Building Implementation Capacity for Inclusive Education in Egypt

An Approach to Quality Education for All

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Preface from the Dean of the Graduate School of Education

Thank you for taking the time to read this important concept paper. This paper provides a brief background of inclusive education in Egypt, analyzes related barriers, and prioritizes areas of need. Given the importance of this topic in our profession and especially in Egypt and the Middle East, this paper suggests specific steps that we, as a school, intend to take to support inclusive education in Egypt. We look forward to your feedback.

Most sincerely,

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Considerable complexity and controversy surrounds the concept and application of inclusive education around the world. Varying interpretations and inconsistent usage of inclusive education terminology often stem from a lack of consensus and awareness in Egypt and throughout the Middle East (Gaad, 2010). *Inclusive education generally refers to the capacity of an education system to provide the academic and behavioral supports needed for **all** students, regardless of disability or difference (i.e., gender, ethnicity, location, language), to participate and succeed in the academic, social, and extra-curricular activities of the school alongside their peers* (UNESCO, 1994; UNDESA, 2016).

With specific reference to disability-inclusive education, inclusion demands a shift from separate, segregated learning environments for persons with disabilities reflected in the "special education" approach, to inclusive classrooms within general education schools, in which children with disabilities learn alongside their peers without disabilities, as illustrated in Figure 1 (UNDESA, 2016; Beco, 2016). This inclusion process requires a system of structural and methodological elements that ensures effective instruction and accessible evidence-based interventions for all students with disabilities regardless of severity (McCart, Sailor, Bezdek, & Satter, 2014).

Because a clear definition of inclusive education has not yet been documented in Egypt, the definition and explanation suggested will serve as a needed frame for viewing and measuring progress and opportunities for moving forward in terms of inclusive education reform in Egypt, while recognizing the value and critical nature of tailoring inclusive language, definitions, practices, and approaches to ensure cultural and social relevance and consensus in future (Richards & Armstrong, 2011). When evaluating and applying the concept and practice of

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inclusive education, consideration must be given to the socio-cultural historical context in which it exists (Batsche, 2014). Designing approaches without regard to contextual and cultural relevance reduces implementation fidelity and sustainability of inclusive education (Sugai, Simonsen, Freeman, and La Salle, 2016).
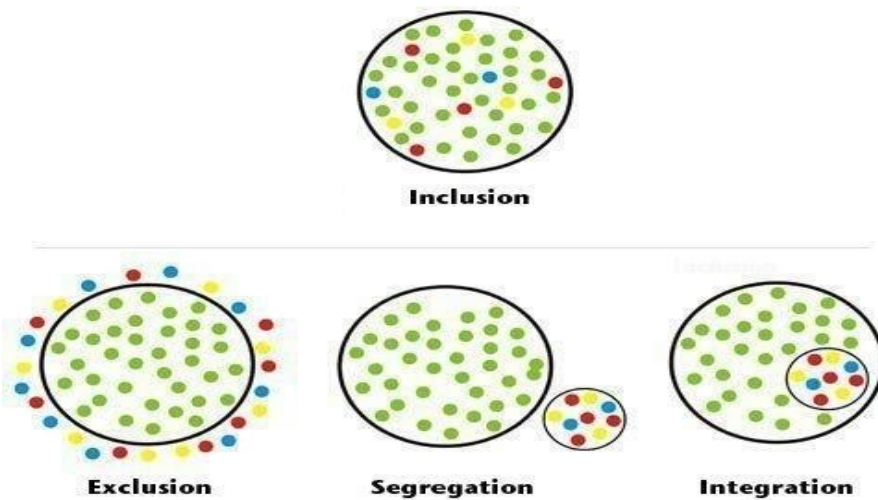

Figure 1. Inclusion compared with exclusion, segregation, and integration

Benefits of Inclusive Education

When ALL children learn together, ALL members of a society benefit (Swift Center, 2017). Thirty years of research indicates that quality inclusive education results in better behavioral and academic outcomes, social relationships, high school graduation rates, and post-school success for all children, at a lower cost than special or segregated education (Choi, Meisenheimer, McCart, & Sailor, 2017; International Disability and Development Consortium [IDDC], 2016; Rojewski, Lee, & Gregg, 2015; Woodman, Smith, Greenberg, & Mailick, 2016). On the other hand, the cost of excluding children with disabilities from education is significant for both society and individuals (IDCC, 2016; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2009). Exclusion negatively impacts economic growth and

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results in high costs. Specifically, recent research suggests that the returns on investing in education for people with disabilities are two to three times higher than that of persons without disabilities (Lamichhane, 2014; Morgon Banks & Pollack, 2014). Ultimately, investment in accessible and quality inclusive schools is cited as the most effective method for combating discriminatory attitudes, promoting welcoming and tolerant societies, and achieving education for all (UNESCO, 1994).

Current State of Disability Inclusive Education in Egypt

Policy and Practice

Inclusion of students with special needs in general educational settings has been a global initiative since the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action by the Ministry of Education and Science, Madrid (Spain), and UNESCO, Paris (France), in 1994. The Salamanca Statement and the subsequent issuance of the Dakar Framework for Action at the World Education Forum (UNESCO, 2000) call upon all countries to develop inclusive education systems, with the goal of high-quality education for all types of learners. In 2006, the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) became the first human rights treaty to affirm the right to inclusive education for all individuals with disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006, art. 24, para. 1). The treaty has been ratified by 172 countries including Egypt (United Nations [UN], 2017).

Over the last two decades, Egypt has shown significant interest in and support for inclusive education, as evidenced by policy efforts, political discourse, and partial inclusion initiatives for student with mild disabilities. Following Egypt's endorsement of the CRPD (2007), the Egyptian Ministry of Education (MoE) issued a Ministerial Decree in 2009, updated in 2015, mandating the admission of students with mild disabilities in public and private schools that are configured and

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prepared to receive those students, with the goal of preparing 5,040 schools suited for the inclusion

of 152,000 students by 2012 (MoE, 2008; MoE, 2014). Mild disabilities include vision and hearing

disabilities, mild to moderate physical and mobility disabilities, and mild intellectual disabilities.

