

The Loss of Egypt's Children

By Cindy Ragab

Introduction

Under the fierce rays of the desert sun, in the heat of the summer, young children are forced to remove pests from cotton crops for eleven hours per day, search for recyclable goods among animals and the pungent stench of city dumps, and are sold to elderly male tourists through temporary marriages by their parents. This is the hideous reality for millions of child laborers in Egypt. Child labor is a manifestation of the pains of extreme poverty on the world's most vulnerable population. Childhood is lost. Children are forced to take on responsibilities that in normal circumstances push adults to the brink. The accumulation of tasks from school, home, work and the community systematically chip away at these children's abilities to be productive citizens in the future. The negative repercussions that result from child labor affect both the children, on an individual level, and the global economy, on a macroeconomic scale. The vicious cycle created by child labor is real and must be attacked in a strategic manner that takes into account all of the factors that lead to the practice.

Child Labor Defined

The Worst Form of Child Labour Convention 182 of 1999 and the increase in inter-agency cooperation seen in Understanding Children's Work of 2000 have led to the creation of a standard definition of child labor. According to these conventions, child labor is a subset of children's work that is injurious to children. Hazardous work, a category of child labor, includes all labor that exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse. Such abuse may be the result of work with dangerous equipment, hazardous substances and temperatures, or the manual handling or transport of heavy loads. The worst forms of child labor include all forms of forced labor, labor that exposes children to illicit activities, and that which jeopardizes their lives, health, or morals.

Child labor is also defined by age, where all children below the age of 11 involved in economic activity are considered laborers. Children between the ages of 12 and 14 may only be involved in light work and children between the ages of 15 and 17 may not participate in hazardous work or other worst forms of child labor.

The Work

Children work in every sector of the Egyptian economy. And everywhere, they face grave dangers. The most pervasive forms of child labor in Egypt are agricultural, industrial, domestic and street labor.

The most common job for child agricultural laborers in Egypt remains the removal of worms that threaten cotton harvests. Children well below the legal minimum age for child labor work during their summer vacations to remove worm eggs from leaves and pieces of infected vegetation.

Over their eleven hour work day, children regularly get only one hour off and are lucky to get any water breaks or time in the shade, resulting in severe dehydration, malnutrition and exhaustion. Supervisors abuse their powers further by beating children for slow or sloppy work, in addition to sending children back into the fields only hours after toxic pesticides are sprayed.

Children working on the street are oftentimes there to support their parents in the sale of fruits and vegetables in illegal sidewalk markets. Others pedal newspapers, toys, and trinkets in addition to begging. In order to increase sales, the children are made to appear disabled, and are forced to weave through moving traffic, setting them up for abuse and injury in Egypt's unruly streets where hit and run accidents are very common.

Young girls are often sent into the homes of the country's elite families as domestic servants. Most commonly originating from rural areas or the daughters of doormen and maids, the girls are sent away in order to alleviate their families of the cost of their education, food and clothing. The girls' employers send their income to their families, leaving the girls dependent upon their employer and vulnerable to beatings, sexual exploitation, and the loss of education and family protection. The psychological effects of this service cannot be underestimated.

Physically intensive industries such as leather tanning, brick making, metal work, construction, and mining also pose great health risks for children. Exposure to harsh chemicals is common. The use of heavy machinery and tools leads to injuries to children who have limited access to health care. Work related injuries suffocate their economic chances in the future through the costs of treatment and lost income. Finally, their psychological wounds are left untreated, exacerbating the instability in the children's lives and eroding social cohesion.

Bans on the labor of children below the age of 14 have led to their increased employment in illegal sectors of the economy. Consequently, children work in prostitution rings, drug trafficking, and black market sales, exposing them to exploitation that cannot be overseen by government. Children who work illegally are also divorced from the protections of the minimum wage and unionization.

