

PPIC-Work

Promoting and Protecting the Interests of Children who
Work



Pick Work
PPIC-W



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1. PPIC-Work Rationale

Employment creation through micro and small enterprise development is recognized as an effective mechanism for reducing poverty among marginalized groups. As this process of employment creation unfolds and brings improved incomes for many new workers, it is an inevitable though unintended consequence that an increasing number of children will be drawn in to these new work places. The *Promoting and Protecting the Interests of Children who Work* (PPIC-Work) project, seeks to improve both working conditions and learning opportunities for economically active children by working with and through micro finance programs. The PPIC-Work objective is to assist children, through a series of interventions tools, to learn to identify and resolve workplace and educational issues. To this end, PPIC-Work supports children, families and business owners in better understanding the best interests of children, in raising awareness of child rights, and in developing strategies to overcome educational obstacles and inappropriate working conditions. The PPIC-Work approach recognizes that private sector development initiatives not only help marginalized groups to end the cycle of poverty, but can also help addressing issues related to the work of children.

Children do work. To reduce the effects of poverty, children work for a wide variety of

reasons: to support themselves and their families, to assist in financing the costs of their own education, or otherwise help their families meet basic needs. But children who work even under appropriate conditions and remain in school still face the double challenge of maintaining their performance at school and succeeding in their work. Often schoolwork suffers as a result of the time and effort that children must put into their jobs. In instances where children drop out of school, they may seek alternate or non-formal learning opportunities through work, particularly in technical trades such as woodworking or metalworking where apprentice-type opportunities exist.

In making the choice to work, children are able to improve their own lives and the lives of other family members. But not all work is suitable for children nor is the work in which children participate



always of their choice. Work for children should be safe and healthy, and there should be continued opportunities for children to learn and grow as children. PPIC-Work works specifically with children in the growing micro and small enterprise sector, assisting them to find resolutions to work and education-related problems, and empowering children, families, and business owners to act in

children's best interests. The underlying causes for children working will not disappear quickly and it will take time for Egypt to evolve to a more prosperous society where the needs and causes for children working are reduced. In the short to mid term it will neither be practical nor possible to ban children from the work place and it is becoming increasingly clear that it is not in the best interest of children to attempt to do so.

2. Project Overview

PPIC-Work is a four-level socio-economic development project that aims at: i) improving the working conditions and learning opportunities of girls and boys by working with and through micro finance institutions; ii) documenting and sharing experienced gained through micro finance networks; iii) working at the national level to influence micro finance policy created by the Government of Egypt; and iv) engaging in the



international debate about child labour to support the rights of working children.

In all project activities, PPIC-Work tries to empower its main stakeholders: children, families, and business owners, by respecting and promoting child rights and by integrating a rights based approach within

a participatory framework that gives children an active voice in the project.

By working through local, established micro-finance institutions,¹ PPIC-Work connects to business owners, the children they employ, and the families of the children. PPIC-Work collaborates directly with business owners to identify, analyze and mitigate workplace hazards and to provide the means to bring about positive changes through the provision of dual purpose loans². PPIC-Work also engages with business owners and working children to establish a code of conduct that sets standards for children's work and becomes part of the requirements for accessing loans. As well, PPIC-Work supports parents in assessing child needs and interests and in developing viable responses that are consistent with children's rights. PPIC-Work engages with working girls and boys so that they are directly involved in the development and implementation of the intervention tools³ that are now being implemented through the MFI partners. These intervention tools now include:

Improving Working Conditions

- dual-purpose loans that improve business performance and profitability while also improving the health, safety and quality of children's work;

¹ PPIC-W currently works with the Egyptian Association for Community Initiatives and Development (EACID) in Aswan, the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS) in Cairo, the Association for Rural and Urban Women's Development (ARUWD) in Qena, and the Zeinab Kamal Hassan Foundation (ZKHF) in Cairo.

² The loans developed through PPIC-Work are dual purpose in that they improve children's working conditions but also improve business performance; these loans are sustainable over the long term and are designed in accordance with best practice micro finance principles.

³ Intervention Tools are discussed in depth in the Intervention Tools section of this information package.

- the establishment of a code of conduct that sets minimum standards for children’s work and is integrated into the loan contract;
- the training of loan officers in hazard assessment, analysis and mitigation so that they can advise and assist business owners to improve work environments;

Improving Learning Opportunities

- the provision of education support programs that assist working children to remain in school and perform well;



- learning business principles and ethics through computer based learning (learning to use computers and learning the Ba’alty – My Shop



computer game);

- “learning through work” (improved apprenticeship type learning within work places along with supplementary “learning with work programs”)

Key Processes

- children’s rights
- gender equality
- engaging with children and child – adult partnerships

Not all types of work can be made safe or appropriate for children and not all hazards can be mitigated.⁴ In these instances PPIC-Work tries to assist business owners to introduce new technologies and production processes so that the unsafe work that was done by children is mechanized. PPIC-Work then helps children and their families to find alternate forms of safe work where children can either continue their formal education or gain access to non formal or learning through work programs.



