

Bjørne Grimsrud

# **Evaluation of Education Activities at the Workers Education Institute in Cairo**



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# 1 Introduction

After years of continuing support for the Workers Education Centre in Cairo, LO Norway (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions) called in 1998 for an evaluation of the project. The objectives of the evaluation were twofold: to examine both quality of the project itself and its wider impact within the Egyptian labour movement. The following Terms of Reference were drawn up:

- Measure the number of training courses and students towards the planned number in the applications throughout the years. List other supported activities. Go through the funds applied for, the amount allocated and the amount used and accounted for.
- Evaluate the content of the training courses. Have these differed from other types of trade union training in Egypt in addressing different questions, in being more human rights oriented, in using new teaching techniques etc.?
- Ascertain the number and percentage of female students. If possible, analyse the background and mode of recruitment of both male and female students.
- Through interviewing former students and by other means, investigate the quality, relevance and individual usefulness of the training.
- Look at the broader effects of the training: general results of the emphasis on training female cadres, organisational and policy effects within the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), etc.
- Undertake a wider assessment of current developments within the trade union movement and a brief review of the politico-economic situation in Egypt, and through this describe the setting within which the project has been operating.

The evaluation team consisted of former LO Norway project co-ordinator Ellinor Kolstad, current LO Norway project co-ordinator Moussa El Jeries (Abu George) and external evaluator Bjørne Grimsrud from Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science in Oslo.

The methodology employed included interviews and archive studies. Documentation – project proposals, communication, lists of participants, course curricula, reports and accounts – was examined. A study tour to the Workers Education Institute took place from 15 to 27 November 1998. Interviews were conducted with persons central to the development of the project, including the past and present managers at the centre and several leaders and women secretaries in the national unions (listed in Appendix I).

A selected group of 16 former students was interviewed specially, in order to get their personal evaluation of the study activities and, to the extent possible, map where former students were to be found today. The latter should provide an indication both of how successful the institute has been in recruiting the right students and how successful students from the institute, female students in particular, have been in obtaining new positions within the

labour movement. Of the 16 former students – 6 male and 10 female – one was working in the private sector, 8 in public enterprises and 7 in the governmental sector. The selection was carried out by the Workers Education Institute, on the basis of the guidelines in the Terms of Reference above. Eight were selected through the regional unions and 8 through the national unions.

Chapter two gives a short introduction to the economic and political situation in Egypt today. Chapter three presents the team's assessment of current developments within the trade union movement. This is followed by an overview of all worker education activities in Egypt in chapter four. The evaluation of the LO-sponsored project at the Workers Education Institute is to be found in chapter five. Chapter six contains the major conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation team as a whole has examined the various components of the project. However, this report and its conclusions are the sole responsibility of the external evaluator.



## 2 Egypt at the cross-roads

The second half of the 1980s witnessed a series of international and internal changes of fundamental importance for Egypt – like the demise of the Soviet Union, the revolution in communications and information, the expansion of free trade (WTO) and increased international competition. From being a centrally planned economy, Egypt embarked on a process of economic reforms that would change its business and labour market structures. This has been a transition undertaken more gradually than the case in Europe. Thus, the transformation of the Egyptian economy is by no means over: it is in a relatively early phase, with challenging tasks of restructuring – and potentially high social costs – still lying in the future.

Of basic importance to all development in Egypt is population growth. The 1996 census found the population to be 61.4 million, increasing at the rate of 2.2 per cent annually. The economy has been growing at approximately 4 per cent in recent years, resulting in a small but significant per capita growth. In 1994, per capita income, adjusted by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), was USD 2,278. However, this growth is far from equally distributed, and there is considerable poverty. According to the World Bank (1991), between 10 and 13 per cent of Egypt's population are to be classified as “ultra-poor” (Grimsrud and Stokke 1997).

### Labour force

Egypt's total labour force in 1994 stood at 17.7 million people, to which another 500,000 to 600,000 are added every year. This equals an annual growth in the labour force of 2.6 per cent. One third of the labour force is employed in the government or public enterprises while 38 per cent work in the private sector, including 4.5 million in agriculture and 3.7 million in informal jobs. Private-sector wage-earners account for only a very tiny proportion so far. Table 1.1 presents the latest official labour market statistics. We can note the reduction in traditional sectors like agriculture and industry from 1976 to 1986, agriculture in absolute figures and industry relative to other sectors, although agriculture remains the largest sector of employment by far. Unemployment is always difficult to measure in a developing country like Egypt, but official rates have been stable at around 9 per cent throughout the 1990s (Ministry of Planning). However, estimates from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) place current unemployment at 17 per cent. (*The Egyptian Gazette* 1998)

