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3. EGYPTIAN YOUTH BUILDING A PEACEFUL COMMUNITY

The Selmiyah Movement

INTRODUCTION

Focusing on youth movement in Egypt during the time of unrest and revolts, this chapter is based on my research that explores the potential insights and lessons that can be deduced from the case of *Selmiyah* (peaceful), a grass-roots movement that is aiming to spread the culture of peace through different dimensions and channels. This movement includes over 40 initiatives, whose founders and participants are primarily youth, illustrating collaborative efforts across various civil society organizations (CSOs) in Egypt, where there are a few movements working together on the ground (CIVICUS, 2005). Most of the initiatives within Selmiyah are undertaken within the non-formal sector, while some of them are working in collaboration with educational institutions such as schools or universities. This research offers a description of 15 initiatives within the Selmiyah movement that were selected to demonstrate a comprehensive example of youth contribution to development in Egypt during the period of transition and unrest. Of particular interest is understanding the motives for creating these initiatives, their structure, the framework and methodology they follow, and the organizational and financial sustainability. The research questions the dynamics of creating this movement; why the different civil societies' initiatives chose to join the Selmiyah movement and what are the benefits of being part of its network? I use a peace education model developed by Ian Harris to analyse the comprehensive nature of the initiatives within Selmiyah; the Harris model will be explained later in this chapter. This research offers insights to all CSOs who are interested in the field of peace education, to educators who would like to reflect on how to integrate such concepts within educational institutions, and policy makers who can think of ways to integrate this work into school reforms.

This research adopts a qualitative approach, where 23 in-depth interviews were conducted with founders of initiatives and coordinators of the Selmiyah network. The purpose of using qualitative methods is to understand in depth youth-led initiatives and to gain insight on their motives and target goals. It is of essential importance to this research to document and present the views of the youth, who are involved in these initiatives, about the community, their role and the targets

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they hope to achieve, i.e., hearing their voice. In the field of youth research, there is availability of quantitative research in the form of reports (see Abdelhay, 2005; El-Rouby, 2007; Handoussa, 2010; Population Council, 2011), and while these reports provide valuable data, they lack the quality of in-depth analysis that is needed to complete the picture. This research is an attempt to fill in the missing gaps within the total picture of how youth can contribute to the development of Egyptian society. This research is an attempt to fill the gap within the existing literature, by showing a clear example and successful model of youth contribution to the development of Egyptian society, at a time where many reports view that youth do not participate in civil society and are not heard from policy and decision makers (see Abdelhay, 2005; El-Rouby, 2007; Handoussa, 2010; Population Council, 2011; Mahgoub & Morsi, 2013).

What Is Peace Education?

Peace education is a notion that began in the Western hemisphere and is slowly finding its way towards the Arab region. Peace Education is defined differently in the reviewed literature, yet there are common dimensions or levels mentioned. Peace education has to do with changing the mindset or perception, with gaining the skills needed for peace building, and with the ability to practice these skills through providing channels and alternatives (Danesh, 2006, p. 56). Another important dimension is to provide successful models, as this is a new culture that is being promoted. Peace education is seen by researchers as essential to build a new holistic non-discriminating worldview that can contribute into bettering humanity's approach to life, "peace education is the only route to true civilization and true civilization is both peaceful and peace creating" (Danesh, 2006, p. 57). Based on this vision, the UNICEF considers peace education as an essential component of basic education, and thus is not only necessary in countries where there is conflict but everywhere (Fountain, 1999).

"Youth" a Transition Phase

What is "Youth" Phase? Youth by definition is an intermediate or transition phase between childhood and adulthood, from dependence to independence (UNESCO, n.d.). UNSECO identifies the age group of "youth" to be from 15 to 24, for statistics and research purposes. The African Youth Charter (UNDESA) identifies the youth age group to be from 15 to 35 years (UNDESA, n.d.).

In the 1980s, there was a shift in the "youth" narrative in the US influenced by the new youth development movement. One of the key concepts that contributed to a more positive image of youth by viewing them as an asset is the concept of human capital, a neoliberal approach that dominated literature for some time, producing several policies aiming at maximizing the utilization of youth as a resource in the

global economy (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2011). This approach translated into focusing on education, health, and employment as the key issues related to youth so that they become productive members of the society.

Overview of Egyptian Youth Status

Egyptian youth are facing several challenges on several levels. On the social level, youth suffer from poverty, unemployment, access to education and high dropout rate, and differentiation in the quality of services based on location, where around 60% of young people live in rural areas and the rest in urban or informal urban areas (Population Council, 2011). When it comes to basic education, it is reported that “27% of young people aged 18–29 have not completed basic education” (Handoussa, 2010, p. 4), and access to education does not necessarily mean access to equal quality of education. It is also worth noting that 90% of the unemployed in Egypt are aged less than 30 years (Handoussa, 2010).