Moreover, most recent National Strategic Plans for Pre-University Education in Egypt contain

detailed targets, activities, and indicators for advancing inclusive education (MoE, 2007, MoE

2014). Specifically, the strategic plan for pre-university education in Egypt, 2014-2030 sets a

strategic goal to ensure high-quality education for all learners with disabilities and inclusive

education for learners with mild disabilities, with the aim of structurally and technically equipping

600 schools annually (MoE, 2014; UNESCO, 2014).

These decrees and strategic plans have yet to be backed by laws and associated procedural

guidelines required for supporting and ensuring adherence and implementation on inclusive

education mandates. However, a disability law that includes the provision of inclusive education

as a main chapter, has been presented to the parliament.

Public and private schools. Despite encouraging developments and good intentions, the

translation from policy to sustainable, effective inclusive practice has remained fragmented and

elusive across Egypt, falling far short of targeted goals (MoE, 2013). In 2013, Egypt's Ministry

of Education estimated that less than 1.8 percent (i.e., 36,808) out of an estimated two million

school-age children with disabilities were receiving educational services with the clear majority

of these students receiving served in segregated special education schools (Alkhateeb, Hadidi, &

Al Khateeb, 2016; Hassanein, 2015). Of the 36,808 (i.e., 1.8 percent) students with disabilities

enrolled in schools, only 2,776 students were enrolled in 452 general education schools across

Egypt (MoE, 2013). However, in a recent news article, the advisor/consultant to the MoE on

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Special Education, Dr. Ahmed Adam, reported an increase in the official number of students enrolled in general education schools from 4,000 to 30,000 between 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 (Allam, 2017). While significant, these enrollment statistics should be interpreted with caution as they do not provide information on the caliber of education or type of educational services students with disabilities receive once enrolled. Various studies report point out that overwhelming majority of students enrolled in mainstream general education schools, remain "partially included or integrated", served primarily in special education units or special classrooms and receiving instruction of limited quality (El Shami, 2012; Hassanein, 2015, pg. 19).

Nevertheless, a limited number of learners in Egypt benefit from full inclusion in mainstream general education schools because of successful, small-scale pilot projects (Hassanein, 2015). Recent statistics reported by the Support Education Training for Inclusion (SETI) Center – CARITAS Egypt (2017) in Egypt suggest that SETI projects have resulted in the full and current inclusion of 1184 students in 89 schools (i.e., kindergarten and primary) across Egypt between 1998 and 2017, with direct support from SETI or from other community entities trained by SETI. In partnership with local Ministries of Education, national organizations, and NGOs, the SETI Center guides school adoption and implementation of inclusive education, by establishing on-going educator/site-leader training and support, assessment and monitoring systems, awareness meetings/activities, family and community involvement, multi-level teaming and collaboration, typical peer support and education, and a training-of-trainers program (personal communication, E. Shenouda, March, 2017). For further statistics, see Appendix A. Moreover, the MoE in partnership with UNICEF prepared 20

inclusive schools in the Cairo and Sohag governorates that involved teacher and social worker preparation, awareness campaigns, infrastructure modification, resource provision, and two inclusion guides for school personnel (personal communication, N. H. Dous, May 16, 2017). Data and statistics from these small-scale projects highlight *the potential for successful, sustainable fully-inclusive education models in Egypt, yet the slow pace at which the number the inclusive schools appears to be increasing stands concerning* (Save the Children- United Kingdom, 2008; SETI Center, 2017). High-quality Inclusive education remains the exception rather than rule Egypt.

Exclusionary practices extend to private schools as well, leveraged by admission criterions and/or high costs results in the exclusion of learners from general education private schools (El Shami, 2012). However, statistics on the number of inclusive education private schools and/or the number of students included in private school have not been reported. Further, studies investigating the status of inclusive education in Egyptian private school have not yet been published, thus limiting this review to unpublished Masters theses. Awad (2016) conducted a case study to evaluate the extent to which private schools in Egypt implement inclusive ministerial policy. Results of interviews with four administrators at four different private schools, four teachers at four different private schools, and ten parents of children both diagnosed with a disability and enrolled at a private school indicated the following issues: 1) variable compliance with governmental inclusion decrees, 2) inconsistent and low quality inclusive practice implementation, and 3) denied admittance of children with disabilities despite eligibility/acceptance conditions being met. Additionally, many "inclusive private schools" appear to limit participation of students with disabilities to social activities (i.e., identified as

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"partial" inclusion) as opposed to academic instruction (i.e., identified as full inclusion). According to Awad (2016), most students that are admitted to private schools must have a shadow/support teacher regardless of need and assessment results.

Despite efforts towards and commitments to the development of inclusive education in both the public and private sector, the current situation remains extremely concerning and statistical progress minimal, underscoring the urgent need for examination of barriers, analysis of needs, and the development of a corresponding action plan as it relates to the implementation of inclusive education in Egypt.

Identifying and Addressing Barriers to Inclusive Education

A combination of societal, systemic, and pedagogical barriers contributes to low enrollment and quality participation of students with disabilities in inclusive schools in Egypt (Alkhateeb et. al, 2016; Gaad, 2010; Ghoneim, 2014). However, as with a many developing countries, a paucity of accurate information and research-based data on inclusion exists in Egypt making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions regarding context-specific barriers (Crabtree & Williams, 2013). Thus, the following barriers were derived from the limited number of publications citing barriers to inclusive education in Egypt or Arab countries, more generally. Identified barriers to inclusive education include 1) negative attitudes and a lack of awareness on inclusive education across stakeholders, 2) limited teacher and specialist/leader preparation and training, 3) physical inaccessibility of schools and learning content (i.e., resource related), 4) fragmented systems and supports and a 5) lack of comprehensive, aligned legislation and policy frameworks backed by rules and regulations to ensure compliance (Abdelhameed, 2010; Alkhateeb et. al, 2016; Gaad, 2010; Ghoneim, 2014). In accordance, results of unpublished

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manuscripts investigating and identifying inclusive education barriers specific to private school report challenges in identical areas (Awad, 2016; Ammar & Skaggs, 2017).

