





Towards a child-friendly justice in Egypt: Implementing SDGs for children

Training for the Ministry of Social Solidarity

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Summary



 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Project overview

The project "Towards Child Friendly Justice in Egypt" aims at enhancing the judicial capacity, institutional coordination and effectiveness of the Egyptian child justice system. Aligned with Egypt's Vision 2030, the National Child Strategy and the UN SDGs, the project is implemented by the OECD with the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The project also builds on the work of the MENA-OECD Governance Programme and rule of law support to Egypt. It facilitates high-level engagement in support of effective implementation of the objectives of the Strategic Framework and National Plan for Childhood and Motherhood in Egypt 2018-2030.

Objectives of the training

The training aimed to build the capacities of social observers and experts who are responsible of drafting the social expert reports, a crucial instrument for judicial decision-making. The training fostered a hands-on approach for a technical discussion and exercise focusing on the challenges and opportunities related to improving the Ministry of Social Solidarity's (MoSS) interaction with child justice processes, drawing on the findings and key recommendations of the OECD Strategic Review "Towards Child Friendly Justice in Egypt".

The two-days training provided the opportunity for participants to:

- Deepen participants' understanding of core inclusions, reference materials, and templates within the MoSS framework as well as expert guidance from the OECD on international good practices, with a view to build a solid foundation in key elements of report writing and data collection.
- Gain insights into how reports are used in judicial processes and seek clarity on current challenges in report preparation,

usage and finalisation based on their interaction with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Public Prosecution Office (PPO).

- Consider reform opportunities to streamline and improve future practices between MoSS and MoJ/PPO.



Key takeaways

- Template and reference materials provided by MoSS should be consistently used to systemize work practices;
- Delivering varied report formats (oral, short, standard) to meet time constraints and standardizing interview questions for consistency were highlighted as solutions to overcome certain challenges such as inconsistent report quality and delays.
- Meaningful engagement with the child is crucial – MoSS is encouraged to review the work schedules/number of cases viewed by the social expert/observer per day, to optimise the opportunity to engage directly with the child and incorporate their view within reports (e.g. ensure they are conducting home visits at times when the child is home);
- Usage of child-friendly communication techniques must be encouraged – the quality of information obtained from a child will depend on the techniques used to

interact (e.g. usage of the Socratic questioning and the columbo technique);

- Restorative Justice, as an emerging tool (e.g. Alexandria pilot) can have significant benefits in deterring future offending behaviours. OECD good practice were of particular interest and MoSS staff should be kept updated with developments in this area;
- The application of alternative to detention measures by social experts should be prioritised, while taking into account; the feasibility and convenience of the recommended measures. Social experts could recommend in the follow-up report to change the measure applied if it is not in the best interest of the child.
- Ongoing dialogue with both the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Public Prosecution Office (PPO) is critical to enable continuous reflection on institutional co-ordination good practices. In particular, probation orders were considered with conflicting understanding across the PPO and MoSS in relation to the process for concluding.

Putting Theory into Practice: developing mock reports

- In the first practical exercise, participants were presented with case studies and asked to review the given circumstances of a young individual's life and behaviour. The aim was to develop a methodological approach to construct a comprehensive social assessment report. The purpose of this exercise was to enable analytical skills, emphasizing the necessity for thorough investigation and the integration of the child's perspective, all while maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and objectivity.
- The exercise was followed by an open discussion and feedbacks from each group of participants which allowed a very good exchange of expertise and fostered a dialogue between OECD experts and

social observers and experts from different governorates.

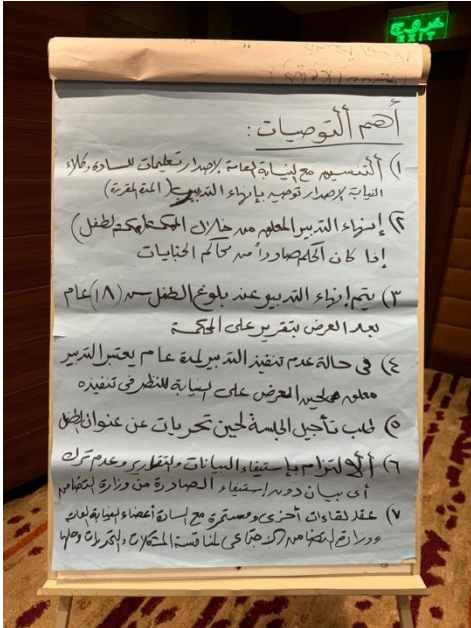


Putting Theory into Practice: reviewing concrete report samples

- On day two, participants analysed concrete reports to identify missing content and to discuss enhancement options. This practical review was designed to deepen participants' ability to critically assess report quality, recognise areas for content enrichment, and ensure that reports meet the required standards for informing judicial decisions effectively. The social observers and experts had the opportunity to discuss the challenges they face with OECD experts and with the presence of representatives from MoJ and PPO and reach some practical resolutions to speed-up the process for child-related cases.

Way Forward

- The two-day training culminated in the formulation of a set of reform proposals and recommendations aimed at improving coordination between the MoSS and partner institutions (MoJ and PPO).



For more Information

- OECD Child-Friendly Justice Framework: Building a people-centred justice system (2023): <https://doi.org/10.1787/6a60970e-en>.
- OECD (2023), Towards a Child-friendly Justice System in Egypt: Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9f5b0524-en>
- OECD/Open Society Foundations (2019), Legal Needs Surveys and Access to Justice: <https://doi.org/10.1787/g2g9a36c-en>.
- [Governance - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(oecd.org\)](https://www.oecd.org/governance/)
- [Library - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(oecd.org\)](https://www.oecd.org/library/)