Children who are forced into labor due to family conditions of scarcity maintain little independence. Although they believe they can support themselves independently of their family, the children must beg for food and seek shelter in unsafe and unsanitary locations in order to escape arrest and assault. Street children are subject to abuse from fellow street children, civilians and police alike, and are regularly sexually, physically, and emotionally abused.

Even with all the hard work they are forced to do, most child laborers in Egypt attend school because Egyptian schools have several shifts, making it possible for children to work during the day. However, they cannot pay attention in class and study at home due to their limited time and exhaustion from long work days, making them more vulnerable to grade repetition than their peers.

Society & Development

Child labor drastically reduces the quality of the state's human capital through its detriment to education and the physical and mental health of children. An impaired work force produces sluggish

economic development. Unemployment is exacerbated both in the present and the future through increased competition for limited employment opportunities in the short-term and declines in skill attainment in future employees. Child labor also plays a significant role in the underestimation of the gross domestic product of developing economies through increased illegal economic activity. This leads to a decreased ability for the government to take out loans and collect taxes, limiting social safety nets and subsidies that protect the poor. Child labor also complicates international trade relationships, as the movement to cut trade with nations where child labor is practiced and to the goods they produce continues to grow in the developed world. The long-term ramifications of the extreme poverty that results include: higher crime rates; drug use; child labor; malnutrition; work related injuries and decreased education and healthcare spending.

Causes

Child labor is the partly result of structural inequalities in the state. In Egypt, increased unemployment rates and a minimum wage, which has not increased since 1981, are to blame for the rapid increase in impoverished families. Parents who can afford to support their children rarely send them to work, particularly in dangerous vocations.

Egypt's failed educational system also contributes to child labor, as school not perceived as a worthy alternative to labor. The expenses of education, which include uniforms, books, fees, food, and tutoring, oftentimes make schooling prohibitive. Attempting to juggling school and work leads to poor education and shorter work hours, which in turn lead to decreased learning on the job in apprenticeship positions. This combination leaves children with neither a promising future through academia nor strong technical skills.

Overpopulation, a consequence of poor social safety nets and inadequate wage rates, is also a leading cause of child labor. Families have more children to help them financially through child labor and to support elderly parents in the future. High child mortality rates encourage families to have more children while inadequate healthcare spending limits access to birth control.

Finally, societal acceptance has also led to an increase of child labor. Children today work in the most elite institutions due to the novel acceptance of child labor. High society has institutionalized child labor for its convenience. Children are considered superior employees, as they are cheap and easy to control. Employers rationalize their activities by claiming that these children would work anyway and they are simply providing a clean, safe and supportive environment. Changes in the norms accepted by parents have led to the employment of children whose parents are unemployed and those who take their children's earnings for their own consumption of drugs, alcohol, and extramarital affairs.

Governmental Response

Attempts to rid Egypt of child labor and to conform to the Convention on the Rights of the Child—ratified by Egypt in 1990—led to the passing of the Child Law in 1996. The law dictates that all employment of children below the age of 14 is illegal with the exception of occupational training,

which can start at the age of 12. All children below the age of 17 are prohibited from employment in hazardous occupations.

The regulation of child labor starting from the age of 14 includes many rules that are intended to deliver services to impoverished children. Employers are required to pay for a yearly physical examination and to provide their child workers with 200 grams of milk per day of work. Children are only allowed to work between the hours of 8 am and 7 pm, cannot work for more than four consecutive hours, and must receive at least one hour long break. A total of six hours of work per day cannot be exceeded and children cannot work overtime or on official holidays or weekends.

However, three exceptions in the Child Law, coupled with a lack of government enforcement, have made the law's positive effects minimal: domestic work (one of the worst forms of labor); work in family businesses; and summer jobs remain legal.

A commitment to enforce these laws and the revocation of laws that can have children arrested for being "vulnerable to delinquency" is necessary if the government is to be sincere in its efforts to protect children.