Attitudes and Awareness

Inclusive education studies identify negative attitudes and perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities as barriers to inclusive education in Egypt (Ghoneim, 2014; El Ashry, 2009; El Zouhairy & Rizzo, 2014; Emam & Mohamad, 2011). In particular, studies evaluating teacher perception and attitude have produced concerning results given the research documenting the significant effects of teacher attitude on the success or failure of educational or social inclusion efforts (Gaad, 2010; Hassanein, 2015). Hassanein (2010) found that Egyptian teachers were reluctant to include children with mild intellectual disabilities in their classrooms, even after ministerial inclusion decrees. Another study examining teacher attitudes and perceptions of inclusion in Egypt revealed a lack of support for inclusive education and generally negative perceptions regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities and behavioral and emotional disabilities, in the general education setting (El-Ashry, 2009). While research from Egypt has focused primarily on examining teacher attitudes as barriers to inclusive education, negative views and lack of awareness and social acceptance regarding disability across various stake-holders and implementers impede adaptability of the education system, enrollment in schools, adoption of inclusive practice, and sustainability of change efforts (Emam & Mohamad, 2011; Gaad, 2010).

Given that agreement and commitment among stakeholders and implementers are recommended as critical prerequisites to effective implementation, efforts to create awareness and establishing buy-in stand essential (Pianta, 2004; O'Shea, 2006; Shogren, McCart, Lyon,

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Sailor, 2015). Measures to address attitudinal barriers should include increasing education and experience relating to disabilities and inclusive practice, as well as promoting partnerships and collaboration between stakeholders (Gaad, 2010; Garrote, Dessemontet, & Opitz, 2017; UNDESA, 2016; Vaz et al., 2015). In accordance, findings of the studies reviewed above identify the lack of information, experience, and skills related to inclusive education preparation as a major factor contributing to negative teacher attitudes toward inclusion (El-Ashry, 2009; El-El Zouhairy & Rizzo, 2014; Emam & Mohamad, 2011).

Training and Development

      General and special educators. Shenouda and Al-Agha (2009) argue that low enrollment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools in Egypt can be attributed to failed dissemination of the concept inclusion and support services, resulting in part from a lack of qualified teachers. Additional reports indicate that teachers and support staff often lack the skills and knowledge to implement evidence-based inclusive teaching strategies and practices for facilitating the success and participation of all children within the inclusive classroom. (Awad, 2016; Ghoneim 2014; Alkhateeb et. al., 2016).

      The CRPD requires states to employ teachers with the required skills to provide inclusive education and to ensure adequate and effective training of teachers so that they are able to teach all children. Egypt's 2014-2030 strategic planning efforts have targeted the provision of specialized training for "special educators", documenting a 21% increase in the number of special educators trained between 2003 and 2013 (UNESCO, 2014). While a number of organizations, universities, and centers (i.e., Ain Shams University, Cairo University, Learning Resource Center, Support Education Training for Inclusion (SETI) Centre of CARITAS) now

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offer short and long-term special education teacher training, an important step forward for Egypt, the vast majority of university programs continue to be rooted in a medical model of disability, which focuses on awareness and identification of specific disabilities/conditions (i.e., attribute the "problem" to the person), rather than emphasizing how educators can identify and remove barriers to create accessible, inclusive learning environments in which all learners thrive (i.e. attributes the "problem" to the environment).

Aside from small-scale, isolated training efforts and experimental inclusive school preparation/projects such as those coordinated by SETI Center Caritas Egypt in partnership with UNESCO, Save the Children, or other NGOs, little progress has been made to prepare general education teachers for inclusive settings (Shenouda, 2008). While coursework in Egyptian colleges may touch upon the concept of inclusive education, pre-service general education teachers are not sufficiently prepared to work in inclusive settings (Abdelhameed, 2010; Emam & Mohamad, 2011; El Ashry, 2009; El Zouhairy & Rizzo, 2014).

As key agents of quality inclusive instruction and essential mediators of social inclusion and participation, both special and general education teachers must be supported in terms of high-quality, initial and ongoing training and professional development (Fixsen, Blase, Horner, Sims, & Sugai, 2013). To that end, changes in the focus of existing training structures and content as it relates to inclusive educator preparation is required. Establishment of large-scale, comprehensive, and contextualized teacher preparation programs must be a priority with an emphasis on equipping both general and special educators with the knowledge, tools, and skills needed to successfully educate all learners in the inclusive classroom (Leko & Roberts, 2014; Alkhateeb et. al, 2016; Charema, 2010).

Educational Leadership Preparation.   Many administrators and school-leaders across Egyptian private and public schools lack awareness of and commitment to inclusive education policy, as well as the training and experience to implement inclusive school models (Ghoneim, 2014; Emam & Mohammed, 2011). A lack of local preparation and training programs targeting the skills and knowledge inherent to effective inclusive school leadership exists.

Substantial research indicates that inclusive school leadership is critical to implementing, transforming, and sustaining inclusive school practices (Ainscow & Sandhill, 2010; Waldron & McLeskey, 2010; Salisbury & McGregor, 2002) and improving learner outcomes (McLeskey et al., 2014). Thereby, inclusive education training initiatives must focus not only on preparing educators to implement inclusive practices, but also on ensuring schools leaders are equipped and motivated to support those educators and guide school implementation.

Accessibility

Accessibility can be defined as the provision of flexible facilities and environments to accommodate each learner's needs (UNDESA, 2016). Individuals with disabilities in Egypt face challenges that hinder full and equal access to and participation in inclusive education including physical, informational, and communication barriers as evidenced by 1) inaccessibility of buildings and transportation systems, 2) lack of adapted learning materials, and 3) unavailability of information and computer technology.

Currently, an extreme shortage of accessible, inclusive schools exists in Egypt. Egypt's national strategic plan for education reform (MoE, 2014), comprising intentions to equip 5,040 schools (i.e., 10% of schools) with suitable technological facilities and equipment for the inclusion of 152,800 learners with mild disabilities by 2012. However, according to the

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Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Egypt, only 452 general educations schools across Egypt had been prepared for with special education resource rooms and equipped with teaching aids, yet details are vague (e.g., MoE, 2014; UNESCO, 2014). Specifically, both National Strategic Plans (2007/2012, 2014/2030) target accessible inclusive education, aiming to adapt services and environments, provide technology, and prepare special, multi-level curricula, resources, and textbooks (e.g., braille textbook, partial braille dictionaries, easy-read textbooks). However, despite emphasis across plans, infrastructure adaptations and provisions of required accommodations remain the exception rather than the rule. Additionally, these efforts appear primarily directed at equipping segregated, special education schools rather than ensuring accessibility to general mainstream schools (UNESCO, 2014).