On the institution level, there hasn't been consistency in terms of the governing body that addresses youth issues; responsibilities have alternated between a national council and the Ministry of Youth for almost two decades now (Abdelhay, 2005), and currently there is a Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS). In addition, there is not currently a declared national policy for youth and development; the current MoYS website does not state a common vision that would provide a framework for the legislations and policies related to youth.

On the legislative level, there has been contradicting legislations that confuse the definition of youth (in terms of their age group) in Egypt and confuse it partly with children (Abdelhay, 2005). A publicly issued plan of how youth are expected to contribute to societal development remains missing. Abdelhay (2005) concludes that there is a dire need to issue a “youth law” similar to the “child law”, which defines clearly the jurisdiction of all governing bodies and the overlapping of all ministries involved, and facilitates addressing all youth issues from a comprehensive perspective (p. 7). On a participatory level, some reports show that youth in Egypt did not fully participate in public life, and did not actively engage in volunteer activities or other form of civic engagement activities (Handoussa, 2010; Population Council, 2011). This narrative changed slightly after the January 25th revolution, recording a spike in the engagement of youth in all forms of public life (UNV, 2013; British Council & Gerhart Center, 2013).

However, there is a lack of representation of youth in the management of NGOs and especially in decision making positions, which contributes to the small participation levels that are reported (El-Rouby, 2007). According to El-Rouby (2007), the World Bank 2007 report, “Mapping Organizations Working with and for Youth in Egypt”, defines what is considered a youth organization or initiative; this definition is adopted in this research. Youth organization or initiative is described as matching the following four criteria:

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(1) Number of youth in the board exceeds 60%; (2) The programs/services of the organization are directed mainly to youth and children; (3) Number of employees under 35 exceeds 70%; and (4) The organization depends on youth volunteers in planning and implementing its activities. (El-Rouby, 2007, pp. 8–9)

It is important at this stage to further understand the notion of civil society and CSOs and the role they play in youth related issues, especially that civil society organizations are the main vehicle for social and political participation for youth.

ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN PEACEBUILDING

Definition of Civil Society and Its Role in Peacebuilding

Civil society is a complex term that has several definitions that try to define its form, whether it is a subsystem in society or a crosscutting system (Barnes, 2005; Rucht, 2014), its role in society, and the values that govern it. Definitions explore as well which organizations are within civil society framework; some say that civil society includes all the entities and organizations and communities that are not state governed, that civil society comprises of all the non-governmental and not-for profit organizations (Rucht, 2014). Other scholars see that it is difficult to set the boundaries between civil society and the state due to the complex relations and dynamics of today's world (Kopecký & Mudde, 2010).

Another way to define civil society is through its function within society, some see that its function is “cultivating civic values and practices” (Barnes, 2005, p. 8), others see that it has a political role in providing the space for citizens to engage in public life and voice their interests through certain channels of communication with the state. Another perspective is based on the wider view of society and the sub-systems that operate within it, where civil society with the social dimension it represents can balance the power of the capitalist market-based economies and the authoritarian states (Rucht, 2014). Within this framework, the idea of “civil” raises questions, where scholars have debated the part that civility plays in this scope, and what to do with uncivil societies or groups (Rucht, 2014). Here Rucht invites scholars to adopt a paradigm shift, “a shift from the concept of civil society (defined as a distinct space or sub-system) to practices of civility in society as a whole” (Rucht, 2014, p. 18).

With the notion of “practices of civility”, civil society organizations (CSOs) can play a role during conflict times and can contribute to the peacebuilding process. Choosing to handle any conflict, whether internal or external, in a peaceful or violent way is partially the responsibility of civil society, and sometimes is led by civil society groups. Its role is essentially related to structural prevention, which is working within the community to eradicate all the causes of structural violence, such as unequal distribution of resources, human rights issues, discrimination, and prejudice. The remaining stages of peace building include escalation of violence where the CSOs' role is to highlight this (early warning) and lobby for support to

prevent it. During the conflict where the role is related to negotiations and providing safe spaces for conflicting parties; and towards the end of conflict, the role becomes more about consolidating peace efforts and putting measures to prevent reoccurrence of war or violence.

While CSOs have a viable role in peacebuilding, it is important to remember that they cannot achieve peace on their own since there are other players, like governments, politicians, and military leaders, who need to be on board for the process to reach positive outcomes. CSOs need to be able to persuade these parties to come to the table and negotiate, and need to ensure people support all the time to maintain power balance. From here comes the importance of forming partnerships and networks on a local, regional, and global level (Serbin, 2005, p. 52). Serbin (2005) is inviting structured partnerships that are planned and done strategically rather than ad-hoc partnerships or collaborations that might not be as effective.