Table 1.1 Employment by Sector of Economic Activity, 1976 and 1986, Total and per cent

	1976	Per cent	1986	Per cent
Agriculture, fishing, hunting	4,881,009	47.6	4,566,945	37.6
Mining	33,831	0.3	52,769	0.4
Industry	1,369,482	13.3	1,475,608	2.1
Electricity	61,761	0.6	91,077	0.3
Construction	425,084	4.1	817,644	6.7
Trade, hotel, restaurants	861,286	8.4	852,124	7.0
Transport and communication	482,253	4.7	640,827	5.2
Finance and insurance	88,392	0.8	224,061	1.8
Social services	1,868,289	18.2	2,614,477	21.5
Other sectors	186,438	1.8	811,089	6.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>10,257,825</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>12,146,621</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: World Bank (1991)

Table 1.2 Private share of sector output in 1995/96

Sector	Share of GDP in per cent	Private share of sector in per cent
Agriculture	16.0	98.7
Industry and mining	17.6	62.2
Petroleum	9.4	16.1
Construction	5.1	72.1
Electricity	1.7	0.0
Transport and communication	10.5	33.4
Trade, finance and insurance	20.8	81.5
Restaurants and hotels	1.7	85.2
Housing	1.8	94.4
Utilities	0.3	0.0
Social insurance	0.1	0.0
Government services	7.2	0.0
Social services	7.7	100.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>63.3</i>

Source: Ministry of Economy (1998)

## **Privatisation**

The transfer of state-owned public enterprises to the private sector is perceived as a cornerstone in the overall economic reform programme which Egypt started to apply in 1991, and privatisation is considered the most difficult and challenging component of the reform. An issue sensitive to public opinion, privatisation necessitates a new legislative environment under which the transition can take place smoothly. From 1991 to 1998, the economy has seen the flotation of majority shares in 38 companies through the stock market, majority sales of 9 companies to strategic investors, as well as the sale of 17 companies to their employees, and 27 companies to private investors. The stock market reopened in 1991 after having been closed down since 1961. Today non-Egyptians hold 1/3 of the stocks. Table 1.2 shows the latest official figures on the private sector in Egypt.

## **Labour relations**

For decades the Egyptian government has intervened in all aspects of the Egyptian economy. Even in the agricultural sector, which was dominated by private ownership (98 per cent of land privately owned), the government had full control over the supply of inputs of agricultural production, and over the marketing of its output as well as the financing. The government even dictated what crops should be cultivated and where. One result of this has been the widespread feeling among Egyptian citizens that government intervention is essential in every aspect of their life (Khattab 1998). In the formal sector, a labour relation system was developed, based on central regulation. The role of the trade unions was reminiscent of the situation in the former Soviet Union, where the provision of holiday resorts and social activities comprised central tasks for the movement. A centralised wage system was also developed. In fact it included both a basic wage and a bonus part, but the latter was not necessarily linked to productivity – it could for example be bestowed by the President as a May Day gift. Also today there is only a weak general awareness among Egyptian workers of the need to link wages to performance on an individual or collective basis, according to labour law expert Dr. Ahmed Hassan.

Another major characteristic of the Egyptian labour market for several decades has been the government's allocation of the labour force to government entities and public enterprises. Until 1989, all university graduates were guaranteed a job in the public sector. This was not based on actual need of those entities for more labour, but was rather intended to absorb the inflow of new labour, regardless of the market. One result has been the overstaffing of government entities, with excess labour currently estimated at twice the requisite work force.

This overstaffing is one of the problems facing the privatised or soon-to-be privatised public enterprises. There is no study that specifies accurately the extent of redundant labour, but estimates from the management of troubled companies indicate some 180,000 surplus workers, mainly in the financial, administrative and service divisions. Excess labo-

ur in public enterprises, according to such estimates, accounts for approximately 33 per cent of the total labour force in those companies. This will mean additional pressure on a job market where employment is already around the 2 million mark (Khattab 1998). The re-trenchment of this excess labour and payment of compensation packages is to be negotiated with the national unions and local union committees. Local union committees in the affected companies are to be present in the earliest stages of the diagnostic study of the status of the losing companies, and at the discussion of the management's proposals for dealing with excess labour.