The CRPD requires member states to provide "reasonable accommodations" and individualized supports to ensure access to an inclusive, quality, and free education for all learners with disabilities, which may include constructing of ramps and/or lifts, facilitating the learning of sign language, providing curricula in accessible forms, and/or provision of augmentative and alternative communication systems or devices (United Nations, 2006). Given the persistent gap between intention and practice, Egypt needs to further assess specific accessibility barriers to better determine practical, attainable measures for promoting inclusive education accessibility and participation.

Systems and Supports

Another challenge to inclusive school implementation and sustainability is the absence of an inclusive model of special education service delivery (Gaad, 2010). Presently, special education operates in isolation from the general curriculum to provide specialized support to

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learners with disabilities, disconnecting learners from both the general education classroom and curriculum. Egypt's fragmented or segregated service delivery model impedes effective and efficient resource and staff allocation, and prevents the use of evidence-based inclusive instructional practices and strategies. Further, segregated special education structures and schools remain highly limited in terms of capacity and quality (Shenouda & Al-Agha, 2009, MoE, 2014).

Despite mandates allowing enrollment of learners with disabilities in public general education schools and commitment to "establishing supportive inclusive environment", a framework specifying how these initiatives will be translated to inclusive practice has yet to be developed (MoE, 2007, pg. 325; MoE, 2014). If the goal is to create unified teaching and learning environments, a systematic approach and organization for providing highly effective instructional delivery and supports for *all* students within inclusive classroom must be detailed, practical, and supported (McLeskey, Waldron, & Redd, 2014).

Legislation and Policy

The absence of a clear, comprehensive legislative and policy framework for inclusive education acts as a barrier for the adoption and implementation of an inclusive education system in Egypt (Gaad, 2010; Ghoneim, 2014). Legislation and policy must be fully aligned with inclusive reform initiatives in order enable and enforce adherence to inclusive reform initiatives across classrooms, schools, and governorates (Kozleski & Smith, 2009). Additionally, inclusive education legislation and policy should be accompanied by an established outline for implementation and monitoring of the transition process from segregated school to quality inclusive schools (CRPD, 2006; UNDESA, 2016).

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While the Egyptian constitution (2014) guarantees the right to education of individuals with disabilities, a law specifying individuals' right to inclusive education has yet to be established. Ministerial decrees initiated in 2008 mandate inclusion of learners with mild disabilities in general education schools; however, mandates remain vague, providing little on the nature and practice of inclusive education, and conflicting, reflect in the concomitant calls for both increased segregated special education schools and preparing schools for inclusion (MoE, 2014; MoE, 2007). In 2016, a disability law that includes a chapter on the provision of inclusive education has been presented to parliament, but not yet passed.

Data on progress towards inclusion decrees, and children with disabilities more generally, remain unreliable and extremely limited. Although ministerial decrees have ordered the establishment of an assessment system to monitor the progress made by children with special needs included in mainstream schools in 2010/11, little information of type of data collected, mechanism of data collection, or progress towards this goal could be located. Moreover, enforcing compliance and ensuring consistent application of inclusive education mandates requires rules, regulations, and monitoring systems which either do not exist or have failed to translate to practice (Awad, 2016). While a ministerial decree in 2008 called for the formation of a committee for inclusion in the MoE to be responsible for policy making for the project of inclusion of learners with mild disabilities in public school, but a similar lack of information surrounds the status and contribution of this committee.

Consequently, establishing a multi-stakeholder leadership team that holds decision-making power and implementation expertise, appears an essential first step in creating, adopting,

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disseminating, and monitoring inclusive education legislation and a corresponding transition (i.e., implementation) plan (Sugai et. al., 2016).

Laying the Foundation for Inclusive Education in Egypt

Although Egypt has established inclusive education mandates and associated strategic plans, a range of barriers continue to impede the adoption, implementation, durability, and impact of evidence-based inclusive educational practices. The challenge of translating intentions and commitment to inclusive education into implementation fidelity and sustainability plagues many education systems around the world. However, an existing and rapidly growing research base indicates that implementation of a 1) *universal design for learning principles (UDL) within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)* service delivery model with a focus on developing 2) *local competence and capacity developmen*t (i.e., implementation science) may be the solution to dismantling identified barriers and creating sustainable inclusive school systems that meet the needs and actively engage *all* learners (Sugai et al., 2016; Giangreco & Suter, 2015; McCart et al., 2014). Internationally, MTSS implementation capacity development efforts have been documented in Europe (e.g., United Kingdom, Wales), Australia (e.g., New South Wales, Tasmania), United States, Caribbean Countries, and the Middle East (e.g., Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey) (Sugai et al. 2016; http://www.apbs.org/, 2017).

Multi-Tiered System of Support and Universal Design for Learning

A multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) is an evidence-based inclusive education service delivery model that uses data-based problem solving to integrate and deliver behavioral and academic instruction and intervention (Batsche, 2014; Algozzine, Anderson, & Baughan, 2016). Evidence-based, culturally-contextualized practices and supports are implemented in