Overview of Civil Society in Egypt

In 2011, it was indicated in the CSO sustainability index that there are over 45,000 CSOs registered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) (USAID, 2011), a Ministry that is in charge of managing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Egypt and ensuring that they abide by the governing law number 84 of 2002 (Khallaf, 2010). Some research shows that the organizational capacity of NGOs in Egypt is not high. There are variations between the urban and rural capacities, and between NGOs in Cairo and Upper Egypt with regards to the caliber of who can handle operations and management capacities. Most of the time, NGOs cannot maintain full-time employees due to irregularity and fluctuation in funds.

Regarding financial capabilities, most CSOs receive funding from International non-governmental organizations (INGOs), international agencies, local and international corporations and community members. The funds are inconsistent and short-term which leads to many challenges and obstacles. Overall, the Law 84 of 2002 prohibits any organization from receiving any money from foreign organizations without prior approval from the MoSS (USAID, 2011), however the process of approval is a very long and can take years, which poses a threat on the financial resources of some CSOs.

With regards to creating relations and bonds among CSOs, there were several federations, councils, and unions formed, although their effectiveness is under question, and cross-sectorial cooperation is not high. Moreover, the cooperation between CSOs and the business sector is increasing due to the rise of the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Egypt (CIVICUS, 2005).

When it comes to public image, many small and medium size CSOs do not have the capability or resources to manage media campaigns or any other marketing campaigns, while the big local CSOs have been able to sustain a rather good image in Egypt (USAID, 2011). Towards the end of 2011, the government launched an aggressive campaign against NGOs in general with accusations of foreign agendas

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and treason, an act that confused the Egyptian community about the whole sector and raised many questions on the corruption level within civil society (USAID, 2011).

OVERVIEW OF PEACE EDUCATION

Definition of Peace Education

Peace education has several definitions. One category of definitions stipulates that there are different layers or levels within peace education. These include understanding the roots of the conflict, understanding the alternatives to conflict and learning new skills of conflict resolution and dialogue, and learning more about human rights, international, and local laws and environment friendly approaches to promote a more peaceful approach to life in general (Danesh, 2006; Fountain, 1999). Another categorization of peace education is related to how peace is perceived whether it is inner peace, which is mainly individual and is more of a state of mind, or outer peace, which is more of practices and attitudes that affect the society, culture, and the larger community (Harris, 2007).

Peace education mainly combines knowledge that is constructed with the participation of the students, skills that are needed to progress through life without violence, and attitudes that are a natural product of the interactive and contextualized process that students undergo. This requires a pedagogical shift from teacher-centered approaches to student-centered approaches, which would have great impact on how curricula are developed and practices within the classroom (Ashton, 2007; Fountain, 1999).

UNICEF considers peace education as an essential component of basic education, and thus is not only necessary in countries undergoing armed conflicts or social emergencies but is needed everywhere. It also recommends that peace education is integrated within the education system rather than becoming a separate subject. The main reason is the belief that instilling peace values within a given society is a long-term process, and it requires the whole community to be involved (Fountain, 1999). To explore this idea further, some scholars and international agencies created models of peace education introducing the framework that could be the foundation of a curriculum. Among these models is Ian Harris Model which is used to form the theoretical framework employed in the analysis of this case study of *Selmiyah movement*.

Ian Harris Model of Peace Education

Several scholars and international agencies created models of peace education based on the ideas mentioned above. Ian Harris (2007) developed a model that includes five key components or pillars within peace education: international education, human rights education, development education, environmental education, and conflict resolution education (Harris, 2007). More details about each component

will be demonstrated in the below table. The reason behind choosing this model is the level of detail Harris reached in clarifying the components and creating links between them. The main components of peace education in the Harris model are further explained in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Ian Harris' peace education model

<i>Pillar</i>	<i>Core concepts/skills</i>	<i>Why is it important?</i>
International Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding international and state laws. 2. Understanding the positive and negative dimensions of globalization and how it impacts nation states. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how wars start over territory divisions and imaginary man-made borders. • Construct a new narrative of the "other". • Realizing that globalization is a key factor of the spread of Peace education; however it is also playing a major role in increasing religious extremism, violence and discrimination.
Human Rights Education	Understanding commonalities and differences among people, engaging in dialogue, sharing human experiences and creating new solutions for co-existence.	Reduce all ethnic, religious, political, ideological and gender-based forms of discrimination.
Development Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding the components of social injustice and creating new development strategies to eliminate these components. 2. Focusing mainly on positive peace,¹ the root causes of its absence and how it can be achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To eliminate all forms of social injustice, through active citizenry and participation within the community. • To include the people suffering from social injustice in the planning and implementation process, to avoid issues of social marginalization and monopoly of resources by the "elites".
Environmental Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding the issues facing the environment. 2. Developing personal conviction towards saving the environment. 	To create a culture of environmental and ecological awareness.
Conflict Resolution Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building needed skills to promote peaceful resolutions to conflict. 	To provide peaceful effective alternatives for students, teachers and the community in general to the normal violent techniques used to resolve conflicts.

