and working with children has been regularly made use of by different institutions on the national as well as regional and international levels. Many instances testify to this achievement and to the wide range of governmental, non-governmental and other institutions which have sought the benefit of the coalition's experience. Selected examples of the services the coalition has been called upon to provide include:

The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)

The NCCM, which is by far the most important governmental institution concerned with childhood issues in Egypt, has invited the coalition to participate and contribute to several of its activities. Among these were to:

- participate in an awareness-raising campaign for literacy teachers in January 2001, and in several other similar campaigns for social workers,
- contribute to producing the National Report on follow-up to the World Summit for Children, Egypt, which was published in 2000 by the NCCM,
- present the experience of NGOs working in the field of child rights in a number of NCCM workshops,
- attend a preparatory meeting for the preliminary session at the UN; and
- organize the participation of children in the national conference on childhood, in which the children selected, organized, and trained by the coalition presented a document on 'Children's demands for the next decade' to the First Lady in November, 1999.

Furthermore, a member of the executive committee of the coalition was selected as a member of the technical-consultative committee of the NCCM.

NGOs and schools

The last two years have witnessed an increased demand by several NGOs for the expertise of the coalition, and many requests for the participation of coalition members in activities conducted by these NGOs have been made. The coalition's experience in working with children by employing a participatory approach is one of its main comparative advantages and was particularly requested, especially by NGOs wishing to work based on the model of youth camps and Child Rights Clubs introduced by the coalition. Many NGOs have also requested that the coalition members contribute in areas of child rights, while the kit produced by the coalition for awareness-raising campaigns was also in demand. Among the various NGOs which sought the collaboration of the coalition: Al-Maraa' wa Al-Mogtama' (Woman and Society) invited members of the coalition to provide training on child rights and working with children in a number of its activities during 2000 and 2001. The Coptic Evangelical Organization for Services (CEOS) called upon the expertise of the coalition to provide training for small NGOs supported by CEOS in working with children and youth. Among the other NGOs are Al-Tobgiah, Bashair Helwan, the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, Sudanese Organization for Human Rights, Cairo Center for Human Rights, Al-Sayeed Association for Education and Development, Caritas, the Egyptian Organization for Child Protection, and Health Improvement Organization.

On another front, the College des Freres schools have invited members of the coalition to participate in their annual activities week for a number of years. Lectures and training on child rights and related activities were offered by the coalition members.

In an attempt to widen its base of expertise as well as its future work, the NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child explored possibilities for collaboration with the UNICEF supported coalition on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). A workshop was held in 1997 between the two coalitions to discuss potential linkage. Although no agreement was reached between the two bodies on a co-operation plan, the dialogue which took place between them is a sign of the coalition's continuous effort to acquire more experience and linkage with experts in similar fields.

On the regional and international level

Some selected examples of the coalition's engagement with regional and international bodies are:

- Representatives of the coalition were invited to attend a workshop on non-discrimination and child rights in the Arab world organized by the Arab Resource Collective (ARC) in Cyprus in November 1996. Since then, several more members of the coalition have participated in ARC-organized workshops on awareness-raising programs on child rights and the executive plans of like-minded Arab coalitions. This has been an excellent opportunity for coalition members to gain exposure and exchange experience with similar organizations around the Arab world, and to enhance its members' expertise in areas of training and networking on childhood and CRC issues.

- Coalition members were invited to participate in a Workshop on effective reporting to the UN Committee on CRC organized at the Human Rights Institute, Tunisia in September 1996. The workshop was instrumental in providing coalition members with the necessary skills and background knowledge to produce the NGO report on the rights of the child.
- Representatives of the coalition participated in several workshops during 2000 and 2001 held at the Civil Society and Childhood Center in Morocco, on topics of CRC and reporting on the situation of children to UN sessions.
- Some members of the coalition participated in a British Council seminar on *Children's Rights: Moving Forward*, held in Oxford, February 2000.
- Coalition's participation in a Conference on Children's Rights in Education, organized by the Royal Danish School of Educational Studies, Copenhagen 1998.
- Funded by the Ford Foundation, one member of the coalition was invited to attend the Millennium Forum at UN, May 2000.
- Attending meetings of the UN Preparatory Committee for the UN Special Session for Children.

