

**Full Length Research**

# Good Governance in Basic Education in Egypt: Paradoxical or Self Explanatory?

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Despite the numerous initiatives suggested and implemented to reform education in Egypt, very little was achieved in terms of improving education quality and, consequently, boosting development and democratic transition processes in Egypt. This paper argued that basic education in Egypt suffered variant degrees of weaknesses in applying good governance dimensions, including participation, accountability, responsiveness, fighting corruption, effectiveness and transparency, which ultimately affected negatively the overall performance of the basic education sector in Egypt. Building on the results of an assessment to governance in basic education in Egypt, the paper evaluated the degree to which basic education service providers in Egypt applied the principles of good governance (i.e. participation, accountability, responsiveness, fighting corruption, effectiveness, transparency, rule of law, efficiency and equity). The assessment was based on nationally-owned governance indicators structured in the form of a composite index. The paper highlighted the reasons behind the limited impact and weakness of basic education in Egypt from a governance perspective. Finally, the paper offered a new insight to improve basic education in Egypt. This insight focused on good governance in education as a technique towards a better quality and more democratic education.

**Keywords:** Governance; Education; Governance Assessment; Composite Index; transparency; anti-corruption; accountability; measurement; participation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Poor governance and corruption have a pervasive and disturbing impact on development and inflict considerable economic costs on economies. The 2010 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Summit identified corruption and poor governance as serious barriers to the effective mobilization and allocation of resources needed for development. Systemic corruption, lack of transparency and weak accountability eventually lead to the insufficient progress in achieving MDGs and affect, mainly, the poor

and vulnerable groups in society who suffer the most from the consequences of corruption. The findings of the Transparency International' study *Anti-corruption Catalyst: Realizing the MDGs by 2015* also come in line with such remarks. The study emphasized that bribes are directly related, for example, to childbirth death rates and has a corrosive effect on any efforts to promote literacy, access to primary health care, basic education and clean water especially in poor areas.

This paper argues that basic education in Egypt suffers variant degrees of weaknesses in applying good governance dimensions, including participation, accountability, responsiveness, fighting corruption, effectiveness and transparency, which ultimately affected the overall performance of the basic education sector in Egypt negatively. Despite the numerous initiatives suggested and implemented in order to reform education in Egypt, very little has been achieved in terms of improving education quality and, consequently, boosting development and democratic transition processes in such countries. The paper presents the findings of an assessment to 'governance in basic education' in Egypt. The assessment evaluates the degree to which basic education service providers in Egypt apply the dimensions of good governance (i.e. participation, accountability, responsiveness, fighting corruption, effectiveness, transparency, rule of law, efficiency and equity). This assessment was carried out by the Social Contract Center in Egypt while using nationally-owned indicators that were developed in consultation with stakeholders from government, private sector and civil society. Building on the results of the 'governance in basic education' assessment in Egypt, the paper points out the reasons behind the failure and limited impact of the basic education sector from a governance perspective. In that sense, the paper offers a new insight to education in Egypt that focuses on good governance in education as a technique towards a better quality and more democratic education.

Numerous international agencies and governments attempted to define governance. The World Bank, for example, defines governance as the traditions and institutions by which an authority in a country is exercised for the common good. It is the process of governing a specific sector, area, or a country in general (The World Bank Group, 2011). "This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them" (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2009&2010). In that sense, the term 'governance' includes various dimensions, such as accountability, transparency, participation, equity, effectiveness, efficiency and control of corruption. Similarly, the EU defines governance as the "rules, processes and behavior that affect the way in which powers are exercised at European level, particularly as regards to openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence" (European Union, 2001). In that sense, it can be concluded that good governance refers to running an institution or entity through policies and practices that ensures efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, equity, transparency, anti-corruption, accountability and participation of all stakeholders

(Khodary, July 2016).

In *Governance in Education: Raising Performance*, Lewis and Pettersson (2009) emphasize that good governance can serve as a window to improve both the performance of education institutions and the delivery of education services. Lewis and Pettersson highlight that pursuing good governance in education ensures efficiency in using public resources, guarantees education officials are held accountable for their actions and assert the effectiveness of education systems in meeting their objectives, guarantees. The 2009 UNESCO "Education for All" Global Monitoring Report asserts that inefficiency and poor governance in basic education in Bangladesh resulted, for instance, in geographical and social gaps in the quality of basic educational services and the accessibility to them. Without good governance in the basic education, the blooms of basic education and basic education reforms do not fully and effectively trigger down to the poor and marginalized groups (Al-Samarrai, 2008). Lewis and Pettersson (2009) underline that "pervasive teacher absenteeism in developing countries is a symptom of governance failure due to little or no accountability of teachers to employers or parents. Budget leakages, where public education funds fail to reach intended recipients, offers another sign of governance failure due to some combination of mismanagement, lack of incentives to track funds, weak information systems that thwart the ability to track funds, and absence of mechanisms that would hold officials to accountable. Good governance can serve as an entry point to raising institutional performance in the delivery of education services" (p.6). As a result, mainstreaming good governance and anti-corruption efforts, in general, and in basic education, in particular, fosters the better use of domestic resources for development and directly pushes for effective achievement of Post 2015 MDGs, which -similar to the old MDGs- are also concerned with boosting the performance in basic education.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Many international models attempted to analyze and assess governance, such as World Governance Indicators (WGI), USAID governance indicators, E.U Country Governance Profile (CGP), Urban Governance Index, UNDP governance framework, UN University's World Governance Assessment. Nonetheless, none of such well-established models attempted to assess governance within basic education or any other service sector. In addition, none of them was comprehensive enough to address all the aspects of governance (Amin, 2010).