From the above table, it is clear that Harris model includes several aspects, some that might not even be categorized within peace education, such as environmental education. However, this model offers a comprehensive approach towards all issues related to countering structural and cultural violence, thus helps educators plan for peace education from an integrated and multi-disciplinary perspective. It is also important to note that this model integrates several levels of education (awareness, attitude, skills and actions), which makes it more of a holistic approach in the teaching and learning of peace for diverse students.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This research is exploring the potential benefits and challenges to developing a peace education model that is suitable to Egyptian context in an informal set-up. It uses the case study design, to examine a specific movement in Egypt called “Selmiyah” that is working towards spreading the culture of peace. Case studies have several definitions; for the sake of this research the definition proposed by John Gerring (2004) is used where a case study is defined as,

An intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units. A unit connotes a spatially bounded phenomenon— e.g., a nation-state, revolution, political party, election, or person observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time (Although the temporal boundaries of a unit are not always explicit, they are at least implicit). (Gerring, 2004, p. 342)

In its essence, this case study is a critical-constructivist piece, where I designed the research tools and constantly modified and revisited throughout the research, while maintaining focus on social change and the impact of the work being done on society. This approach is, thus appropriate to the topic and nature of the research, having done the field work with people who are categorized as social activists and who are striving towards social transformation (Carspecken, 1996).

Case Selection

This research focuses on a network and movement in Egypt called “Selmiyah” as a case or single unit as per above definition. “Selmiyah” as a movement includes over 40 initiatives, a network of partner civil society organizations, and more than one-thousand individuals. To achieve a deep understanding of the initiatives undertaken by this movement, 15 initiatives were selected for examination in this study, as further explained below. Participants included the co-founders of the Selmiyah movement and active members who were/are involved in the coordination of the movement since its launch, but also who are engaged in undertaking the selected initiatives. The sample included 23 participants, 43% of whom were women and the average age was 32, ranging between 21 to 50 years of age.²

Selmiyah was officially launched in June 2012; many of the initiatives that joined had started long before the movement launch. Furthermore, the initiatives involved in the network are diverse in terms of scope, structure, age groups, etc. Therefore, the selection criteria of the initiatives were designed to maintain a balance between: (a) old and new initiatives in terms of the time of launching their activities and when they joined the movement; (b) different structures that exist within the movement's initiatives; (c) different age group included in these initiatives; and (d) the fields of work or focus areas of the initiatives and projects.

The last criterion was added during the course of the research, as I tried to categorize initiatives similar to the components of the Harris model to make the process of the analysis easier. The final sample of peace education initiatives is shown in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Summary of peace education initiatives included in the study

<i>Name of group/initiative</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Year of establishment</i>	<i>Registration date in selmiyah</i>	<i>Categorization according to Ian Harris model</i>
Initiative A	Informal Group	2002	Sep-13	Art for Social change
Initiative B	Company	2004	Sep-13	Conflict Resolution Education/Human Rights Education
Initiative C	NGO	2007	Sep-13	Development Education
Initiative D	NGO	2008	Sep-13	Conflict Resolution Education
Initiative E	Company	2009	Sep-13	IT integration
Initiative F	NGO	2011	Dec-13	Cultural Exchange
Initiative G	Company	2012	Sep-13	Development Education/ Human Rights Education
Initiative H	Informal Group	2012	Sep-13	Development Education/ Human Rights Education
Initiative I	NGO	2005	May-14	Art for Social change
Initiative J	Informal Group	2011	NA	Environmental Education
Initiative K	Company	2009	Sep-13	Development Education/ Art for Social Change
Initiative L	NGO	2007	Sep-13	Development Education
Initiative M	Company	2007	Sep-13	Art for Social change
Initiative N	NGO	2005	Sep-13	Development Education
Initiative O	Informal Group	2011	Sep-13	Development Education/ Human Rights Education

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Data Collection

For this study, data was collected in the forms of semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation and documents' review. Interviews were carried out with one founding member of each selected initiative, co-founders of "Selmiyah" movement, and the coordinators of the movement. Two interview protocols were developed for this study. The first is the version for the initiative founders, and the second for the founders and coordinators of the movement. The interview with the initiative members asked about the experience of the initiative in developing their idea and structuring their interventions. The interview protocol for the movement co-founders and coordination team asked about the experience of creating the movement, sustaining it, and developing it further.