Key Elements

The basic elements of the PPIC-Work approach at the MFI level begin with the **collaborative relationship** between microfinance programs and the business owners. This allows the MFI to connect with the business owners and working children in a non-

⁴ The PPIC-W project works closely with the International Labour Organization (ILO), National Council of Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), and a wide range of experts in defining workplace hazards.

confrontational manner. The next element of the PPIC- Work approach recognizes that it is the **access to credit that provides the resources needed so that business owners can improve working conditions** for children as well as adult workers. Change happens over time and it is the ability of **MFIs to self-finance their work with businesses that allows them to continue to support** business owners and working children over the long term. The permanent and on-going nature of micro finance programs represents the third element of the PPIC-Work approach.

Expansion

Initially, PPIC-Work operated in the Egyptian



Governorate of Aswan in collaboration with the *Egyptian Association of Community Initiatives and Development* (EACID) and developed a series of gender-sensitive tools and approaches that are used at the MFI and enterprise levels to bring about positive changes for working children. Field studies have shown that when children have taken part in the full range of PPIC-Work programs they have been better able to access their rights within

their work (safer conditions, shorter hours, better pay, better fewer accidents and better treatment from owners and customers, greater participation in decision making with business owners) and have also been able to negotiate changes in their roles within their families. This has been particularly evident for working girls who are now able to agree with their parents that then can plan for future careers beyond marriage and that they have the same rights at their brothers.



Basma and Ibtissam used to leave early in the morning to carry supplies from the local market back to their family shop. The heavy loads, dark streets and traffic and harassment along the way were all part of the daily problems they had to face. When they and their father discussed these problems with the EACID loan officer they realized that increasing the working capital loan for the business would allow them to negotiate with a wholesaler to get home delivery. Since they had a good credit rating the loan was approved and all of Basma and Ibtissam's problems disappeared.

Both Basma and Ibtissam were very much involved in the design of the Ba'alty computer game. Basma completed school and now works as a computer operator with a business in Aswan. She plans to continue her career after marriage.

The experience gained by EACID is now being expanded to reach larger numbers of children in EACID's programming areas in Aswan and greater Cairo.

As the programs are self financing EACID expects to reach many thousands of children over the coming years.

Training and Expansion via MFI Networks

In collaboration with EACID, PPIC-Work has been able to develop a series of training manuals that are now being used to help new MFI partners to adopt and adapt the PPIC-Work methodology to suit their own programs and geographic areas.



Depending on the nature of their programming and the realities of working children in their areas of operation, new partners may chose to adopt all or only part of the PPIC-Work approach and the training programs can be customized to meet partner needs.



PPIC-Work began its training and networking activities with the Egyptian Small and Microenterprise Association (ESMA) that was the national micro finance

network. More recently PPIC-Work has begun to collaborate with Sanabel, which is the micro

finance network for the Arab region. Already several of the larger MFIs in the region have indicated an interest in the PPIC-Work training programs. The potential outreach through these partner agencies will involve hundreds of thousands of working children.

Micro finance and Education

School to work transitions are a challenge for the formal education system in Egypt. Despite educational reforms and extensive investment in technical and vocational training, most graduates of secondary, technical and even post secondary educational facilities find that they are ill prepared for the types of employment that exists. Under PPIC-Work the *learning through work* intervention begins by



recognizing that working children are already learning technical, business and life skills as part of their work and that this learning does prepare them for future careers in the types of private sector jobs that are becoming the back bone of the Egyptian economy. Learning in work places generally makes use of guided observation and involved adult to child and older child to younger child interactions. These types of learning approach are being recognized by educators as superior to the teaching techniques that are generally used in classrooms.



PPIC-Work is beginning to collaborate with business owners to document and share good training practices that are now part of the traditional apprenticeship systems in Egypt. PPIC-Work will facilitate the exchange of good training techniques among business owners and also provide loans and lease programs that will



allow business owners to access new types of technologies that will improve the learning environment within the business. One example

of this type of technology involves the computerized scanners that are now needed to diagnose mechanical problems in modern automobiles. Adoption of this type of technology will help business owners become more efficient and competitive but also requires that workers including working children, become literate and numerate and are able to work with computers.

In addition to supporting working children as they learn through their work PPIC-Work will also be providing education support programs so that children are able to acquire the literacy, numeracy and other academic skills that are not taught during work directly.