Under its "National Ownership, Harmonization and Alignment" Goal, the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness laid emphasis on nationally owned governance assessments (OECD, 2008).

As a result, the UNDP Social Contract Center attempted to assess governance in basic education, for the first time in Egypt, while using nationally owned indicators that were developed in consultation with stakeholders involved in or concerned with basic education in Egypt. This research introduces the main findings of the "Governance in Basic education" assessment which has been carried out in 5 major steps:

a) Development of a Generic Framework with general indicators measuring governance and anti-corruption: This required reviewing the international governance documents and models, such as the WGI, USAID governance indicators, Urban Governance Index, UNDP governance framework, UN University's World Governance Assessment, etc... After reviewing and analyzing international governance literature, the key shared components and areas of governance that fit Egypt economic, political and social context, aspirations and peculiarities were identified (Amin, 2010).

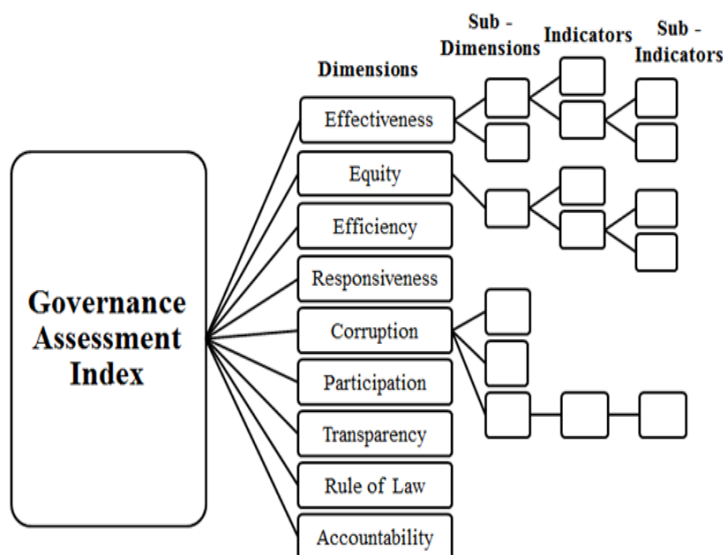
b) Development of sector specific dimensions and indicators (for basic education, health and water and sanitation sectors): This required reviewing the legal and institutional background of the basic education sector and drafting the governance in basic education indicators and questions guided by the generic framework.

c) Development of a nationally-owned composite Governance in Basic education Index: This involved carrying out extensive consultations with various stakeholders concerned with basic education and representing civil society (e.g. academia, NGOs and trade unions), private sector and government. This was complemented by the final step where the 'Governance in Basic education Index' was revised in line with the stakeholders' suggestions.

d) Design and implementation of household questionnaire: This required turning dimensions into accurate quantitative and qualitative questions and identifying the relevant data sources which resulted in developing and testing a household questionnaire and 8 key informants' questionnaires.

e) Assessment of governance in basic education: With the assistance of the Central Authority for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), a total sample of 3000 households was withdrawn for the Governance in Basic education Assessment survey.

In General, the Governance in Basic education Index is constructed of eight main dimensions. Each dimension is assessed through a set of indicators and sub-indicators that are mapped to specific questions in a household questionnaire. As appears in Figure (1), the Governance in Basic education Index is composed of dimensions. Each dimension has a set of sub-dimensions and each sub-dimension is composed of a list of indicators to measure that sub-dimension. The sub-dimension is sometimes measured directly through one indicator. The