Despite these achievements, it has been mainly established members of the coalition (most of them members of the executive committee) who have been asked to offer their expertise and participate in these meetings. Although some of the cadres trained by the coalition have started taking part in these activities, their participation still remains limited. This is understandable considering the short life of the coalition in general. It is of the utmost importance, however, that more emphasis be put on giving the new generation of cadres extensive quality training. Already, the coalition has trained a group of cadres on child rights and in working with children and youth. A future strategy for enlarging the base of experts within the coalition to meet the growing demand in the area of child right could be to:

- select a core group from the more active cadres,
- encourage the more established members of the coalition to invite members of this core group to join them in their consultancies, on a voluntary basis, as assistants or even observers. The potential for these individuals to become highly-sought experts in the expanding field of child rights is a strong incentive.

VII. Challenges and the Future: The identity of the Coalition and its role

The above review and discussion show that the coalition has, in a short span of time, established itself as a solid entity in many ways, and to a large extent has been successful in delivering what it originally attempted to do. Above all, the Coalition has managed to spread the concept of child rights in areas where previously it was unknown, and played an instrumental role in raising awareness of the CRC, particularly in the Egyptian context where the concept is not part of the local culture. It has, further, made child rights an accessible topic by translating legal and theoretical discourse into interesting and practical activities. By co-operating with governmental bodies on reasonably equal grounds, born out of its expertise and knowledge, the coalition has given a high profile to NGOs in general.

To date the coalition has attempted to function as an executing body for projects and activities, a co-ordinating body among individual NGOs, and as a visionary body with a higher mission of inspiring debate and alternative thinking among NGOs and of

engaging in a dialogue with the government on Child Rights issues. In theory, the coalition should have the capacity to manage all these identities and to operate on multiple levels. However, it is essential that the coalition prioritizes these roles, articulates them precisely, and presents them with the utmost clarity to all groups it co-operates with, in particular, individual member NGOs. There are some serious issues which the coalition has to reflect upon in this regard.

1) The Coalition and Future Planning

At the time of drafting this report in October 2001, the coalition has not yet taken any tangible steps towards formulating its action plan for 2002. In conceiving its future plan of action the coalition has to critically rethink its immediate objectives and the best implementation strategies for realizing them. An essential step in this direction would be to review its previous plan of action drafted with the UNICEF for the December 1998-December 2000 period. The main feature of this plan was its ambitious far-reaching scope. While this ambition was conceived necessarily in order to set the tone for the coalition at its consolidating stage, it has had its negative effects. It has meant that the coalition has had to stretch itself over too many fields of activity before it has had time to establish itself as an institutionally and managerially capable structure. Trying to keep up with all these activities and meet deadlines came at the cost of building the capacity of the coalition's organizational system. The load of objectives and activities set out in the plan was disproportionate to the size and capacity of the governing and executing bodies of the coalition and especially to the support team (executive secretariat) allocated to the coalition.

The far-reaching scope of activities further meant that the coalition could not sustain an effective monitoring and follow-up system for its work. The coalition took initiatives in many fields but has not followed up to see how these initiatives have matured or whether they have yielded any results. When the overall objectives of the coalition are to raise awareness and establish democratic structures as venues for children's participation, one-off type activities is not the best strategy. To change the attitudes of a certain group of people, for example teachers, on issues of child rights more is needed than holding one or two workshops.

In its upcoming action plan, the coalition has to be aware of the drawbacks in its previous plan and should attempt to avoid these shortcomings by focusing its efforts more and concentrating in fewer fields. A priority should be to follow up some of the successful projects initiated by the coalition in its previous campaigns and consolidate some of the successes it has achieved. Also, a systematic documentation system for the coalition's activities has to be put into place. The upcoming plan of action has to ensure that mechanisms for documentation are considered as part of the capacity building of the coalition.