In addition, *Participant Observation* was conducted to gain additional insight into the implementation process in the organization and to see some workshops or trainings implemented by the selected initiatives. Main points of focus were the relationship between team members as facilitators during preparation and facilitation, their relationship with the participants throughout the workshops and camps, and the methods of delivering the content. Moreover, available documents that describe the activities, purposes, targets, and/or curriculum of the selected initiatives were gathered and reviewed. It is important to note that I am a part of the Selmiyah network, and have volunteered to assist in coordination and maintaining coherence within the network. This made accessibility to many of the participants easier, even though I personally did not know almost 35% of the sample involved in the study. However, I was able to access them through contacts within the network. Being in the same network had an impact on the trust factor, and thus participants may have been willing to share more insights and reflections during interviews. Some of ideas that were suggested by participants in the interviews were used to enhance the coordination of the network, and some processes are being developed currently based on the feedback the participants shared.

Data Analysis and Validation

The typological technique for analysis and coding was used, which means that the researcher was "dividing everything observed into groups or categories on the basis of some canon for disaggregating the whole phenomenon under study" (Hatch, 2002, p. 152). Credibility for this study was achieved using the validation strategies of triangulation. The data was triangulated with the various forms of data that were collected in this study; i.e., interviews, observations, documents, and field notes.

FINDINGS

The richness of data collected and the sample chosen to include different and common characteristics (age group, interests, etc.) reveal different aspects of the

Selmiyah movement (and its network of initiatives). Focusing on the purpose stated earlier for this case study, I focus my discussion of the research findings on the following themes:

- Motivation of youth in developing initiatives within the field of Peace Education and its context.
- Structure of initiatives and projects.
- Methodology of Developing Frameworks.
- Harris Model vs. Selmiyah Model.
- The Movement Dynamics.

MOTIVATION AND CONTEXT

The trigger to start the examined initiatives differed. For some the trigger was a phenomenon in society that indicated intolerance and prejudice. Incidents were related to religious discrimination and led to physical and verbal violence within the community. Founders of these initiatives were able to identify that these were indicators of societal issues that needed to be addressed. Some initiatives were part of an already existing network or project, so the teams did not develop the idea but they made it more relevant to the emerging needs, changing context or developed their own approach. For instance, a participant states, “when there are events, when there is a project that we can offer, for example during the constitution voting period, we did a seminar about the constitution, without any political orientation towards a certain party” Many initiatives share the feature of developing their ideas across time, based on the experiences they gain from working on the ground, and on their constant readings and observations.

The January 25th revolution had impact on the founders and their initiatives. For some participants, it was an eye-opener on the reactions of people towards the old regime; for others it was more eye-opening on the youth movement. Some initiatives had to slow down their activities because they could not cope with the fast changes and the dynamics that were occurring during the first period of the revolution. For some, these same dynamics were the force that gave birth to the idea and pushed the people to work, such as initiative H. The participants also shared some core differences between the times before and after the revolution related to freedoms, mobility, awareness of society, and position towards civil society. Below is a summary of the points they raised.

Before the Revolution

People did not want to talk or to discover their differences, so it was very hard getting people to engage in dialogue or finding people who request that.

People did not see the need to work on coexistence and conflict resolution.

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“Peace” had a political connotation and it meant normalization with Israel, now people understand that it can be societal peace.

Terms like non-violence and alternatives to violence did not have any meaning or relevance to reality.

The access to public spaces and government-owned spaces was limited. People were not used to seeing street performances and public spaces weren’t open for use, either by artists or anyone else.

After the Revolution

People saw the need for dialogue in the community and the awareness was much higher, so requests increased for dialogue, consensus building, dealing with difference, and conflict resolution. After the 30th of June events in 2013, people don’t want to engage in dialogue again especially after the political polarization that occurred.

As people experienced both violence and non-violence, the terms became familiar.

The revolution deepened the idea of public ownership, so people started using the public spaces, especially activists and artists.

The revolution events brought together groups who were working on the ground, which led to the growth of networks and connections among them. This had huge impact on the collaboration and outreach levels among initiatives. Right after the revolution, the Egyptian society was supportive of civil society and there were a lot of donations and volunteers.

After the 30th of June events in 2013, there was a lot of attack on NGOs, accusations of foreign funding and treason, and this impacted the way the community looks at civil society in general and youth groups specifically.

STRUCTURE OF INITIATIVES

Goals and Framework

During the interviews, each participant shared the goals of their initiative; these goals were grouped and categorized to include: (a) goals related to achieving peace on an individual level, (b) goals related to achieving peace on a community level, and (c) goals related to achieving peace on a societal level. On an individual level, some initiatives aimed at creating spaces for communication and deep understanding of oneself and the others. They wanted people who engaged in their activities to know what peaceful coexistence is, that there is this option, and to have the skills and tools to practice it.