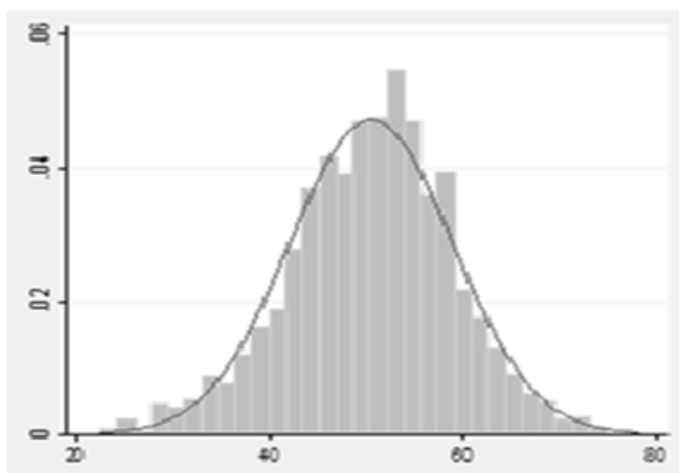


**Figure 1:** Governance in Basic Education Composite Index

last level of the index is the sub-indicators level, for which each sub-indicator was simply measured through one question. Moving upward from the sub-indicators to indicators, then to sub-dimension and finally dimension is what ultimately produces the composite Governance in Basic education Index. Variables are ranged on a scale from zero to 100, where zero reflects the lowest value of governance and 100 reflects the highest value. It is worth mentioning that in addition to the questions that are designed to derive quantitative data/scores, some questions are included in order to provide qualitative or in-depth analysis to, for example, the reasons behind certain actions or perceptions, the needs of the respondents, their opinions, etc...

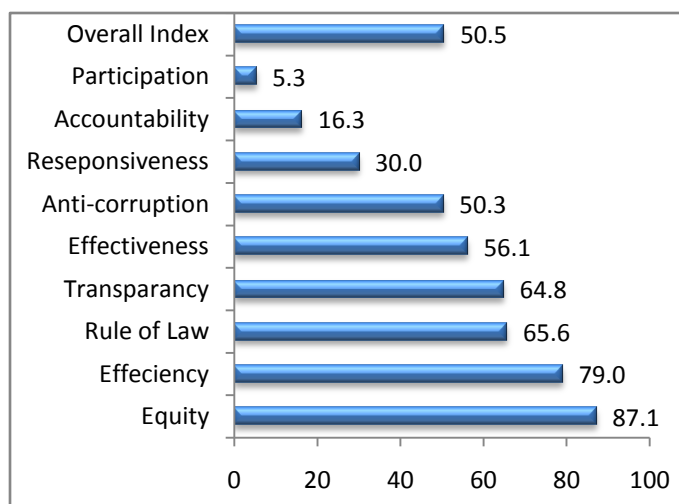
The findings of the governance in basic education assessment are based on a household survey for a sample of 3000 households representing districts, rural and urban areas of Fayoum Governorate. The overall number of students surveyed within the sample is 1741 students. Throughout the survey, SCC cooperated with the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics for withdrawing the sample, the Ministry of Local Development for facilitating fieldwork, and the Fayoum Local Information Centers for collecting the data.

On a scale that ranges from zero to 100 degrees where, as mentioned earlier, zero is the lowest degree and 100 is the highest, governance in basic education in Fayoum scored 50.5. Figure (2) shows the histogram (the graphical representation of the data distribution) of the Governance in Basic education Index. The histogram shows that the households' responses were mostly concentrated between 40 and 65 for basic education where there were almost no outliers in the values and the distribution was not heavily tailed.



**Figure (2):** Histogram of the Governance in Basic education Assessment

As appears in Figure (3), the Governance in Basic education Index reflected the average scores Fayoum received for the 9 dimensions of governance (Efficiency, Effectiveness, Responsiveness, etc...). While the scores of Equity (87.1), Efficiency (79.0) and Rule of Law (65.6) were the highest, the scores of Participation (5.3), Accountability (16.3) and responsiveness to the needs of students and their parents (30.0) were the lowest (Khodary, 2013).



**Figure (3):** The Governance in Basic Education in Fayoum Index

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Lewis and Pettersson (2009) suggested that governance should be measured across both policymakers and service providers. It is worth mentioning that similar to what Lewis and Pettersson suggested the Governance in

Basic education Index for Egypt is built upon questioning every governance dimension of the 9 dimensions across both policymakers (i.e. the Ministry of Basic education and its directorates) and service providers (i.e. schools' teachers and administration).

**Participation**

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) emphasized the right of citizens to “take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives”. Public participation in public affairs involves participating in legislative, executive and administrative affairs (Human Rights Committee, 1996). In addition, participation involves the effective engagement of citizens and other stakeholders in the identification of a problem or an issue, planning, implementation, monitoring and follow-up and, finally, evaluation (Khodary, January 2016).

Unlike non-participatory approaches of decision-making, participatory decision-making gives voice to a wider range of stakeholders. In addition, participation reflects the diverse views of stakeholders, thus, providing more informed, representative, responsive and rich outcomes. It also facilitates communication and deepens mutual understanding of oneself and others. Finally, participation ensures a greater sense of legitimacy, ownership and buy-in from stakeholders, which ultimately boost trust among stakeholders (Khodary, 2015).

As appears in Table 1, Participation scored 5.3 out of 100 points, which is the lowest among the governance dimensions. It reflected extremely low levels of participation by students and their parents in policy making in terms of discussing the basic education budget or other basic education-related affairs and decisions (0.8). In addition, it reflected low levels of participation in school affairs shared by both students and their parents (7.5).