The workers in privatised enterprises are also, through the establishment of Employee Shareholders Associations (ESA), given the option of buying 10 per cent of the shares in their company if it is sold, whether to strategic investors or on the stock market. Workers who leave the company must sell their shares and can only take out the potential gains. The workers' shareholders associations can be represented on the company board. It is also possible to sell companies totally to ESAs: indeed, the programme witnessed the full sale of 17 companies to ESAs until May 1998.

## **New labour structure and wage settlement regime**

A new labour law is tabled in the Parliament and take effect in 1999. This new law will give the Egyptian workers rights and obligations more in line with present-day European standards. It foresees the establishment of a national tripartite council where minimum wages and allowances are to be set. Otherwise, wages may be set through collective agreements sector-wise or at the enterprise level, or through individual agreements. The government sector will not be allowed to bargain collectively; public enterprise employees, however, will have this right. The penalties for employers acting in conflict with the law are reduced in the new proposed labour law, from jail to the imposition of fines.

Other major changes include regulations for downscaling the labour force. Today the formally employed Egyptian worker enjoys a high degree of protection; under the new labour law, a worker may be dismissed or retrenched because of misconduct, lack of skill or because of financial difficulties on the part of the enterprise. Notification must be given, but it is not clear whether the unions have the right to negotiate over dismissals and retrenchments.

The new labour law also has provisions concerning the right to strike. To conduct a legal strike it will be necessary to notify the employer(s) in due time. However, sectors considered "vital" (by the governments' definition at any time) may not strike. Since it is the national unions who are party to the collective agreements, it is clear that they will have to endorse any strike actions. Within the trade union movement, however, the attitude seems to be that the ETUF itself should endorse any strike action.

These recent changes in economic policy have a profound impact on the conditions under which trade unions operate in Egypt. The change of ownership of many enterprises means that unions no longer can count on workers more or less automatically joining the unions. The forthcoming end to government regulations on wages and the introduction of

collective bargaining and the right to strike will require new skills. Even the transition process itself has meant new tasks for the unions through local and central negotiations on the conditions for privatisation, including downsizing of the workforce and early retirement packages.

### 3 The Egyptian Trade Union Movement

The first organised labour in Egypt can be traced a hundred years back to workers' committees in the tobacco industry, railways and printshops. Today all blue collar and most white collar unions belong to the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), which currently comprises 23 national unions. Each union is made up of a varying number of branches, with local trade union committees at each workplace. The elected board of a trade union

Table 3.1 ETUF membership 1996

Name of Union	Total membership	In private or public enterprises	Per cent in enterprises
Agriculture and irrigation	174,935	107,411	61
Weaving and textile	206,081	20,200	1
Commerce	117,286	6,460	6
Bank and finance	120,045	7,632	6
Railways	71,821	0	0
Telecommunication	56,602	0	0
Public utilities	153,114	0	0
Education and scientific research	287,508	3,402	1
Health services	125,038	1,567	1
Food	201,659	30,552	15
Metallurgical industry	160,883	45,000	28
Wood and building	496,863	171,912	35
Transport	370,786	288,590	78
Air transport	19,138	1,433	7
Sea transport	75,900	20,000	26
Chemical industry	137,532	38,335	28
Mines and quarries	20,129	2,409	12
Press and printing	53,878	2,342	4
Hotel and tourism	46,991	40,634	86
Administrative services	219,427	25,076	11
Military production	56,522	0	0
Postal services	30,280	0	0
Petroleum	60,650	12,339	20
<i>Total</i>	<i>3,313,068</i>	<i>834,297</i>	<i>25</i>

committee consists of six to fifteen members. The number of elected members depends on the number of the workers in the enterprise. They are elected for a period of five years. In 1980 an amendment to the Egyptian Constitution guaranteed workers the right to form unions. At that time, however, the work of the unions focused on promoting the standard of efficiency and promoting socialist behaviour among their members (Wohne 1985).

The Trade Union Act, revised most recently by the Parliament in 1993, regulates most aspects of running the unions, including membership fees. The Act also regulates union rights to be represented on the board of public enterprises. Membership fees are set at between 1 and 3 EGP per month, mainly collected through check-off systems. The Act also regulates the division of funds between local enterprise committees (60 per cent), national unions (30 per cent) and the ETUF (10 per cent). The 60 per cent held locally are mainly used for social purposes like contributions to weddings and the establishment of holiday resorts for union members. Of the 30 per cent going to the National Union, 1/6 (or 5 per cent of the total) is held as a reserve. National-level union leaders would appear to view the Trade Union Act not as an intervention into the union movement's own domain, but rather as a convenient tool that provides them with legislative power and authority. It obviates the need for them to recruit members and collect fees.

