Chapter 5
Education in Egypt and its Role in the Global Community

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ABSTRACT

The Egyptian revolution of January 2011 has brought about tremendous changes within Egypt's political and social institutions. This chapter examines historical and current events that have shaped educational reform and practices. Educational policies have been heavily influenced by external agencies. International organizations have targeted educational programming and infrastructure resulting in educational transfer practices focused on global topics. Issues surrounding post-revolution educational changes are addressed as well as the role of globalization processes.

EDUCATIONAL EVOLUTION

Egypt has witnessed events that are changing not only the country but affecting educational policies throughout the entire Middle East. While protests brought an end to Hosni Mubarak's three decade presidency, the void created by his overthrow has yet to be filled. The full impact on the Egyptian economy and the social and educational systems has yet to be realized. A challenge for the future of Egypt will be in the success of its educational system. If the educational policies and practices of Mubarak are to be replaced by a government responsible to and for the people, then an educated citizenry is a necessity. Only an educated and informed citizenry can make the legitimate choices needed for participatory government.

Education represents the means by which countries are able to develop the capacity to achieve economic change, incorporate new technologies, and prepare a workforce suitable for the economic and social goals of the nation. Further, education and training will support the economic and social systems to cope with rapid changes and respond to the needs of the people (Rifai, 2004).

The overall purpose of this chapter is to outline the Egyptian educational system during the pre-revolutionary period, before January 25, 2011, and

offer a vision of viable post-revolutionary efforts. The challenges of a changing government will have a long lasting effect on the nation of Egypt. The country is at the point of serving as a model for the world to follow or serving as a model for failure which should be avoided at all costs. This chapter will review Egyptian educational administration and how it is organized through public and private schools as well as through the Al-Azhar system and a higher education system. Historical development and reform of education in Egypt has resulted in significant transformations throughout the centuries. Egypt's education policies and procedures have been predisposed to global discussions such as the 1990 Education for All Declaration and the international community supporting every person's right to an education. Emphasis has been placed on community participation and teacher education reform efforts.

Educational transfer or the policies and practices that have been transferred into the country of Egypt have occurred during four major periods ranging from the early 1800s to 2010. These transfers have focused on modernizing the public education system; however, of equal importance has been building local capacity in order to evaluate, extend accountability, and ensure program effectiveness of the project.

There are issues related to the current educational system and are a result of the educational transfer and reform initiatives. Suggestions for the post-revolution educational changes are made that refer to students, teachers, governance, curricula, and evaluation. In addition to educational changes, building cross-cultural awareness through programs and interactions may further build culturally competent educators and an educational setting that fosters the global community.

The objectives of this chapter are to describe the educational evolution; Egyptian educational administration; Egypt's educational system; historical educational reform; global influences; educational transfer; evaluation; educational issues; post-revolution educational change; globalization and cross-cultural awareness; and, a conclusion.

EGYPTIAN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

The government is responsible for the management and supervision of education at all levels according to the Egyptian Constitution (Cochran, 2008). The supervision of education is mainly the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the responsibility for pre-higher education is based on the provisions of Education Act No. 139 (Egyptian Ministry of Education, 1981). In accordance with its provisions, the resultant educational system is a model that reflects central planning and decentralized implementation (Abdel-Moneim, 1997; Abdel-Shafi, 1996). The educational management system includes four administrative levels related to decision making which are the Ministry of Education, Directorate level, Educational Administration, and School level (Hassan, 2000). All levels of education administration use a regulatory and legal framework which influences educational decision making. A major function of education administration is to provide for planning, accountability, and formation of public policy for education, and to resolve any problems (Abdul-Fattah, 1996; Ministry of Education, 1993).

At the school level (procedural level), the institutional stakeholders participate in the management of the school and these include the school principal, head teachers, teachers, secretary of the school, and administrators. In addition, there are two councils that participate in the management of the school which are the School Board and the Board of Trustees composed of parents and teachers. The School Board is responsible for policy, administration, assisting the school in activities both inside and outside the school, and consultation in resolving any issues within the school (Baraka, 2008). The primary purpose of the Board of Trustees is to assist the schools in overcoming any education-related problems. The Board has operating sub-committees which identify general themes of interest such as reform and construction. The school activities committee

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