According to the survey, most of the students and their parents were unable to express their opinion or evaluate the school building & facilities, activities, teachers or administration. In addition, students and their parents rarely took part in students unions and the school boards of trustees, which are the two main mechanisms of participation. The survey showed that those two bodies which were supposed to enhance the engagement of parents and students and reflect their voices and aspirations were inefficient, unrepresentative, weak and incapable of making any difference or change (Khodary, 2013). Lack of participation in those two bodies was traced to: the apathy by students and parents (possibly because the two entities are neglected by the school and are ineffective), the direct selection by the school administration of their members and the lack of transparency in communicating the timings of their elections and other information.

**Table 1: Participation Scores**

	<b>Participation</b>	<b>5.3</b>
1	Participation in Policy-Making	0.8
1.1	Allowing students and parents to express their opinion in overall basic education affairs	0.8
1.1.1	Expressing opinion in Basic education Budget	0.4
1.1.2	Expressing opinion in Basic education related governments' decisions	1.2
2	Participation in Schools	7.5
2.1	Allowing Students to express their opinion in the school's affairs	8.0
2.1.1	Expressing opinion in school's building & facilities	0.3
2.1.2	Expressing opinion in basic educational affairs in school	0.7
2.1.3	Expressing opinion in school's administration	0.4
2.1.4	Electing the members of Student's Union	30.6
2.2	Allowing Parents to express their opinion in the school's affairs	7.0
2.2.1	Expressing opinion in school's building & facilities	0.4
2.2.2	Expressing opinion in basic educational affairs in school	1.4
2.2.3	Expressing opinion in school's administration	1.8
2.2.4	Electing the members of Board of Trustees	24.4

### Accountability

Accountability is one of the most important governance dimensions which feeds into combating corruption and also ensures that an institution is serving its target beneficiaries (Behn, 2001). Building on Manin et al. and Schedler, Ackerman (2005) defines accountability as "a pro-active process by which public officials inform about and justify their plans of action, their behavior and results, and are sanctioned accordingly" (p.303). According to Ackerman, public officials and government agencies must be accountable to citizens, other public officials and accountability agencies. Lewis and Pettersson (2009) add that accountability requires that public servants have clear lines of responsibilities and are held answerable in acting upon their responsibilities. Therefore, it is crucial to have mechanisms and institutions ensuring the answerability of officials and holding them accountable to different bodies, whether external (legislative, judiciary, media and the public) or internal (i.e. internal technical and financial audit) (Khodary, 2013).

As appears in Table 2, Accountability scored 16.3 out of 100, which is the second lowest score among the governance dimensions. It reflected the students and parent's overall low knowledge of the available internal or external agencies and entities responsible for monitoring basic education service providers or holding them accountable and their sense or perception of their existence and their role (31.3) in addition to their absolute inability of parents to monitor school policies and hold the staff at school accountable (1.3). It is worth noting that the respondents' knowledge of the available entities in charge of holding basic education service providers accountable was limited. Their knowledge of external entities, such as students unions and boards of trustees was extremely weak (1.3) compared to their knowledge of internal entities (45.1) (e.g. Ministry of basic education). Apparently, the majority of Egyptian citizens are not aware of where to head to when they want to hold a school teacher or an official accountable. In particular, they are unaware of the external bodies and channels (i.e. the board of trustees and parents, the student union, or NGOs), which they can use or resort to in order to hold a school teacher or an official accountable mainly because the actual role those bodies play in holding officials accountable is very weak and unclear. The survey showed that in almost all of the cases, students and parents if asked to evaluate the school and teachers' performance, their opinions, suggestions and complaints are not taken into consideration to hold a school official accountable or put him into investigation.

**Table 2: Accountability Scores**

	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>16.3</b>
1	Availability of accountability mechanisms	31.3
1.1	Creating and availing various accountability Mechanisms	31.3
1.1.1	Availability of various accountability Mechanisms	47.5
1.1.2	Citizens' awareness of internal accountability mechanisms	45.5
1.1.3	Citizens' awareness of external accountability mechanisms	1.3
2	Students and parents' ability to monitor schools policies or hold officials accountable	1.3
2.1	Students and parents' ability to monitor schools policies	1.3
2.1.1	Students and parents' ability to monitor schools policies	1.8
2.1.2	Students and parents' ability to monitor schools policies and activities	0.9



## Responsiveness

According to the UNDP Democratic Governance Reader, Responsiveness refers to interacting with and responding to the needs, demands and urgent claims or complaints of the different stakeholders, such as women and poor or underprivileged groups. Responsiveness emphasizes the importance of becoming pro-poor or gender sensitive in policy formation, implementation and service delivery.

As appears in Table 3, Responsiveness scored 30.0 out of 100 points, which is the third lowest dimension among governance dimensions. It reflected the low degree of responsiveness of both policy makers or the Ministry of Basic education and its directorates on the local levels (34.1) and schools (25.9) to the needs and problems of the students and their parents. According to the survey, the main needs for the respondents that were ignored are providing secondary schools (general or technical), females' friendly schools and disabled classes (Khodary, 2013).