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varying intensities to meet the identified academic and behavioral needs of all students, with an emphasis on implementation of the most effective prevention practices for all learners in a school and providing supplemental specialized supports or intervention for individuals whose social or academic behavior has remained unresponsive to universal intervention, based on universal screening and progress monitoring (Batsche, 2014; Sugai et al., 2016). A MTSS should incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles across all levels of supports (Swift Center, 2017). Research supports the efficacy of the UDL framework in guiding pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment design for the purpose of accessible and effective instruction for all students (Meyer, Rose, and Gordon, 2014). The three overarching UDL principles include: a) multiple means of teaching (i.e., various methods and modes of instruction), b) multiple means of expression (i.e., various options for communication and demonstration of learning), and c) multiple means of student engagement (i.e., strategies to promote learner motivation and interest) (Navarro, Zervas, Gesa, & Sampson, 2016).
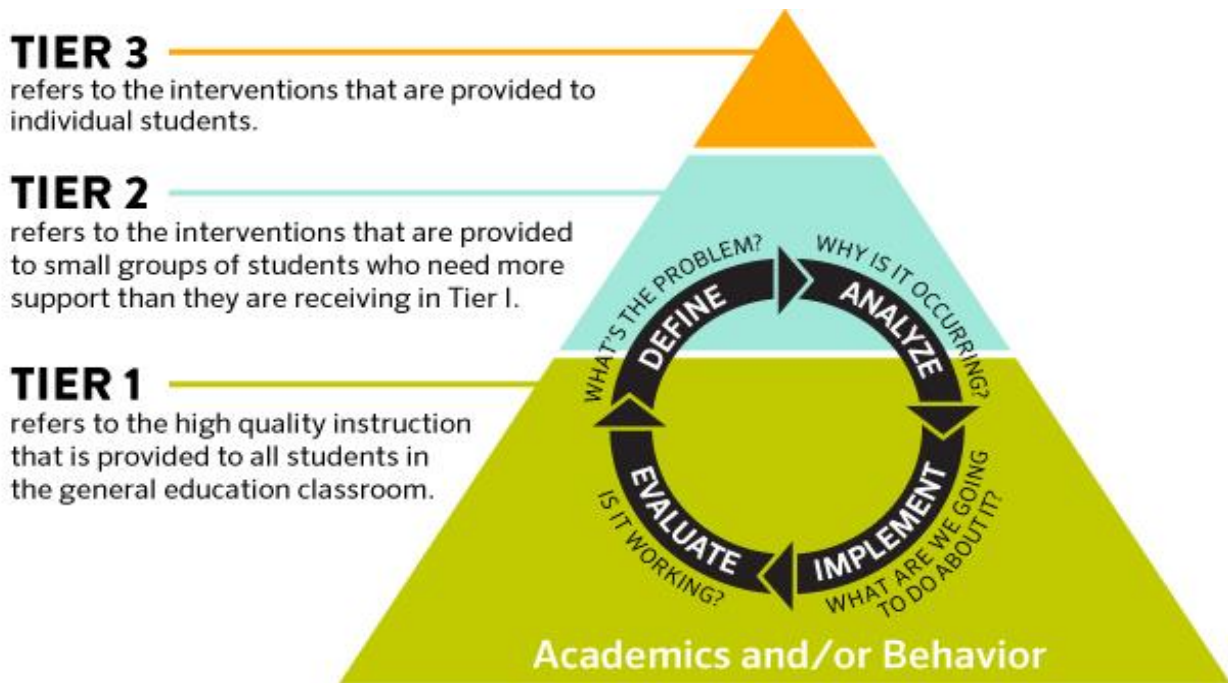
Figure 2. MTSS Pyramid Model and Conceptual Framework
(North Carolina Virtual Academy, 2017)

Implementation Competence and Capacity

The United Nations Development Program (2009) defines capacity development as the

"process through which individuals, organizations, and societies obtain, strengthen, and maintain

the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time" (pg. 4). Within

the context of inclusive education, capacity development entails the development of competent

and sustainable school, governorate, and national organizational systems that enable inclusive

practice implementation characterized by 1) high fidelity and durability, 2) cultural relevance 3)

data-based decision making, and 4) local management and coordination (Sugai et al., 2016).

Within a capacity-focused approach, priorities and steps should be designed according to

the five stages of practice implementation that include a) exploration, b) installation, c) initial

implementation, and d) full implementation (Sugai et al., 2016; Blase & Fixen, 2013; Goodman,

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2013). Designed according implementation research and best practice, phases provide a dynamic framework for guiding education systems toward independent, sustainable implementation of inclusive education with an emphasis on gradual, attainable steps individualize according to the current situation and context. The development of implementation system capacity and staff competence depends on attention to implementation drivers, or core components, integral across implementation phases. Core components can be categorized as competency, organization, and leadership drivers (Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005).

As such, the focus becomes competency development and improvement of implementation capacity of school personnel and organizational units to promote local and durable implementation capacity (Blase, Fixsen, Sims, & Ward, 2015; Sugai et. al, 2016). With this aim, a capacity-focused approach involves a shift from cursory, short-duration, and episodic training initiatives, to embedding evidence-based professional development strategies within existing organization structures and every-day teaching routines and activities (Sugai, et al., 2016). Further, organization agreement and commitment demonstrated through formalizing inclusive education policy and procedures, securing commitment to inclusive education across multi-stakeholders, collection and dissemination of related data, and establishing recurring funding sources (Sugai et al., 2016). Leadership teaming represents the last, but most essential implementation driver (McHart, et al., 2014; Eagle, Dowd-Eagle, Snyder, & Holtzman, 2015). Effective and engaged leadership structure and activities across system levels serve various function to direct, coordinate, and institutionalize implementation of inclusive education practices.

Ultimately, the success of inclusive school reform necessitates fundamental changes to

complex organizations, a restructuring of the system (Jerald, 2005, pg. 2). However, educational inclusion is not destination, but a journey. If Egypt is truly committed to educating all its children, our first steps must be directed towards building the foundation for inclusion education using an implementation capacity-focused approach that integrates evidence-based training strategies, implementation phases, leadership teaming, and multi-tiered systems of support aligned with cultural and contextual factors (Sugai et al., 2016, pg. 86).

Capacity and competence building outside Egypt. Generally, the movement towards education for all learners involves a step-by-step transition from exclusion to segregation (i.e., provision of special education), to integration and, finally, to inclusive education (Ainscow, Dyson, & Weiner, 2013). While evidence supports this pattern across countries, the pacing and methods within and across phases vary.

In many Western countries, the shift from integration to inclusive education has involved core capacity and competency building mechanisms including the provision of inclusive education legislation and policy, adaptation of training of school personnel (in-service and pre-service), establishment of local school/educator support systems as well as associated tools and assessment, parental and community engagement, and partnership. In addition to the substantial research base indicating the positive effects of these components in Western countries, effective and efficient methods for sustaining and scaling evidence-based inclusive school models using implementation science framework are fueling further growth of progressive inclusive education.