2) Advocacy and policy level

One of the coalition's main objectives and the *raison d'être* for its formation was to influence public policies with the purpose of transforming them in favor of children. However, influencing public policy is a complex and often lengthy process, and results in this regard could not have been expected from a body as young as the coalition in its short existence. The coalition, nonetheless, has taken a number of steps in this direction. Its involvement with the NCCM has been very positive in granting

the coalition a semi-official status as well as recognition for its effort by one of the most important governmental bodies. Also, the coalition managed to involve representatives of local governments in their activities albeit in an often symbolic way.

However, the main groups which the coalition activities have targeted so far have been mainly NGOs and children, and to a lesser extent teachers and parents. Important as these categories are, they by no means show substantial involvement with policy formulation. Actual policies affecting the situation of children and their welfare are taken and implemented elsewhere; namely in ministries of health, labour and education. Because of its semi-legal position, the coalition has not been successful in permeating these bodies and incorporating them in its agenda. In the future, however, the coalition has to engage more seriously in designing strategies for this end, if it is at all serious about making a meaningful contribution towards changing policies concerning children. Planting ideas and methodology into existing systems is the only guarantee for any long-term effects.

3) The coalition as a co-ordinating body

Although the activities of the coalition have given many NGOs the opportunity to meet other organizations working in the same or similar fields, there is not much evidence of regular channels of communication among NGOs. To a large extent, individual NGOs are responsible for this apathy, and for not making optimal use of the opportunity provided by the coalition's activities to make contact and familiarize themselves with the work of other NGOs. The coalition, however, could take it upon itself to do more in providing help for NGOs to facilitate exchange among themselves. As an umbrella organization, it has to adopt as a major aim the development of partnerships based on sharing practices and facilitating the opportunity for mutually supportive capacity building initiatives. Some of the mechanisms mentioned throughout this report could serve this purpose, for example the re-activation of the newsletter and holding regular meetings with representatives of all NGOs. Another mechanism which the coalition has already envisaged and which deserves special attention is the creation of sub-coalitions at the local level.

4) The Coalition and the UNICEF

The terms of reference for this evaluation implied that the assessment should make projections regarding the future directions of the coalition including its relationship with the UNICEF. The basic assumption adopted in this regard has been, therefore, that if the UNICEF expected its counterpart (the coalition) to adopt and sponsor the concept of partnership with other parties it should, itself, adhere to this same principle.

The history of the coalition reviewed in Section II of this document shows that the history of the coalition, especially in its formative years, has been closely linked to the UNICEF. The UNICEF provided a core group of NGOs interested in the area of child rights, which later formed the coalition, with the intellectual and conceptual background and material needed for their endeavour. Later on, the project agreement, which the coalition signed with the UNICEF, and which guaranteed the UNICEF commitment to the financial and technical support of the coalition for the period between December 1998 and December 2000, ensued out of close consultation between the two sides. It was the outcome of a vibrant dialogue and detailed

discussions over the best implementation strategies for reaching the objectives of the project. As mentioned earlier in this document, the project agreement was not drafted to suit the demands of the donor as much as it was designed to fit in with the general objectives of the coalition. Throughout the project, close communication continued between the coalition and the UNICEF, and the UNICEF officials were invited to participate in some crucial meetings of the governing bodies of the coalition. The UNICEF has also shown a great level of flexibility especially in approving amendments made by the coalition's EC during the agreement with regard to dropping some activities and adopting new ones. In short, the project was conducted in an environment of co-operative partnership and mutual deliberation.

As mentioned earlier, the main shortcoming of the project design was its over-ambitious scope which made the coalition spread its infant and limited organizational and technical resources over a far too wide range of activities. A more, serious deficiency in the design of the project, however, is the absence of a plan by which the coalition could phase out its reliance on the UNICEF for financial and technical support. Two years is a very short period to expect the coalition to become fully self-reliant, especially in light of the overwhelming range of activities it was supposed to carry out. An abrupt termination of the UNICEF support for the capacity-building of the coalition which was supposed to establish it as an independent body could result in serious hampering of this goal. A gradual phasing out plan over a period of perhaps two or three years, after the initial two-year phase of the agreement, is necessary for ensuring that the results of the project and the objectives behind it are consolidated.