**Table 3: Responsiveness Scores**

Responsiveness		30.0
1	Policy Makers' Responsiveness	34.1
1.1	Policy Makers' Responsiveness to complaints and problems of parents and students	52.0
1.1.1	Availability of complaint Mechanisms	15.8
1.1.2	Responding to complaints	44.0
1.1.3	Swiftness in responding to complaints	90.9
1.1.4	Ability to solve the students' problems	57.1
1.2	Policy Makers' Responsiveness to the needs of parents and students	16.2
1.2.1	Responding to the needs of parents and students	16.2
2	Schools' Responsiveness	25.9
2.1	Schools' Responsiveness to complaints and problems of parents and students	44.6
2.1.1	Availability of complaint Mechanisms	36.1
2.1.2	Responding to complaints	55.1
2.1.3	Swiftness in responding to complaints	42.6
2.2	Schools' Responsiveness to the needs of parents and students	7.2
2.2.1	Responding to the needs of parents and students	7.2

The Responsiveness dimension emphasized responding to the needs and complaints properly and in a timely manner and deploying enough mechanisms of complaints. The problem with the responsiveness of basic education systems to citizens' needs and complaints rested mainly on two factors. First, there were no enough tools and mechanisms of complaints -such as hot lines, complaint boxes or customer service offices- set by policy makers (15.8) and schools (36.1). Second, schools and basic education projects in Egypt were

unable of their parents because in many occasions, responding to citizens' needs and complaints required extra fund, resources and technical capabilities which they did not possess.

## Fighting Corruption

Lack of standards, information and accountability does not only lead to poor performance by service providers but also to corruption (Lewis and Pettersson, 2009). Fighting corruption in basic education requires the availability and enforcement of mechanisms, policies, rules and regulations that fight and combat corruption (Khodary, 2013). Improving governance and fighting corruption in basic education ultimately increase the efficiency of basic education services, raise performance, improve teachers' productivity and eventually advance students' learning.

As appears in Table 4, Fighting corruption dimension scored 50.3 out of 100 points due to a very low respondents' perception on the absence of corruption in the Ministry of Basic education and its directorates (22.3) compared to a relatively better respondents' perception and exposure to acts of corruption in schools (63.8) despite it still did not indicate a very good level of fighting corruption by schools. The survey showed that the two main reasons behind the spread of corruption are the lack of supervision on the officials and employees working in basic education and their very low wage and salary levels. According to the respondents, these two reasons were fundamental in spreading acts of corruption, including accepting or demanding bribes, approving patronage and nepotism, or at least acting

**Table 5: Effectiveness Scores**

Effectiveness		56.1
1	Effectiveness of services provided by Policy Makers	40.6
1.1	Quality of services provided by Policy Makers	40.6
1.1.1	The curriculum quality and ability to improve students' intellectual and practical skills	8.9
1.1.2	Effectiveness of the ministry and directorates in providing services required by parents	72.2
2	Effectiveness of services provided by schools	63.9
2.1	Quality of services provided by schools	55.8
2.1.1	Quality of text books	62.6
2.1.2	Quality of technology used	75.8
2.1.3	Quality of schools activities	30.2
2.1.4	Quality of teaching	54.7
2.2	Parents' satisfaction about the schools' services	72
2.2.1	Parents' satisfaction about teaching	72.1
2.2.2	Parents' satisfaction about the school building and utilities (toilets, classrooms, etc)	72.0

sloppy and inefficiently. This situation was aggravated by the fact that, as appeared from the survey results, neither the students nor their parents attempt to report such incidents of corruption in addition to the weak enforcement of laws.

### Effectiveness

According to USAID (2000), Effectiveness refers to seeking high quality outputs of policy formulation and execution and the satisfaction of the service beneficiaries. It focuses on outcomes rather than what is being done in the process itself, which is the main focus of the other dimensions of good governance (Lewis and Pettersson, 2009). As a result, it can be concluded that effectiveness revolves around providing high quality services in addition to ensuring citizens' satisfaction.

As appears in Table 5, Effectiveness scored 56.1 out of 100 points, which reflected mediocre levels of quality and citizens' satisfaction. The survey showed that there was a constant focus on quantity rather than quality. For example, the students and parents found that the number of school teachers, toilets, desks, books, even computers was enough; however, their quality has raised a big question mark. Around 70% of parents reported that the school activities were of very low quality. Also, about 30% of parents were not satisfied of the school toilets, and the space and cleanliness of the classrooms and the playground. Another salient example on emphasizing quantity on the expense of quality was the wide complain by parents that "there were many computer devices in schools but the students were unpermitted to use them. School books were available but they did not include enough exercises and their content was very poor. The number of school teachers is acceptable but they rarely teach and when they teach they encourage students to memorize rather than to understand or analyze critically" (Khodary, 2013). As a result, parents were not satisfied about the final outcome of the basic educational system.