Recommendations

Child labor will be difficult to end in Egypt. But there are some steps that the government can take in an attempt to do so. Poverty, the main cause of child labor, should be fought by increasing of the minimum wage for adults, and by requiring that employers hire children only when no adult applicants are available. Education must also be addressed in the fight against child labor. The removal of gaps between educational outcomes and market demands, especially through expansion in areas where unemployment is relatively low, is necessary so that education is directly correlated with employment. The costs of dropping out of school must be increased, while the expense of education for families must be simultaneously decreased. Also, different tracks for children who intend to stop school at the minimum requirement, intend to finish high school, and those seeking university educations should be created so that all students can get returns for their education. Apprenticeship programs must be expanded so that students gain necessary skills, have a certificate that ensures their mastery of a trade, and are protected from exploitation. This, in conjunction with campaigns to increase societal respect for these educational options and all types of labor, will give child laborers struggling in school a proper alternative.

Conclusion

Child labor is clearly a violation of the rights of children. The economic causes of child labor have placed children in the center of a vicious cycle where poverty has forced them into economic activity that is harmful to their development, and where the negative externalities of their labor increases their poverty in the future.

The passage of laws intended to fight child labor and other rights violations must be backed by adequate governmental funding for law enforcement, education, and societal transformation. An

understanding of the economic repercussions of child labor, which affect all segments of society, must be highlighted to stimulate a proper rally against child labor.

Annotations

Alessandro Maffei, Nikolai Raabe and Heinrich W. Ursprung. 2006. "Political Repression and Child Labour: Theory and Empirical Evidence." *The World Economy* 29 (20): 211-39.

Annotation: The authors provide readers with a strong argument that seeks to explain the persistence of child labor in the developing world despite bans on the practice in 113 nations. Their argument that well educated elites seek to retard the poor's attainment of education so that their own children do not face increased competition in the labor market is applicable to some extent in Egypt. It also pushes researchers to think critically about the root causes of the persistence of child labor despite the clear efforts of government and civil society in Egypt to end the practice. Lenient enforcement of child labor legislation must be explained and understood if child labor and the adverse effects of it on society are to be stopped. The article provides proof of a significant and robust association between repression in a nation's political system and lenient enforcement of child labor policies. This piece also provides an eye opening literature review on the topic of child labor.

Ali , Ali Abdel Gadir. 2003. "Poverty in the Arab Region: A Selective Review." Arab Planning Institute. Available online: <http://www.arab-api.org/wps/wps0402.htm>.

Annotation: An excellent introduction to poverty in the Middle East, this paper provides an excellent comparison of the statistical evidence of poverty in five nations—Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisian and Yemen. By giving researchers' contextual understandings of poverty in Egypt, the author provides the reader with a working definition of poverty and analyzes an amalgam of the available data using the Datt-Ravalion method and Engel Curves among others. The paper's greatest strength is the author's connection between low income and a loss of capabilities with reference to Amartya Sen's capabilities approach to human development. He notes that low income leads to low capability whilst greater capabilities lead to higher income. However, the piece is void of a solution to the quagmire this information unveils. It is not well organized and can be difficult to follow, however the wealth of information on poverty in Egypt and some of its neighbors is worth the trouble.

Amnesty International. 2010. "Universal Periodic Review: Opportunity to Address Human Rights Concerns in Egypt." Available online: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE12/009/2010/en>.

Annotation: While this report does not directly discuss children's human rights abuses, it provides a clear, concise and current overview of the human rights situation in Egypt. This gives

those seeking to understand child labor a contextual understanding of the human rights situation for all. It also provides a cultural understanding of the situation. This allows the researcher to take into account other problems faced by society so that recommendations for and critiques of the work of the government and civil society are realistic and include solutions which address multiple dilemmas. This piece provides insight into the willingness of the Egyptian government to work with the UN Human Rights Council and to advance human rights issues.

Basu, Kaushik. 1999. "Child Labor: Cause, Consequence and Cure with Remarks on International Labor Standards." *Journal of Economic Literature* 37 (3): 1083-119.