On a community level, there were goals related to spreading the culture of dialogue within youth groups and among them. Some projects strived to create enabling spaces for people to discover themselves and meet one another, through that they achieve forgiveness, creativity, and peace. Within that goal, providing models of non-violent conflict resolution, such as mediation is important. Some aimed at enabling the marginalized communities in solving their own problems, helping them to build upon the human resources who exist in the area to make their lives better, and thus increasing their participation in decision-making. One initiative saw that the main goal was to have real coordination and collaboration among people who are working on the ground, to build on what has been done already, and benefit from other people's experience in this field or in this location.

On a societal level, part of the goals of some projects was focused on creating an alternative community for people who want to live according to peaceful values, through building partnerships between different communities and creating spaces for working together towards a common goal. And through raising awareness, for example on the importance of art for social change, and how arts can contribute to the community's prospering; and providing art services that speak to the people which help in bringing art to the street.

For some initiatives, they developed these goals after a few years of working on the ground; assessing actual needs based on first-hand experience in the field, and choosing which area they will focus on. Others knew their area of focus from the beginning and they worked on refining their articulation of it throughout the years.

Legal and Organizational Structure

Regarding the legal status, the Selmiyah initiatives choose different levels of legalization, depending on their conditions and scope of their work (see [Table 3](#)). Some choose to be Limited Liability Companies, others choose to register as NGOs, and others choose to be unregistered. This choice has an impact on the financial and organizational sustainability. Some initiatives depend on team contributions whether monetary or voluntary, while others depend on funds, services, income generating activities, and strategic partnerships with donors or INGOs. In the meantime, for activities and services targeted students, these specific initiatives depend on membership fees. On the other hand, some initiatives rely on donations from the local community and connections. These initiatives needed to build trust with their donors through their work. A participant explains, "we were able to build trust and good reputation ...our reputation is good, people know we do real work on the ground, even if it is on small scale, and this is what I tried to really focus on."

The initiatives also varied in their organizational structures. Unregistered initiatives depend mainly on volunteers while companies have part-time staff, a few full-time staff, and consultants who are hired for certain tasks along with volunteers and interns. Some NGOs have trainers and animators who only conduct workshops and are not considered staff. One NGO has a flat management system with no hierarchy

where decision-making process is done collectively, and another includes their young volunteers in all phases of planning and execution. A summary of the legal and financial resources for all initiatives within this case study is shown in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. Summary of legal status and financial model of initiatives within study

<i>Name of group</i>	<i>Year of establishing</i>	<i>Legal status</i>	<i>Financial model</i>
Initiative A	2002	Initiative	Minimum Costs
Initiative H	2012	Initiative	No need for money, self-funded
Initiative J	2011	Initiative	No need for money, self-funded
Initiative O	2011	Initiative	No need for money, self-funded
Initiative C	2007	NGO	Donations from community members
Initiative D	2008	NGO	Providing Services and local Partnerships – Facing difficulty in receiving any foreign funds
Initiative F	2011	NGO	Fund by local NGO for part of the project
Initiative I	2005	NGO	Funds, donations and provide paid services
Initiative L	2007	NGO	Member fees
Initiative N	2005	NGO	Donations from community members
Initiative B	2004	Company	Service-based model, no funds accepted
Initiative E	2009	Company	Based on human capital: mostly all work is done by volunteers
Initiative G	2012	Company	Key partners with some international NGOs that have offices in Egypt
Initiative K	2009	Company	Service-based model
Initiative M	2007	Company	Mostly self-funded – Received one grant through a local NGO

METHODOLOGY OF DEVELOPING FRAMEWORKS

Many of the initiatives have developed documents that explain the principles, vision and mission that guides their work and the different activities or steps they follow. Most of them have developed these documents across time based on research, experiences on the ground, and readings. Some initiatives focused on producing materials (i.e., handbooks, books, documentaries, and videos) for a wider dissemination of their work and for their interest in encouraging people to reapply their model.

Values and principles are key terms that are used in the documents of all the initiatives. Based on these values and principles the framework is built and this forms the foundation for the activities and practices within the workshops. It also defines how the team members themselves would interact with one another. For example,

one of the initiatives, which focused on dialogue, published a handbook for anyone who is interested to learn more about the topic or to organize dialogue workshops. As stated in its introduction: “In this book, you can read about the principles for dialogue and get ideas for planning. You can also get inspiration for exercises that create dialogue. And you gain understanding of the role of the workshop leader and facilitator.” The handbook addresses in the beginning the values or principles of dialogue (trust, openness, honesty, and equality) and defines them. A participant during the interview explained the process of creating this handbook:

The process by which this handbook was written is completely dialogical. We could have done it in three months ... it took above a year because we had to make sure that it was a dialogical process that integrates everyone and that we all kind of reach some level of consensus on everything that was written ... I am super proud of how this handbook was written, because it was more about the process rather than the content.