### Transparency

Increasing accessibility to information and enhancing levels of transparency are eminent in reducing corruption and enabling citizens to better know and practice their rights or hold service providers accountable on the basis of their roles and responsibilities. According to Dayanandan (2013), when information are available, citizens become more aware of their rights, the channels they can use in order to pursue their rights, the incidences when their rights are violated, where to head when this happens and what to do to hold officials accountable. However, unavailability of information and inaccessibility to information when available are two of the main problems in basic education. Therefore, it is crucial that the education sector avails information related

to education plans, budget, the school extracurricular activities, any change in the tuition fees, the performance indicators of the school, the school's revenues and expenditures, children's performance, etc... In addition, education institutions should respond efficiently to any requests by parents and students to obtain any information.

**Table 4: Fighting Corruption Scores**

	<b>Fighting Corruption</b>	<b>50.3</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Fighting Corruption by Policy Makers</b>	<b>22.3</b>
1.1	Absence of acts of corruption in the basic education sector	22.3
1.1.1	Citizens' perception on the absence of acts of corruption in the basic education sector	22.3
<b>2</b>	<b>Fighting Corruption by Schools</b>	<b>63.8</b>
2.1	Absence of acts of corruption in schools	68.1
2.1.1	Citizens' perception on the absence of acts of corruption in schools	68.1
2.2	Non-exposure to acts of corruption in schools	59.4
2.2.1	Non-exposure to any acts of corruption in schools (e.g. bribes, nepotism, etc...)	59.4

As appears in Table 6, Transparency scored 64.8 out of 100 points, which reflected similar levels of transparency for policy makers (63.5) and schools (66.1). The survey showed that despite information were provided by both policy makers or the Ministry of Basic education and its directorates (90.2) and schools (74.0) most of the time when requested, there was no real tendency to avail information voluntary without waiting for citizens to inquire about them especially by policy makers (26.9) and particularly information related to the budget (4.9).

The striking finding according to the survey was the available of various channels or mechanisms to communicate information to parents and students about basic education, school, or their children's performance at school. However, there was a high tendency not to make use of such channels and mechanisms. In other words, there is a culture of secrecy and preservation of information among officials and service providers from citizens or parents (Khodary, 2013). As a result, parents were rarely aware of current and future basic education plans, the school extracurricular activities, any change in the tuition fees, the performance indicators of the school, the revenues and expenditures, their children's regular performance, etc... It is worth noting that the problem of lack of information has constantly affected the trust between parents or students on the one hand and the school or basic education service providers on the other.

**Table 6: Transparency Scores**

Transparency		64.8
1	Transparency of Policy Makers	63.5
1.1	Policy Makers' tendency to avail information about basic education	26.9
1.1.1	Availing information related to budget	4.9
1.1.2	Availing information related to basic educational affairs	46.2
1.1.3	Using different channels to avail information	59.4
1.2	Providing information by policy makers when requested	90.2
1.2.1	Responding to information requests	87.5
1.2.2	Swiftness in responding to information requests	92.5
2	Transparency of Schools	66.1
2.1	Schools' tendency to avail information about basic education	58.2
2.1.1	Availing information related to budget	42.0
2.1.2	Availing information related to basic educational affairs	48.0
2.1.3	Using different channels to avail information	84.9
2.2	Providing information by schools when requested	74.0
2.2.1	Responding to information requests	52.2
2.2.2	Swiftness in responding to information requests	95.7

**Rule of Law**

Availability and enforcement of laws and regulations organizing the basic education service provision is very important as it sets the ground to fight corruption, holding officials accountable, improving transparency and setting the service quality and costs (Khodary, 2013).

As appears in Table 7, Rule of law in basic education scored 65.6 which reflected a better score of respecting laws regarding tuition and curriculum in schools (76.5)

**Table 7: Rule of Law Scores**

Rule of Law		65.6
1	Rule of Law in the Ministry and Directorates	60.1
1.1	Ministry and directorates' respect for law	81.1
1.1.1	Respecting Work time	87.4
1.1.2	Respecting work procedure	74.8
1.2	Sufficiency of Laws	39.2
1.2.1	Sufficiency of Laws governing basic education	39.2
2	Rule of Law in Schools	76.5
2.1	Schools' respect for law	76.5
2.1.1	Respecting laws related to tuition	77.0
2.1.2	Respecting laws related to curriculum and syllabus	76.0

compared to a lower score for the rule of law in the Ministry and its directorates due to mainly the insufficiency of laws and regulations set by the Ministry of Basic education. It is worth noting that few questions inquired about the Rule of law dimension in the household questionnaire given the fact that it is a very technical/legal section for respondents. Accordingly, the questionnaire only inquired about laws that directly affected parents or were directly related to the basic education process.

**Efficiency**

Efficiency refers to providing a service at the lowest cost and in a timely manner. In many occasions and especially in developing countries, the problem with any basic education sector is not the lack of funds allocated to the sector, but rather the inefficient spending of such funds.