Annotation: An excellent overview of available policy solutions to the plague of child labor, this article provides the reader with past policy attempts to curb child labor. More importantly, the piece includes models for analyzing decision making processes by relevant actors. Although these models may not be the work of Basu, they are integrated into one piece, making the reader's task of collecting them easy. This article is an excellent starting point for the analysis of child labor policy and regulation. Although the article does not focus on Egypt, it does use it as an example of the larger issue. The ideas presented in the article allow the reader to consider more facets of the child labor equation. Easy to read and informative, this is an excellent article.

Bhalotra, Sonia and Zafiris Tzannatos. 2003. "Child Labor: What Have We Learnt?" *Social Protection Discussion Series* 0317. Available online:
http://www.efm.bris.ac.uk/ecsrp/papers/CLsurvey_BT.pdf.

Annotation: This article is a fascinating critique of child labor research. It points to the failures of academics to produce complete research that is quantitatively accurate and theoretically based. An understanding of the authors' argument makes researchers on the topic of child labor better able to understand and gauge the validity of the literature on the topic. This piece is an excellent examination of the study of child labor and guide to those aspiring to write on or study the topic.

Bibars, Iman. 1998. "Street Children in Egypt: From the Home to the Street to Inappropriate Corrective Institutions " *Environment and Urbanization* 10(1): 201-16.

Annotation: This short paper written by Iman Bibars is an excellent piece both for a thorough introduction to the topic of street children and an insightful discussion of the problems with possible solutions to this issue. The piece begins with a definition of street children and the circumstances which lead to their homelessness. It then explains, through a social and legal prism, the problems facing street children. Further Bibars includes exceptionally well chosen accounts from children which exemplify the most important issues. Finally, the piece ends with a discussion of the solutions attempted to date and a superior list of recommendations. While this piece is outdated (completed in 1998), it offers an irreplaceable literature review and overview of the problem.

Dancer, Diane and Rammohan, Anu. 2007. "Determinants of Schooling in Egypt: The Role of Gender and Rural / Urban Differences Oxford Development Studies." *Oxford Development Studies* 35 (2).

Annotation: Dancer and Rammohan offer a wonderful examination of schooling differences in Egypt. Although this piece does not discuss the reasons for these differences, it provides a significant study of the most disadvantaged children. It is clear that children in rural areas, girls and particularly children in Upper Egypt are in need of greater attention than the rest of the school age population. The increase in child enrollment rates when the mother is educated (particularly in the cases of girls and children in Upper Egypt) suggests that investment in the education of girls will reap greater rewards than in boys. Thus, the article suggests the government of Egypt should increase its investment in girl's education in order to increase education rates in the future. While this theory is prevalent in education literature, proof of its validity in the case of Egypt was necessary.

———. 2008. "Gender Differences in Intrahousehold Schooling Outcomes: The Role of Sibling Characteristics and Birth-Order Effects." *Education Economics* 16 (2): 111-26.

Annotation: An intriguing paper, this piece introduces the reader to the effects of family composition on children's education. Based on substantial research, this piece uses nationally representative data to study the effects of a number of variables on the attainment of schooling by children, concluding that there are large gender and rural-urban divides in Egypt. In rural households with many children, boys are often taken out of school to help the family financially. In terms of not completing school, first born males in rural settings are at very high risk while girls of all birth orders in rural areas are at the greatest risk. Household income, parental education, and urban residence all significantly increase the likelihood that children will complete their education and refrain from labor in their youth.

Fahmi, Kamal. *Beyond the Victim: The Politics and Ethics of Empowering Cairo's Street Children.* New York: The American University in Cairo Press.

Annotation: Fahmi provides a comprehensive study of street children in Cairo. The book gives historical context, defines the phenomenon of street children and includes the real stories of many street children in their own words. The book can at times be confusing and the discussion of the study carried out by the author may be inaccessible to some as a consequence of advanced scientific and field specific terminology. However, the information provided is worth searching for. This book would be best used as a resource when searching for specific information as opposed to a leisurely read.