The activities included in the handbook are interactive; they are inviting participants to think critically, to revisit their ideals and habits, and to reflect on their experiences.

Experience through Practice

It was a common feedback among the interviewed participants that many of their work and their concepts developed over time and with practice, whether working in training and workshops, community organizing and participation, arts for social change, activities with children, environmental mobilization, and remote or marginalized areas. This experiential approach to developing the curricula promotes further flexibility and ability to adapt to the context and the audience, and this addresses a core concept in curricula development, that Dewey talks about when he says, “the essence of education is the continual reforming and reshaping of activities, and this requires plasticity – the ability to reach new and more complex adjustments” (Dewey, 1899, pp. 32–33).

For one initiative that works mainly on many aspects of peace education, there was a document that explains the theoretical framework and methodology that their curriculum is based upon, which are mainly:

- The relevance of the content to the lives of the participants and their experiences;
- Activities are diverse, interactive and strongly based on participants’ experience, whether simulated on site or borrowed from real life events;
- The knowledge is built—rather than transmitted—through the awareness, sharing, and evaluation of the participants’ experiences and their exposure to new or different ones;
- Emphasis is put on the process of learning together and through each other in a climate of openness and respect;
- Individual differences in learning, experiences, opinions and values are acknowledged and respected.

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Research-Based Approach

Another common feedback among groups was the factor of research, readings, and trainings that had an impact on developing their framework and curricula. For some initiatives, members joined graduate studies related to the field, for others they were looking for available training related to their field. One initiative had several university professors involved in their work and mentoring the team on different aspects. This passion for learning and developing ideas shows a commitment to the value of openness, which is one of the underlying values of peace. Another dimension that was mentioned by some participants was reflections, that there were organized and periodic sessions for reflection. This develops the cognitive skills of the members and also helps them articulate the experiences and lessons learnt. The combination between research and experiences on the ground and reflections is powerful, and this is why the documents that have been developed so far are very rich and comprehensive.

HARRIS MODEL VS SELMIYAH MODEL

When it comes to compatibility between the Ian Harris model and the initiatives within Selmiyah, some interesting points arise. First, regarding International Education and Human Rights Education, there are not any initiatives within Selmiyah working mainly on these components. However, several initiatives do address these topics within their work. One participant saw that diversity as a concept is missing from Harris' model and she saw it as a core concept with regards to viewing the "other". She explains: "I feel what is really missing is diversity which is not just international education so I know who is outside, I need to first understand who is inside... we [the group who works on this initiative] have a concept called social dynamics which most probably we invented, inside the community how the different groups deal with each other and why ... dealing with diversity within society and the dynamics of diversity within society."

There are many initiatives within Selmiyah that are operating within the pillar of Development Education; in fact, they are the majority of the initiatives. The scope of these initiatives varies, as shown before, from raising awareness to actual interventions. Initiatives combine addressing structural violence and encouraging people to participate in resolving their own problems. Most of the initiatives within Selmiyah did not have an environmental approach to their work, except for one initiative (initiative J). Even for this initiative, their work was more related to campaigning and mobilizing people to support environmental issues. It included a dimension of raising the awareness of people about the importance of the environmental issues and their direct impact on their daily lives.

Many of the initiatives within Selmiyah are working within conflict resolution pillar. Many participants shared that they saw this as a crucial area to work in, because Egyptian society needs to see alternatives to violent resolution of issues, as

one of the participants explains, it is important for citizens “to see how to resolve conflicts through mediation instead of resolving it through fighting or vengeance or through courts that decide that you are right and you are wrong, [and] how mediation will help us reconcile instead of the courts that will make us fight.” Here the idea is not just finding a solution, it is in reaching a state of satisfaction from both sides, otherwise the conflict will continually resurface, and one day it might explode into extreme violent acts.

WHY DID INITIATIVES CHOOSE TO BELONG TO SELMIYA MOVEMENT?

What are the reasons behind joining the Selmiyah network and what are the added and contributing values by joining this movement? The answers of these questions are discussed in this section based on the interviewees’ perspectives, supplemented by the perception of the co-founders and coordinators of the movement.