While the actions of Western countries offer developing countries a useful guide for improving inclusion, the impact of environmental context and developmental phases, and associated variables should not be neglected when adopting, aligning, and integrating inclusive

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education plans of actions. Unfortunately, despite initiatives and projects targeting the implementation of inclusive education in developing countries, the research base reporting the effects of inclusive education efforts in developing countries remains limited and statistics on the number and participation of children with disabilities in the education system remain unreliable (Grimes, Stevens, & Kamur, 2015; Srivastava, Boer, and Pijl, 2015).

However, in examining the available research on inclusive education strategies from developing countries, initial evidence documents the positive effects of 1) *high-quality training and ongoing support* and 2) *collaboration and teaming* (Srivastava et al., 2015; Grimes et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2015), two key components of a capacity-building approach. For instance, in a review of the literature between 2000 and 2011, Srivastava et al. (2015) identified 11 empirical studies and four reports that reported on inclusive education projects in developing countries, with only two studies reporting their effects in terms of an increase in the number of students with disabilities. Of the two studies reporting positive effects, both projects entailed 1) collaboration between local government and NGOs, 2) training teacher-leaders and classroom teachers, and 3) involvement of community and community leaders.

In an examination of strategies to improve inclusive education in four developing countries, Grimes et. al (2015) further iterates that multi-level collaboration and teaming with a range of stakeholders, particularly local communities, disabled peoples' organizations (DPOs), and local ministries appears a highly successful strategy for promoting engagement, changing negative attitudes, and increasing the capacity for advocacy, introduction, and monitoring of inclusive practices in developing countries. For instance, initiatives in Malawi, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) and Zambia have supported the development of community-based

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groups, project boards, school management committees aimed at empowering parents and strengthening DPOs (Grimes et. al, 2015). Further, models of peer support, or in other words, creating networks among inclusive schools and teachers to support implementation of inclusive education (i.e., cluster-approach), offers a vehicle for building capacity and competence, encouraging collaboration, and aiding in the development/implementation of inclusive school action plans in Vietnam, Lao PDR, and India (Catholic Relief Services/India, 2009; Nguyet & Ha, 2010; Handicap International, 2012).

In relation to in-service educator and administrator training and support, research indicates the following features may significantly bolster the efficacy and maintenance of training effects in the context of developing countries:1) long-term, ongoing training and support, 2) emphasis on awareness and practice as opposed to theory, 3) focus on a successful school models, 4) prepare of local teacher-trainers that deliver training, 5) incorporate on-the-job practice opportunities, 6) involve the collaboration among teachers and other local stake-holders, and 7) address topics relevant to teacher (Grimes et al., 2015; Hassanein, 2015; Pinnock and Nicholls, 2012; Reiser, et al., 2013; Sharma, Forlin, Deppeler, & Guane-xue, 2013; Walton, Nell, Muller, & Lebeloane, 2014). Al-Manabri, Al-Sharhan, Elbeheri, Jasem, and Everatt (2013) documented the effectiveness of a "whole-school" (teachers, administrators, social workers, psychologists) training initiative that incorporated lectures, classroom observation, and hands-on classroom experience in improving attitudes toward students with disabilities, instructional service delivery, teaching methods and practices, and community and parent involvement in Kuwait. In Pakistan, a three-pronged training approach that consisted of 1) periodic workshops led by university professors, 2) onsite support from mentor teachers who had received Master's

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degrees in Special Education through the coordinated university, and 3) bi-monthly cluster meetings between mentor and trainee teachers resulted in changes in teachers' attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Awan, Caceres, Majeed, Mindes, & Nabeel, 2010). These studies are only part of a small, but growing research base citing the value of evidence-based training strategies and structures that emphasize the development of durable, local, and expert competence and capacity in the growing of inclusive education in developing countries.

Additionally, the knowledge and skills fundamental to inclusive education should be compulsory within all university and college pre-service teacher training coursework (Sharma, et al., 2013). Federal policies in many developed countries such as the United States, Australia, Singapore, and multiple European countries (e.g., Finland, Norway, Denmark) require teacher preparation programs to prepare general education teachers to teach students with disabilities effectively (AACTE, 2011; OECD, 2016). Further, several developing countries including Vietnam and India have reported the establishment of pre-service teacher education in inclusive education, recognizing these efforts as essential to inclusive education efforts (UNESCO, 2009; Srivastava et al., 2015). In reality, the nature and scope of teacher preparation program in inclusive education varies and countries world-wide continue to struggle to overcome the challenges of constructing pre-service coursework that adequately prepare general education teachers for inclusive education. However, initiatives to revamp national teacher training programs to include contextualized, high-quality training on inclusive education continue to grow as data documenting the positive effects of pre-service training efforts on teacher preparedness and self-efficacy builds (Barrett et al., 2007; Navarro et al., 2016).

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While the inclusion process is influenced by a wide range of systemic factors that must be addressed (i.e., policy, assessment and data collection systems, funding, accessibility issues), evidence from around the world suggests that prioritizing: *1) engaged leadership teaming across system levels and stakeholders and 2) local school personnel support and preparation in the early implementation phases* allows for other determinants and challenges associated with inclusive education legislation and practice to be more effectively and efficiently addressed and managed in the long term (Savolainen, Engelbrecht, & Malinen. 2012; Horner & Sugai, 2015).

Moving Forward

Multi-layered Implementation and Technical Assistance Proposal

When developing the proposed main activities, primary importance was placed on developing implementation capacity and competence at the national, regional, and school/university levels. An effort was to made to examine and build upon successful local and international inclusive education strategies and efforts. Further, activities were designed based upon the principles of implementation science and afore mentioned challenges and needs in relation to inclusive education, and adapted to the cultural and historical context of Egypt. With this aim and in this context, it is suggested that the American University of Cairo (AUC) and Graduate School of Education (GSE) take the following actions ***to advance the development of implementation capacity and competence for inclusive education in Egypt***. The following section describes a progression of activities *beginning with broad-scale AUC level activities followed by targeted GSE-level activities*, with GSE services and phases contingent upon securing agreement and commitment.