Galal, Ahmed. 2003. "Social Expenditure and the Poor in Egypt." Paper presented at Fiscal Sustainability and Public Expenditures in Egypt, Cairo, Egypt, October 19-20, 2003. Available

online: http://www.eces.org.eg/Uploaded_Files/%7BBE2AB9EE-D36F-427C-8D61-7CB06BF7AC7C%7D_ECESWP89e.pdf.

Annotation: In this piece, Galal crystallizes the extent to which support for the poor is a priority for the Egyptian government. The author then discusses the reasons for which the expenditure of roughly thirty percent of GDP on public projects is not adequately alleviating the poverty of millions of Egyptians. This article describes the current public expenditure system in Egypt, describing its current approach as an “engineering approach” which focuses on the need for more quality or quantity of services. He also discusses the virtues of what he terms the “industrial organization approach” and finally points to the World Development Report approach as the most adept to solving the poverty crisis in Egypt.

Gibbons, Jacqueline. 2004. Orphanages in Egypt. Toronto: York University.

Annotation: Using field research from a variety of orphanages in and around Cairo, this piece examines the situation of girls inside of orphanages in Egypt, taking into account the managerial composition and histories of the orphanages examined. Noting the lack of alternative for unwanted children in Egypt, the article considers the possible futures of unwanted girls. While this piece does not provide an adequate study of the literature or of Egyptian society outside of the orphanages, it introduces readers to the challenges faced by orphans and the various ways children can end up in orphanages. Interviews provide information as to the goals of children and their supervisors, illuminating the Egyptian culture as it relates to childhood and labor.

Goldberg, Ellis. 2004. Trade, Reputation, and Child Labor in Twentieth-Century Egypt. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Annotation: An enjoyable read, this book artfully takes the reader on a ride through the history of child labor in Egypt, with a special focus on the most unique aspect of child labor in Egypt--the production of cotton. The political economy of child labor in Egypt and its relationship with Egypt's cotton production is explored with great attention given to the importance of cotton to the Egyptian economy. The author discusses the extraordinary nature of the cotton industry in Egypt with regards to the unequalled quality of Egyptian cotton and use of children in the fields. The ramifications of the economic dependence on this form of child labor are outlined in an organized and enjoyable prose.

Hassan, Mohamed and Sassanpour, Cyrus. 2008. "Labor Market Pressures in Egypt: Why Is the Unemployment Rate Stubbornly High?" Paper presented at International Conference on The Unemployment Crisis in the Arab Countries, Cairo, Egypt, March 17-18, 2008. Available online: http://www.arab-api.org/conf_0308/p7.pdf.

Annotation: This paper provides a comprehensive representation of unemployment in Egypt. The authors present rigorous data which indicates the sectors of the economy and populations most vulnerable to unemployment. This data educates the reader on the effects of child labor on unemployment nationally and on children's ability to bring in income for themselves in the future. The paper is well organized and provides charts, graphs and tables which present crucial information in a visually appealing manner.

Human Rights Watch. 2003. "Charged with Being Children: Egyptian Polic Abuse of Children in Need of Protection." *Human Rights Watch* 15 (1)E.

Annotation: This piece is a scathing review of the maltreatment of street children in Egypt, with a clear focus on the abuses for which the government of Egypt is responsible. This report focuses on the juvenile justice system and the abuses of children's human rights as a result of their participation in child labor and homelessness. While this piece provides an excellent summary of the abuses that working children suffer at the hands of the "actions police," it does little to explain the circumstances of the problem of child labor and homelessness in Egypt. The discussion of the problem is valuable but without a presentation of the societal pressures faced by these children and their limited options, this discussion of the human rights of Egypt's most vulnerable children is incomplete. This oversight takes away from the legitimacy of the report's recommendations.

Human Rights Watch. 2001. "Egypt: Cotton Co-Opt Violate Child Labor Laws." *Human Rights Watch* 13 (1) E. Available online: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/egypt/>.