The new labour law now tabled in the Parliament will open the way to collective bargaining. Under this new law, collective agreements on wages will probably be negotiated primarily at the enterprise level, but it will be the national union who signs and thus acts as party to the agreement. The government sector is not included in the new collective bargaining regime. If as indicated in table 3.1 the ETUF has 75 per cent of its members in sectors that will not be covered by collective bargaining. There is reason to believe that this will lead to the ETUF remaining a conservative force in the restructuring of the Egyptian economy. Moreover, the ETUF will still depend greatly on its ability to influence the political decisions of the government in order to achieve any improvement in conditions for the majority of its members.

In some unions, reality on the ground will change fundamentally with privatisation and the introduction of collective bargaining. The President of the Bank and Finance Workers Union expressed his concerns about the transformation to a market economy and privatisation of the public enterprises, including several currently public-owned banks. A new generation of trade unionists would have to be trained, he said, and the unions would have to prepare for a new reality. Today the Bank and Finance Workers Unions has only 150,000 members out of a potential 500,000 in the sector, competing also with professional associations. The union president felt that more effort had to be put into recruiting new members, by making the unions more relevant. One such strategy was the establishment of the national women's committee in 1996. Systematic training of women was necessary, in order to increase the number of elected women in the local committees. This in turn should better protect women workers, who would probably be hit the hardest by privatisation. For instance, it was believed that private employers would seek to avoid female workers, who might have the right to maternity leave. The union had already taken action against some employers advertising for new male staff only.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That old habit die-hard was however demonstrated by one of the members of the Bank and Finance Workers Unions national women's committee told the evaluation (to be continued...)

One problem facing the Bank and Finance Workers Union was the lack of funds. Membership dues were to be raised from 1 to 2 EGP from year 2000, but this would still have to be divided between the various levels in accordance with the Trade Union Act, leaving the national union short of provisions for a strike fund, among other things. On the other hand, the ETUF had discussed the possibility of establishing a central strike fund for all unions. On the whole, the President expected his union to become more important for its members in the new economic environment. He further expected the union to enter into collective bargaining as soon as the first banks had been privatised.

The ETUF branch secretary in Tanta also spoke about the changes needed in the trade union movement. Tanta had already experienced a strike in a private tobacco company in 1998. As a result of the last local committee election, 25 per cent of the committee members were new. Even if this was lower than the national average this represented an increased number of newcomers. At the Tanta Oil and Soap Company, the workers were preparing for privatisation; here 8 out of 11 committee members were changed at the last election.

The Commercial Workers Union (CWU), which organises retail, wholesale and foreign export enterprises, has already seen a reduction in membership, from 145,000 to 102,000 in the past few years. The main reason for this is the scaling down of the public sector. Privatisation is only about to start in the retail and wholesale sector. The union had, however, not been particularly successful in its attempts to attract private-sector workers. The CWU president believed that most private-sector enterprises would follow the labour law and regulated wage levels, but would be negative to the establishment of unions. The CWU knew of employers who had told their workers that they would be better off if wages remained an individual question.

Another example of problems in organising private-sector workers was given by the ETUF regional secretary in the industrial area called 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan, where only 18 out of 1200 enterprises were unionised (representing approximately 25,000 out of 150,000 workers). He reported problems in getting access to the private enterprises. He also could tell of employers who found reasons to sack workers who tried to establish trade unions in the enterprise.

All these challenges will seem familiar to trade unionists the world over, but represent a new aspect for the Egyptian trade union movement. As was mentioned by several persons we spoke with, a new generation of trade unionists seems to be entering the scene. In the past, most privileges had been granted without the unions playing any real role. Now this is changing, and workers have started to elect people they believe can deliver – or they simply leave the unions. The pressure from both is felt more and more at the national level as well. According to the ETUF organisation department, more than half of the local union committee members elected in 1996 were newcomers. Several of these local activists expressed their concern about how ready the ETUF was at the national level to meet the demanding times ahead. In some places like the Iron and Steel works in Helwan, which

(...continued) team about her achievements as a local committee member. She had taken on the task of organising an exhibition of the handcraft made by the low paid female workers at her workplace so that these women could sell this to better paid colleges and by this work done at home after working hours add to their small income.



employs 22,000 workers, 90 per cent of the local union committee elected in 1996 were newcomers.<sup>2</sup>

Outside the ETUF are the professional associations whose members are academics of various types, such as teachers and engineers. These associations are not covered by the Trade Union Act and generally charge much higher membership dues than ETUF unions. It is not clear whether some of these associations engage in local bargaining on behalf of their members, but the Accountants' Association was mentioned by the Bank and Finance Workers Unions as a competitor with a substantial presence in some banks. Dual membership was also common. From being relatively active politically, many associations have, under the guidance of the government, restricted their activities in recent years. Among blue-collar workers there have been some examples of organisations and initiatives outside the ETUF, but only to a very limited extent. It is not clear whether under the new labour law will permit unions to be established outside the ETUF.