When asked why they decided to join the Selmiyah network, participants who lead the examined initiatives expressed the following reasons:

- Finding common values between Selmiyah and the initiative, such as promoting culture of peace, coexistence and accepting diversity;
- Supporting the idea of collaboration and believing in it strongly;
- Being trustful of the community due to the group of people within Selmiyah community;
- Sharing the goal of creating a network but didn’t know how to do it;
- Working with some partners within Selmiyah was comfortable, thus decided to join;
- Seeing the added-value that the initiative can bring to Selmiyah and that Selmiyah can bring to the initiative;
- Wanting to be part of this network because it includes many initiatives and projects that are rich in terms of experience and content.

Mutual Added Value

All interviewed participants were asked to identify the added value that they think they bring to the network and that they gain from Selmiyah. In response, the interviewees perceived their contribution in relation to the goals and activities of their respective initiative, such as dialogue, creating a values-oriented culture, creating opportunities for practicing on the ground with different communities, etc.

On the other hand, the added value of Selmiyah to the joined initiatives was highly recognized, as it created a channel through which people can collaborate to overcome some of the challenges they face during implementation of activities, it also created a support system, especially to the new initiatives who might get frustrated at the beginning of their road and might give up. Another key added value is that each of these initiatives on its own doesn’t have enough resources to work on some of the key

challenges, like raising awareness of the idea of conflict management and coexistence, or changing the image of the development field to attract new talents or donors, or even challenging the current perceptions of the term “peace education” in the Middle East and North Africa region. Therefore, being together with a readiness to collaborate and partner, and a commitment to support each other is a substantial asset that might help each initiative maintaining its sustainability and further develop and expand their scope.

CONCLUSION

Selmiyah network offers a unique model of association between CSOs in Egypt, this collaboration and partnership model has generated common goals for peace education on the ground, which would motivate other CSOs to develop a similar joint structure. Such bonds within civil society are highly needed to improve (a) coordination among different initiatives, (b) minimize redundancy, (c) maximize the benefit of resources, and (d) undertake activities and produce materials that would have a better impact and sustainability. The findings of this study revealed that the Selmiyah movement with its joint network of different initiatives for peace building is a needed bottom-up movement of collaborative efforts towards promoting a culture of peace among Egyptians. Despite challenges confronted, Selmiyah has a pool of resources and the potential for expanding its partnerships and cooperation between Selmiyah and other similar local and global movements.

The initiatives within Selmiyah offer several lessons from the structure of their framework to the methodology of practice. All the examined initiatives adopt a participatory experiential approach, whether working with children, youth, adults, and communities or working within a learning framework, community organizing framework, or arts for social change framework. Developing these frameworks and their related curricula depends on well-thought and clearly articulated values, practice and experience as well as on extensive research. The idea of involving the target groups in the initiatives of peace building in order to engage them in the learning process from its planning to implementation is particularly in line with Freire’s ideology of education for liberation. In his words,

education as the practice of freedom—as opposed to education as the practice of domination—denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world. Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world. In these relations consciousness and world are simultaneous: consciousness neither precedes the world nor follows it. (Freire, 1971, p. 81)

An interesting finding of this study is the unintentional organic way in which Selmiyah movement was created and the fact that all the initiatives within the movement address different aspects of peace education in society, these aspects integrate and form a comprehensive model comparable with the model designed by Ian Harris.³ The added value of Selmiyah network was found to be offering the needed

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collaboration and supportive system that would contribute to the dissemination and sustainability of the initiatives and projects within the network.

In the post-revolution Egypt, it became obvious that there is a need within Egyptian society for the frameworks, values, and materials that are being introduced and produced by the Selmiyah initiatives for promoting peace education. On the same note, even though there is exclusion and marginalization of certain sects of Egyptian society such as youth (Population Council, 2011), this did not stop these young people from engaging actively in their community, and developing ideas that are desperately needed within the society. The Selmiyah movement offers demonstrated examples of initiatives for peace education that encourage marginalized groups to engage back in society and to adopt a constructive approach, through a mindset shift of how they are perceived and what they can contribute to the development of their society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Dr. Jennifer Skaggs, Assistant Professor at The American University in Cairo for her supervision of my MA thesis where the initial research of this chapter was conducted.

NOTES

- ¹ Johan Galtung, a Norwegian peace researcher who started the intellectual work done in this field in the 1960s, defines positive peace as: "a condition where non-violence, ecological sustainability and social justice remove the causes of violence. Positive peace requires both the adoption of a set of beliefs by individuals and the presence of social institutions that provide for an equitable distribution of resources and peaceful resolution of conflicts" (Harris, 2007, p. 12).
- ² The database of the Selmiyah network was used as reference and the official registrations were shared with the researcher by the coordinator, along with the database updates until end of November 2014.
- ³ Ian Harris explains the key components that should be included in a peace education model while Selmiyah Model offers a demonstrated example of a youth-led movement to form a network of CSOs' initiatives for peace education.

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