Annotation: Excellent research, straightforward reporting and unparalleled coverage characterize this report from Human Rights Watch on the abuses of children in Egypt's cotton industry. The report covers, in detail, the abuses in addition to their legal and social origins. Most beneficial is the piece's cumulative presentation of Egypt's human rights obligations regarding child labor. It would have been beneficial for the report to cover the purchase of cotton products from Egypt in other nations, because there are many nations which vow not to allow products produced by children too are purchased by their citizens. The work of Human Rights Watch provides the reader with a comprehensive view of children's work in cotton co-opts.

Hussein, Nashaat. 2005. Street Children in Egypt: Group Dynamics and Subcultural Constituents. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.

Annotation: This is an excellent resource which explains the social situation of street children, from the conditions which led them to the street to the underground culture they have formed there. A surprisingly complex and organized world where they support one another, called the Sewas, is outlined. Hussein describes life on the street effectively, which is necessary to fully understand the complex phenomenon. The author introduces the reader to the rationale which keeps children on the street and provides a critical explanation of the children's perceived

benefits of street life. The most agreeable aspect of this book is the numerous first-hand accounts from the children, telling their stories and experiences in detail.

Egypt Research Group. 2000. "Executive Report on Strategies in Egypt." San Diego: ICON Group International.

Annotation: A report on labor conditions in Egypt, this short piece provides an adequate overview of government policies towards labor in general and child labor more specifically. The piece also discusses related children's issues briefly, including education and female genital mutilation. The report includes data concerning labor, education, literacy and minimum wage statistics comparatively for Egypt, the Middle East as a whole and the world average. This information proves very helpful when trying to place the situation in Egypt internationally and to compare its strides with those of its neighbors, giving the data more context.

Grimsrud, Bjerne and Stokke, Liv Jorunn. 1997. "Child Labor in Africa: Poverty or Institutional Failures? The Cases of Egypt and Zimbabwe." Oslo: FAFO Institute for Applied Science. Available online: <http://www.faf.no/pub/rapp/233/233.pdf>.

Annotation: The outdated nature of the article has done little to invalidate the author's arguments. This article provides the reader with excellent coverage of the problem of child labor in Egypt. Comparing it to another African country gives the reader perspective, but the organization of the article allows readers to only read about Egypt if they choose. The piece provides a wonderful analysis of the institutional failures that have led to the continued plague of child labor in Egypt. Data in the piece is outdated even for its 1997 printing, but it gives the reader a historical background.

Grootaert, Christiaan and Kanbur, Ravi, Child Labor: A Review. 1995. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 1454. Available online: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=620526>.

Annotation: These authors present a well researched presentation of child labor in the international community. The paper describes the nature of child labor with reference to the activities of laborers and the magnitude of this work internationally. The piece provides an outline of the determinants of child labor though the inputs and consequences of child labor are not fully presented. A section on the welfare economics of child labor and another on policy intervention are excellent overviews of the problem and possible solutions but are not exhaustive.

United States Department of Labor. 2008. *2008 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor – Egypt*. Available online: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4aba3ee137.html>.

Annotation: Providing excellent data and an overview of the child labor situation in Egypt, this report provides a concise update on the most destructive forms of child labor in Egypt as of 2008. This report introduces the reader to many disturbing new developments in the nation. While the data is missing many important indicators, such as child labor by sector, the report provides helpful, quick facts, including the dates of Egypt's signing of relevant human rights treaties. Overall this piece is a worthwhile read and provides readers with rare insights into the realities of the child labor situation in Egypt currently.

Naguib Khouzam, Eglal Chenouda, and Georgette Naguib. 2003. "A Family Partnership Model of Early Intervention." In Early Intervention Practices Around the World, edited by Marci J. Hanson, Samuel L. Odom, James A. Blackman and Sudha Kaul, 358. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Annotation: This short book section provides an introduction into the failures of the Egyptian healthcare system with a focus on children. Historical background is provided, as is a description of the culture surrounding injured and disabled children in Egypt, specifically among impoverished segments of the population. The information provides perspective on the future faced by children with work related injuries and who are denied access to adequate healthcare. The section ends with the description of a successful early intervention program which furnishes best practices.