Organizational Agreement: Ensuring Readiness & Commitment

Convening a Stake-Holder Forum
AUC will hold an Inclusive Education Forum, bringing together inter-disciplinary faculty, national disability advocates/organizations, Ministry personnel, community and government relations professionals, school personnel, and parents. The purpose of this forum will be to:

1) Secure agreement and commitment among implementers and stakeholders regarding needs and outcomes as they relate to inclusive education in Egypt
   - Document a shared vision for inclusive education and mission statement that includes clearly defined inclusive education terminology and concepts.
   - Review/revise documented challenges/needs to inclusive education across levels (i.e., school, community, governorate, and national) and identify priority areas of needs that can be addressed by participating AUC schools (i.e., School of Education, School of Global Affairs and Policy, School of Humanities and Social Science, and School of Business).

2) Develop strategic objectives and quality indicators for mainstreaming, supporting, and evaluating inclusion education in Egypt with specific attention to inclusive education as a cross-cutting national issue.

   - Establish leadership teaming between/within AUC schools and departments.
   - Draft and present an inter-disciplinary action plan that aligns objectives, indicators, activities, and systems.
   - Secure agreement and commitment to school/departmental proposed activities.
   - Plan for dissemination of action plan.
   - Propose and prioritize data systems for monitoring and evaluating progress.
   - Develop active communication systems.
   - Explore initial and recurring funding opportunities for proposed AUC activities.

GSE Services for Installation, Implementation, and Scaling Up

Establishing a GSE Community Outreach Unit
The Graduate School of Education (GSE) Community Unit will comprise GSE faculty and independently contracted local implementation. Initially, emphasis will be placed on developing systems that support implementation including preparation of activity-specific policies and procedures, data monitoring systems, scheduling, team structures and personnel mapping, and funding and resources. Ultimately, this team will oversee planning, leading, and coordinating the main activities described below including the 1) School Partnership Program, 2) Diploma Programs, and 3) University Partnerships Program.

Research will be a primary component of all suggested programs and activities. The GSE community unit will be responsible for: 1) developing a research agenda and plan, 2) conducting

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research to determine the efficacy and efficiency of the purposed programs, and 3) ensuring publication and dissemination of data/results.

Providing Technical Assistance through a School Partnership Program
GSE will provide differentiated *technical assistance (TA) to public and private primary schools* committed to becoming effective, integrated, and equitable teaching and learning environments for ALL student, including those with disabilities. Using the Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT Center, 2016), the university and partner schools will work collaboratively to identify actions, systems, and resources needed to establish *evidence-based domains and features inherent to successful, inclusive schools including: 1) administrative leadership, 2) multiple tiered systems of academic and behavioral support (MTSS) using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, 3) integrated educational framework, 4) family and community partnerships, and 5) inclusive policy structure and practices* (see Figure 1 for domains and features).

As depicted in Figure 2, AUC staff will employ SWIFT's evidence-based TA practices to support the initial implementation process as well as the building of system capacity to sustain and scale up SWIFT's inclusive educational framework in additional schools and governorates over time. *TA practices include 1) visioning, 2) data snapshots, 3) priority and practice planning, 4) resource mapping and matching, 5) transformation teaming, and 6) coaching and facilitation* (McCart, McSheehan, & Sailor, 2015). SWIFT is an evidence-based framework for adopting, aligning, sustaining, and scaling up inclusive education for ALL children, originally funded by the United States Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to improve outcomes of students with disabilities in urban, rural, and high-need schools (OSEP, 2012).

In accordance with SWIFT theories of actions, AUC recognizes that the success of school and system change relies most heavily on the *knowledge and experience of local stake-holders and implementation experts*. Thus, the organization of this school partnership program and the on-the-ground school implementation will be heavily informed by local organizations and professionals specializing in inclusive education effort in Egypt and recruited to serve as part of AUC GSE's community unit. The flexibility of the SWIFT framework will allow for *culturally-contextualized and individualized implementation assistance aligned with school-specific needs, barriers, and priorities*. Further, *integration of the evidence-based SWIFT framework and local working models of inclusive education* (e.g., SETI-supported schools, Misr Language Schools, Notion School) optimize efficacy and efficiency by establishing evidence-based features while using contextually-relevant strategies and systems.

According to the phases of implementation, school-level implementation will serve as practice implementation exemplars for long-term developing district and governorate-level implementation that may become system implementation exemplars (Sugai et. al., 2016).
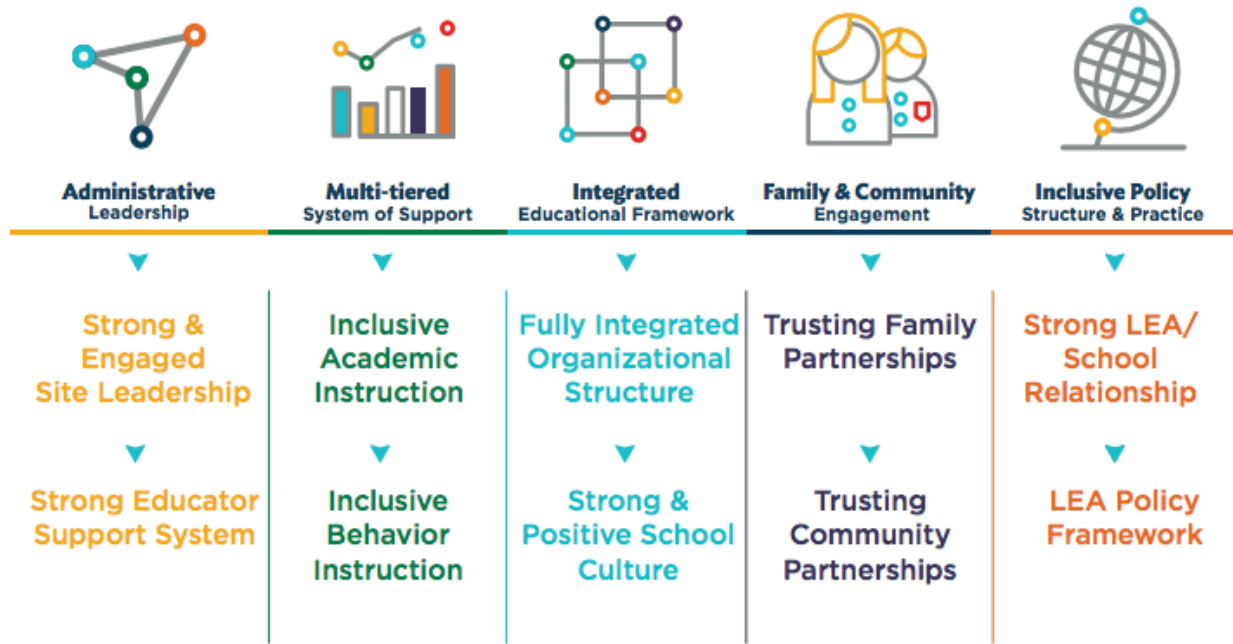
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Administrative Leadership	Multi-tiered System of Support	Integrated Educational Framework	Family & Community Engagement	Inclusive Policy Structure & Practice
▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Strong & Engaged Site Leadership	Inclusive Academic Instruction	Fully Integrated Organizational Structure	Trusting Family Partnerships	Strong LEA/ School Relationship
▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Strong Educator Support System	Inclusive Behavior Instruction	Strong & Positive School Culture	Trusting Community Partnerships	LEA Policy Framework