As appears in Table 8, Efficiency in Basic education scored 79 out of 100 points, which reflected a high tendency by the Ministry and its directorate to provide their services in a timely manner and a relatively good efficiency of schools. The survey showed that some problems that may jeopardize the efficiency of school services existed. About half of the respondents reported that transportation to schools is expensive, unavailable and unsafe. These problems jeopardized students' accessibility to schools and thus risked the failure of the whole basic education project. Also, around 25% of parents reported that schools do not efficiently utilize the resources available for them. In general, problems that might sound minor or indirectly related to basic education may contribute into turning very successful basic education projects to abandoned or unsuccessful projects. For example, building a school in an unsafe area or opening classes for females in remote and unsecured areas, or the unavailability of cheap, safe and accessible transportation to the school have all contributed into wasting the efforts of many basic education initiatives and projects in Egypt.

On the other hand, lack of school extracurricular activities, insufficiency of working toilets, the inefficient performance of some school teachers and their bad treatment to the students have also led to the drop out of many students. The spread of such problems creates a school environment that is not only unattractive to students but also expelling to students, which jeopardize the efficient and smart spending on basic education projects and initiatives. As a result and despite the millions of pounds spent on basic education in Egypt, the impact of basic education reform initiatives and projects has been very limited.



**Table 8: Efficiency Scores**

	<b>Efficiency</b>	<b>79</b>
1	Efficiency of the Ministry and Directorates	87.2
1.1	Delivering services by the Ministry and Directorates in a timely manner	87.2
1.1.1	Delivering services by the Ministry and Directorates in a timely manner	87.2
2	Efficiency of Schools	74.9
2.1	Schools' technical and Financial Efficiency	76.7
2.1.1	Efficiency of school building & utilities	77.8
2.1.2	Sufficiency of human and financial resources	75.7
2.2	Absence of problems that may jeopardize school efficiency	73.0
2.2.1	Absence of problems related to accessibility to schools (transportation, safety, etc...)	54.8
2.2.2	Absence of problems related to high school tuition	816

## Equity

Equity refers to taking the necessary measures in order to guarantee inclusiveness and equal or unbiased access to the basic services. In addition equity refers to providing services with no discrimination on any basis (e.g. race, color, religion, sex, geographical location, etc...) and according to equal opportunities (Khodary, 2013).

As appears in Table 9, Equity in basic education scored 87.1 out of 100 points which is the highest score among all governance dimensions. That score reflected high equity levels in schools (78.2) and even higher levels of equity in the Ministry and its Directorates. Nonetheless, these scores did not reflect real equity as much as it reflected equality among the poor or equality in delivering the same poor services. As one of the respondents phrased it "The teacher could not deliver a bad teaching service to my son and another good one to another boy. All students were in the same class in the public school at the same time enjoying the same bad service. All of them were poor students!"

The planning and implementation of Basic education initiatives and projects should be performed in a way that promotes equity and justice to unprivileged people and geographical locations. Securing justice and equity requires special measures to be taken in planning and implementing basic education initiatives and projects in favor of the poorest villages and distant areas, such as focusing the construction of new schools in such areas,

tuition cancellation for poor students, providing attractive compensation packages to teachers to encourage highly qualified teachers to teach in unprivileged and distant areas.

**Table 9: Equity Scores**

	<b>Equity</b>	<b>87.1</b>
1	Equity in the Ministry and Directorates	96.0
1.1	The Ministry and Directorates' equal treatment	96.0
1.1.1	The Ministry and Directorates' provision of services on equal opportunity basis	96.0
2	Equity in Schools	78.2
2.1	The schools' equal treatment to students and parents	78.2
2.1.1	The schools' provision of services on equal opportunity basis	78.2

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper explored the reasons behind the ineffectiveness and limited impact of basic education in Egypt from a governance perspective. It is necessary for any basic education system to be transparent about its objectives, progress, even the problems and the spending items and allow for participation of different stakeholders who might actually help with ideas, fund or at least with their understanding to the problems the system is facing. In addition, it should set a clear framework for accountability (whether financial or technical, internal or external), which will feed into combating corruption. Most importantly, any basic education system should be flexible enough to respond to the needs and complaints of the students or their parents and pay special attention to vulnerable groups and poor segments of the society. All those steps might require establishing tools and channels for information dissemination, communication and complaints in addition to setting rules and mechanisms to ensure accountability and enforcement of law.

As appeared from the results of the Governance in Basic education Assessment in Fayoum, basic education policy-makers and service-providers lacked -to variant degrees- the dimensions of good governance, especially participation, accountability, responsiveness, fighting corruption, effectiveness and transparency. In the coming years, it is important to integrate the dimensions of good governance gradually into the priorities of basic education reform in Egypt. At the current stage, it is recommended to focus on enhancing the dimensions of participation and accountability followed by the dimensions of responsiveness and transparency as the starting point to improve levels of governance in basic education. It is

recommended to improve good governance in basic education through enhancing the dimensions which scored the lowest scores in the index (i.e. Participation, Accountability and Responsiveness). In addition, though 'Transparency' was not among the dimensions scoring the lowest scores, the paper still suggested to address it because transparency has a positive multiplier effect on the rest of the dimensions, such as anti-corruption, rule of law, effectiveness, etc... Therefore, it is rewarding to boost the level of transparency and access to information. In brief, improving governance in basic education in Education should involve taking measures, such as:

### **Enhancing participation and partnerships**

Private Sector and civil society including NGOs, Students Unions and Boards of Trustees play a major role in supporting and monitoring the government efforts in providing quality basic education. It is, therefore, crucial to enhance participation through: a. Removing barriers and simplifying current procedures in order to allow civil society and private sector to participate in the basic education processes (e.g. constructing schools, restoring or building fences, donating lands, expressing their opinion in the budget and education decisions, etc...); b. Ensuring that students unions and boards of trustees (which are considered excellent arenas for practicing democracy and citizenship) are playing an active role in planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. This requires encouraging students' unions and boards of trustees through various incentives, announcing their election dates publicly and transparently, and providing incentives for parents to participate in the boards of trustees (e.g. inviting them to the governorate club, etc...).

### **Increasing supervision and accountability**

According to Lewis and Pettersson (2009), real accountability is rare in most public basic education systems despite its crucial role in the well- delivery of basic education services. Lewis and Pettersson suggests that "Teachers hired, paid, and deployed by ministries of basic education become accountable to central government, not to local government, the community, or parents, as these entities have no financial or other leverage to hold teachers accountable" (p.5). As a result, it is important to: a. Establish clear and transparent rules for appointments and ensure supervision over schools especially during the non-morning periods in order to guarantee better quality of basic education; b. Increase citizens' awareness of entities responsible for holding service providers accountable, especially bodies other than Ministry of Basic education such as the boards of trustees and the students unions; c. Ensure that schools'

administrations apply self-assessment mechanisms that give space for students and parents to express their opinion or evaluate the school and its roles/facilities.

### **Responding better to the needs and complaints of students and their parents**

Responsiveness does not necessarily require taking costly actions – such as building new schools especially secondary schools or schools for girls and special needs students- in order to respond to citizens' needs and complaints. Some cost-efficient and innovative alternatives can be pursued including, for example, a. Arranging with the local unit to have cheap and safe transportation to schools and more secured environment around schools; b. Considering redistributing available teachers among the schools to ensure the existence of teachers for activities and all other classes, which may require some training or rehabilitation for teachers; c. Paying special attention to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades in primary basic education by training teachers in those grades or by achieving a more efficient allocation of teachers for those grades; d. Laying emphasis on school activities and providing adequate number of teachers for them; e. Encouraging schools to establish small projects that serve the village in addition to generating profit; f. Monitoring the cleanliness of the school buildings and other facilities, especially classrooms and toilets; g. Maintaining and supervising the school feeding program; h. Encouraging non-traditional and low-cost but successful solutions (e.g. in the areas of cheap construction); i. Opening new classes for secondary basic education or for the disabled instead of building new schools; j. Increasing complaints' mechanisms and announcing the steps for handling such complaints.

### **Enhancing transparency**

Freedom and access to information are very important to ensure accountability and enhance the fight against corruption (Freedom House, 2014). Low levels of transparency and access to information have a negative effect on degree of citizens' participation and accountability because citizens become unaware that they have the right to participate or hold officials accountable. Even when they knew about such rights, citizens do not have any information about what mechanisms, procedures or channels they can use in order to practice such rights. It is necessary for any basic education system to be transparent about its objectives, plans, budget, performance indicators and the challenges it is facing. Enhancing transparency might be achieved through: a. Increasing access to information related to basic education, in general, or to the basic education budget and schools revenues and expenditures specifically; b. Expanding the use of available

mechanisms to disseminate information related to basic education. In this regard, schools could be perceived as an efficient mechanism to disseminate information about all matters related to education.

### Final remarks

At last, adopting good governance in basic education in Egypt will pay off. Why? For multiple reasons:

- Good governance seems to provide guidance and a road map for a more efficient and successful process in order to reach high quality basic education and attain the planned learning outcomes.
- Good governance allows for better policy planning and formulation and implementation that is geared towards marginalized groups and poor segments of the society.
- Pursuing good governance ensures and rationalizes the disbursement of aid in specific areas.
- Good governance is necessary for the ultimate use of resources towards fulfilling the MDGs and achieving participatory, lawful and equitable development.
- Corruption and poor governance are key reasons for the lack of trust among different stakeholders. Because good governance promotes students, parents and community participation and enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of basic education initiatives and projects, it boosts the confidence of parents and the public in the basic education system and the service provider.
- At last, in the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2011, young Egyptians rose up against corruption, inefficiency, absence of transparency and weak accountability in Egypt in general and in some important sectors related to their daily life in specific, such as basic education. More than ever before, good governance is starting to serve issues of national priority to Egypt, such as decentralization and participation, fighting corruption, enforcing law, guaranteeing accountability, pursuing equity and equality and responding to people's needs and, thus, generating public satisfaction.

### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**CGP:** Country Governance Profile  
**WGI:** Governance Indicators

**MDGs:** Millennium Development Goals  
**USAID:** U.S Agency for International Development  
**UNDP:** United Nations Development Program

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