Sakurai, Riho. 2006. "Child Labour and Education." Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007, *Strong foundations: early childhood care and education*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Annotation: Research on the success of cash-transfer programs designed to increase school enrollment rates is presented in this report. The piece argues for the provision of social services in exchange for enrollment, though this is not supported with enough evidence. The presentation of this policy as a solution to the problem is not realistic, but the approach does have benefits that deserve greater study. This paper accurately presents the relationship between child labor and deflated education outcomes, and gives an understanding of the cycle of poverty that is reinforced when children do not receive adequate education.

Smith, Michael P., and Todaro, Stephen C. 2009. Economic Development, Tenth Edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Annotation: In this book, Todaro and Smith provide a comprehensive view of the necessary policies for economic growth with historical, practical and theoretical perspectives. The most helpful section of this book is the chapter covering human capital. This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of child labor in the developing world, the consequences of the practice and a critique of the methods that have been used to fight child labor. The explanation of the economic conditions that create the dire need for child labor and the economic

ramifications of prominent solutions presented are invaluable to anyone seeking to understand the outcomes of child labor.

Speak, Suzanne. 2005. "Relationship between Children's Homelessness in Developing Countries and the Failure of Women's Rights Legislation." *Housing, Theory and Society* 22 (3): 129-46.

Annotation: The topic of this article is novel and proves integral to a full understanding of child labor and the resulting phenomenon of street children. This piece outlines the effect that weak women's rights legislation and enforcement has on the protection of children from domestic abuse. In Egypt, this reality plays a significant role in number of child laborers and their domestic abuse. The inability of women to protect their children is a critical issue that presents human rights violations of women and children as interdependent.

UNICEF – Egypt Country Office. 2002. "Child Labor: What Could Be Done?" Paper presented at the Youth Employment Summit 2002. Available online:
www.yesweb.org/alexandria_02/sessions/op.ch_labour.doc.

Annotation: This short paper provides good coverage of the child labor problem in Egypt. While providing some good statistics, the paper would benefit from more quantitative information regarding child labor. The paper is replete with the structural reasons for the subsistence of child labor in Egypt, while describing in brief the government of Egypt's efforts to end the practice. While this piece offers insight into the practices to end child labor in Egypt supported by UNICEF, greater detail about the projects and their success would be beneficial.

UNFPA, Population Reference Bureau. 2009. Healthy Expectations: Celebrating Achievements of the Cairo Consensus and Highlighting the Urgency for Action. New York: UNFPA, Population Reference Bureau.

Annotation: This concise paper provides readers with thorough coverage of the most pressing issues facing children in the developing world using a human development based approach. Clear diagrams show the world's progress towards addressing these issues comparatively. However, the book fails in two respects. First, it is too brief, even for an introduction to the topic. Secondly, it does not compare all countries. Instead, the article provides a mix of cases and regional comparisons, making the data less accessible to those seeking to understand the situation in a particular area as opposed to successes and failures of the international community at implementing the solutions in the Cairo Consensus.

Wahba, Jackline. 2006. "The Influence of Market Wages and Parental History on Child Labour and Schooling in Egypt." *The Journal of Population Economics* 19: 823-52.

Annotation: This journal article provides an excellent study on the sources of the most important causes of child labor in Egypt. The paper comparatively studies child labor in Egypt and Mexico. Wahba provides evidence that increases in child labor can be directly correlated with the following: decreases in the market wage for illiterate adults; increases in local, province and regional income inequality; and parents' history as child laborers. The coverage of the roots of the issue has great policy implications. While the recommendations were inadequate, the data and resulting correlation presented in this article provides a clear vision of the ills which produce child labor. The suggestion to follow in the footsteps of Mexico's PROGRESA program is a good start.