Figure 3. SWIFT Domains & Features
(SWIFT Center, 2017)

Visioning

Data Snapshots

Priority and Practice Planning

Resource Mapping and Matching

Transformation Teaming

Coaching and Facilitation

Figure 4. SWIFT Technical Assistance Practices
(SWIFT Center, 2017)

Preparing Teachers and Site Leaders. As part of the school partnership program, school leadership teams consisting of # educators and one administrator will be enrolled in AUC inclusive education diploma programs. AUC will offer diploma programs aimed at building working knowledge and capacity of inclusive practices and systems at all levels. With a strong practical and applied focus, diploma programs prepare and equip practicing general educators and site leaders with the career-specific skills and knowledge required for successful and

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sustainable implementation of inclusive educational practices. For this purpose, heavy emphasis will be placed on incorporating evidence-based training strategies (i.e., direct instruction, modeling, practice, feedback), targeting accurate, fluent, durable, and generalizable practice use through school-based practicum experiences (Sugai et al., 2016).

As a concurrent objective, the GSE community unit will design steps towards integrating inclusive education pedagogy and practice into AUC's existing education courses and programs. However, the proposed diploma programs will make an immediate impact by preparing practicing general educators and site leaders, for immediate implementation and scaling through a training of trainers approach (i.e., TOT or pyramidal). Those trained will be pertinent to local sustainability and scaling efforts (i.e., School Partnership Program and University Partnerships Program).

Educator Diploma in Methods for Differentiated Instruction and Inclusive Education. The diploma program is designed to prepare general and special educators to adapt and deliver effective instruction and intervention to learners with diverse needs in general education classrooms. Taking both a practical and contextualized approach, emphasis will be place on the application of inclusive education pedagogy and creating effective, inclusive classrooms. Coursework will include the study of diverse learners and inclusive education, assessment for instruction, instruction for inclusive schools, managing the inclusive classroom, collaboration for inclusion, and technology to enhance accessibility and achievement.

Professional Diploma in Inclusive School Leadership. The diploma program is designed for administrators and education specialists faced with the challenge of implementing inclusive education at the school level. The program will arm site leaders with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to establish successful inclusive environments for all students, with a focus on effective implementation of evidence-based inclusive practices and the development of systems that support and sustain those practices. The curriculum includes the study of whole school change models of inclusive education, methodologies for differentiating instructional techniques and curriculum outcomes, data systems and data-driven decision making, collaborative programming, and organizational management practices.

Providing Technical Assistance through a University Partnerships Program
To sustain and scale efforts, AUC will partner with local public institutions of higher education to promote inclusive education as a compulsory subject that should be infused through national teacher preparation programs (i.e., long-term training curriculum, structures, and systems). The AUC community unit will work with colleges of education in select public universities to re-design and adapt current curriculum and programming to ensure future educators and administrators have skills, knowledge, and experiences required for successful implementation of inclusive educational practice. AUC/public university partnerships leverage AUC's expertise and experience to increase the capacity and competence of public universities to: 1) prepare/instruct future administrators and educators to provide academic and behavioral support to improve outcomes, accessibility, and participation for *all* students through inclusion across educational levels and 2) initiate/coordinate their own school-partnership programs (i.e.,

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scalability of the AUC School Partnership Program) or other inclusive education outreach programs.

<h1 style="text-align:center">The American University of Cairo</h1>

Background
The Graduate School of Education (GSE) is a primary vehicle through which the American University of Cairo (AUC) manifests its commitment to education in Egypt and the Arab World through offering quality programs that are responsive to contemporary society and regional needs and challenges, reflecting international best practices. Given the urgent, widespread global need for establishing the capacity and infrastructure for effective, inclusive education in Egypt and other Arab countries, AUC is both committed and ready to take a more active role in building and growing inclusive education across the Arab world.

Experience and Expertise
AUC has extensive experience and expertise in the 1) developing quality programs that are based on educational standards, sound theoretical frameworks, reflective learning, contextualized pedagogy and the specific content knowledge necessary for the topics being pursued, 2) establishing partnerships and facilitating collaboration/communication between various learning and business communities, both national and international, and 3) designing and establishing initiatives that assist in improving both the public and private education in Egypt.

Limitations of the Research
This examination of the literature was limited to articles and reports published in English; thus resulting in the exclusion of relevant literature. Also, unpublished local research on inclusive education was not reviewed. Further, it is likely that additional inclusive education efforts and initiatives exist that are not well documented and/or disseminated, which may have resulted in underestimation of the amount of research conducted.

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Appendix A

Numbers of children with disabilities included in schools with SETI's support
Number of schools and Governorates during and after the projects

March 2017

Nu.	Governorates	International Partners	Number of Children at the end of the project	Number of Schools at the end of the project	Number of Children after the project	Number of Schools after the project	Total numbers of Children	Total Numbers of Schools
1	Minya	Save the Children UK 2003-2008	92	6	200	10	292	16
2	Alexandria	Save the Children UK 2003-2008	162	5	350	15	512	20
3	Cairo	Save the Children UK 2003-2008	114	4	60	3	174	7
4	Qaliubeya	Plan Egypt 2010-2014	40	3	30	5	70	8
5	Sohag	Caritas Germany 2009-2014	62	6	36	15	98	21
6	Aswan	----------	----------	------------	20	5	20	5
7	Asyut	----------			18	12	18	12
Total Numbers			470	24	814	65	1184	89

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