Annex I

Declaration of Principles regarding Co-ordination between NGOs concerned with Child Rights

Capitalizing on the initiative of a groups of NGOs and supported by UNICEF, a number of NGOs working in the field of childhood in Egypt convened to work on co-ordination between them in the field of children's rights in the light of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Presidential Declaration on the Decade of the Egyptian Child. The overall purpose of the attainment of child rights in survival, development, security and participation.

Basic principles governing the joint work will be:

1. Adhering to the principles of the International Convention on Child Rights as they fit with the cultural economic and social realities of Egypt, bearing in mind the best interest of the child.
2. Equality among all children and abolishing all sorts of discrimination against them.
3. Emphasis on genuine participation of children in matters that affect them based on their awareness of their rights and duties.
4. Commitment to educational methods that instill the spirit of democracy in children and make them responsible citizens capable of spreading love and peace.
5. Co-operation with national, regional and international institutions, organizations and entities interested in childhood in addition to organizations whose work affects the situation of children in Egypt.

To achieve our goals we commit to:

1. Widening the scope of the dialogue on children's rights, in order to formulate continually developing visions (perceptions) that agree with our values and reality.
2. Formulating a common understanding of the role of NGOs in Egypt concerned with children's rights.
3. Reviewing our current programmes to enhance the possibility of obtaining comprehensive rights for children, guided by the international convention and the common visions of the role of NGOs and giving priority to the more vulnerable children.
4. Co-operation amongst ourselves in:
 - Popularizing and creating awareness around the content and concepts of CRC.
 - Collecting, collating and exchanging resources, experiences and research, and co-operating in the development and production of new resources.
 - Participating in the preparation of an NGO report on Children's Rights in Egypt and presenting it to concerned bodies.
 - Formulating an organizational structure that suits the organizations signing the declaration.

Our joint work will be governed by the following values:

1. Working in democratic atmosphere which guarantees maximum participation of all members of organizations and decentralization of decision.

2. All joint activities of the group of organizations signing the declaration shall be transparent to all members and shall be reviewed systematically.
3. Working in team spirit to achieve mutual interests.
4. Institutionalizing the exchange of experiences among signing organizations.

The groups of organizations signing the declaration welcome NGOs working in the field of childhood in Egypt to join this declaration of intent.

This declaration was signed by the following organizations on 30 May 1996:

- Association for the Protection of the Environment.
- Organization for Research and Technology for Society Development.
- Egyptian Youth Association for Development and Environment.
- Upper Egypt Association for Education and Development.
- Coptic Organization for Services and Training.
- Egyptian Scouts Organization.
- Young Falcons (Al Nossour Al Saghira).
- Egyptian General Organization for Childhood Protection.
- Arab Lawyers Union.
- CARITAS.
- New Civil Forum.
- Association for Health and Environmental Development.
- Association of Alexandria Businessmen.
- Egyptian Women Medical Association.
- Parents and Children Association.

Annex II

Statute for the NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child

In accordance with the Declaration of Principles, signed on 30/5/1996 by a group of NGOs concerned with issues of child rights in Egypt, the signing organizations, in their meeting on July 8, 1997, agreed on the following statute:

Article One: Basic Principles:

The Declaration of Principles is to govern the work of the coalition.

Article Two: Structures of the Coalition:

1. The General Assembly:

- responsible for drawing up the coalition policies and activities, approving voting members, electing the executive committee, establishing and modifying the statute and approving financial balance.
- the general assembly forms topical committees, whose number and field of activity is to be decided according to the activities included in the action plan approved by the general assembly.
- the general assembly selects co-ordinators for specific regular activities, for example, the newsletter, resources and training.
- The general assembly consists of organizations with full membership (voting members), each organization with one vote and is represented by its director or a representative. Non-voting organizations and individuals have the right to attend the general assembly meetings but without the right to vote, nominate or elect.
- The general assembly meets annually, while an extraordinary meeting can be called for at the request of two thirds of the members or of the executive committee.

2. The General Committee

- responsible for drawing up detailed policies based on the plan endorsed by the general assembly.
- responsible for considering voting and non-voting membership requests.
- consists of an executive committee elected by the general assembly and rapporteurs of the topical committees.
- The general committee meets at least quarterly.

A) The executive committee:

- responsible for managing and executing decisions taken by the general assembly and the general committee.
- represents the coalition as a whole.
- responsible for calling for all the coalition meetings (general assembly and topical committees).
- directly responsible for all financial resources of the coalition.
- consists of five to seven members officially elected by member organizations.
- the EC elects a general secretary and a treasurer in its first meeting.
- The EC meets monthly.

B) Topical Committees:

- Serves as centers of excellence or consultative bodies for the coalition.
- consists of individuals from member organizations according to their expertise (one member from each organization per committee) as well as other individuals with required expertise.
- responsible for drawing up a detailed plan for coalition activities each in its field of expertise.
- Each topical committee elects a rapporteur who is not an EC member.

Article Three: Coalition membership:

The coalition consists of legally-registered Egyptian organizations.

Membership types:

1) Non-voting membership for organizations and individuals:

Conditions for accepting Egyptian non-governmental organizations:

- Its board of directors submits a membership form to the general committee.
- to be directly or indirectly involved in working with children.
- To commit to the institutional contract and the statute of the coalition.

The coalition also accepts membership of individuals with experience in the fields of childhood and other related fields. Non-voting members participate in all coalition activities but have no voting, nominating, or electing rights.

2) Voting membership: Reserved for organizations fulfilling the following conditions:

Article Four: Financial Resources of the Coalition:

These consist of annual membership fees to be specified by the general assembly, and funding for projects by international donor agencies. A legal accountant appointed by the general assembly is to supervise the financial accounts of the coalition.

Article Five: General Rules:

- Unanimity is required for the validity of meetings and for all decisions taken by all bodies of the coalition.
- The exception to the above is modifying the Statute and dissolving the coalition, both requiring the endorsement of only two thirds of the general assembly members.
- Any member organization has the right to terminate its membership through a letter from its board of directors. A decision by the coalition in this regard has to be taken during the next general assembly meeting.

Article Six: Regulations:

- Constituting members of the coalition (signatories of the Declaration of Principles) are exempted from conditions required for other voting member.
- The first elected executive committee formulates the regulations of the coalition based on the statute after its approval by two thirds of the constituting members .

Annex III

Children's Demands for the Coming Decade

It is our pleasure to present you with this document in the name of the children of the NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child. We represent the children of twenty NGOs from six governorates who participated in two summer camps organized around the themes of child rights. We were elected to organize these camps and to discuss our problems and role in our societies. We have been selected [by our peers] to present the following demands to you.

We express our appreciation to the State for its concern with childhood as expressed by the Presidential declaration for the past child decade, and for the efforts exerted by the first lady for childhood care in Egypt. We would like to express our desire to announce the coming decade a decade for children and youth. The following are our wishes:

1. Assuring the application of laws concerning the protection of children, particularly the prohibition of corporal punishment at schools and care for juveniles.
2. Spreading the Culture of children's rights through the concerned authorities and ministries, while adopting this culture and spreading it among the different categories of society through mass media.
3. Allowing children to participate positively in NGOs and student unions, pedagogic, educational and media programs, and in developing activities in schools, youth centres and cultural palaces in order to discover and develop children's potentials.
4. Following up that all children receive free elementary education in order to curb the phenomenon of drop-out children and working children.
5. Developing the educational system in terms of teaching methods, curricula, teachers and reducing the number of children in classes in order to render the educational system an enabling environment centred around children and allowing them to express their opinions and obtain their due respect and dignity.
6. Introducing environmental concepts in educational and pedagogic programs and mass media, and emphasizing the role of children and youth in protecting the environment within their local communities.
7. Solving problems of malnutrition among children and youth and promoting health education among children, youth and the family.
8. Developing the health insurance system for children and following up its implementation for better services.
9. Caring for children with special needs (handicapped and juveniles), adopting programs for their rehabilitation and merging them within the larger society, while preparing the society for this step and training those dealing with them.
10. Eliminating all forms of gender, social or any other discrimination through children and family oriented programs.

Finally, we are ready to bear the responsibility as children and youth in developing our communities through our NGOs and schools in order to contribute the building a better future for our beloved Egypt.