<sup>2</sup> This enterprise actually experienced an industrial action at 27 April 1996 where workers laid down their work after having demanded increased risk bonus and safety measures. It was not the local union committee who had initiated the action but it did join forces with the workers and managed to get a 60 per cent victory according to the shop steward.

## 4 Workers Education in Egypt

The first trade union education activities can be traced back to 1908, when unions formed people's schools to fight illiteracy (Wohne 1985). Through a presidential decree in 1960 a Workers Education Association (WEA) was formed. Today this WEA is in charge of training and education programmes, entrusted with schooling the estimated 30,000 ETUF members in elected positions nationally and locally (1903 local committees). Literacy training is still on the agenda of WEA, although at present this type of adult education is mainly seen as a task for the education authorities.

The WEA central administration is co-located with a Workers University (WU) established by the ETUF. This training institution runs two-year part-time courses for full-time trade unionists in the national unions. At present approximately 60 persons are attending these courses. The rest of the premises of the WU have been turned into a private school offering bachelor degrees in business and administration. The 8,000 students pay an annual fee of 1,500 EGP, which in addition to financing the running of the school generates some funds used for the other WEA activities. Some scholarships are given to family members of trade unionists.

Local trade union committees consist, as mentioned earlier, of approximately six to fifteen members, in different positions, from leader to secretary for literacy. The WEA has established seven institutes, each responsible for training a different number of these local shop stewards. Table 4.1 shows how these responsibilities are divided between the various

Table 4.1 WEA Institutes

Institute	Target group	Courses last school year (1/7/97-30/6/98)
Institute for Union Studies	Leaders, secretaries, treasurers and their deputies, wage secretaries	75 courses 1830 participants
Institute for Industrial Safety	Health and safety secretaries	162 courses 4631 participants
Institute for Social Insurance	Social insurance secretaries	44 courses 974 participants
Institute for International Relations	International secretaries	26 courses 607 participants
Institute for Family Planning	All union members	24 courses 624 participants
Institute for Labour Management	Union representatives at enterprise boards	29 courses 564 participants
Workers Education Institute (WEI)	Education secretaries, women's secretaries, information and media secretaries, secretaries for literacy, and union members in general	46 courses 1342 participants (of which LO supported: 35 courses and 953 participants)

Source: WEA annual report 1998

Institutes. Some institute courses are conducted by the WEA 55 branch offices and some are conducted in co-operation with the 23 national unions. Since the institutes are specifically responsible for training newly elected members of the local committees, non-elected members are only to some extent invited to participate in the training in order to obtain skills that can enable them to be elected.

The main activity of the 55 WEA branch offices is to conduct training based on the request of the local unions in the area. In the academic year July 1997 to June 1998, the 55 WEA branches held altogether 2,983 courses, with more than 57,000 participants (WEA 1998).

During the 1997/98 academic year, the Mid-Delta WEA branch office in Tanta held 310 courses paid by local unions or their enterprises. These courses attracted a total of 6,200 participants. In addition five courses were held for the WEI, and two for the Family Planning Institute. Seven or eight of the 35 participants in each of the two courses on trade union skills and one on collective bargaining held for the WEI were active union members not yet elected to any position.

## **Finances**

The training is basically free of charge for the participants, who are normally reimbursed some pocket money and transportation if their union does not pay this. To date, participants have been given paid study-leave by their employers, although in the private company Woodman in Helwan some persuasion was first needed. To finance its education and training activities the WEA has three major sources of income:

- Courses financed through local unions and the enterprises themselves,
- One third of the disciplinary fees paid by workers in Egypt for misconduct at work, and
- Government contributions.

In addition comes some income from international donors like the ILO, LO-DK, LO-N, African American Labour Centre, Frederick Ebert Foundation and UNDP – probably representing only 10 per cent or less of total WEA income. Participants' transportation costs are mainly covered by the national or local union. Some, like the Telecommunication Union, request the institute to conduct special nation-wide seminars paid for by the national union. At the local level it seems to be common that local union committees, at least at the larger enterprises, organise and finance part of the training themselves. The WEA has tested out new types of seminars, like weekend and evening training, in order to find ways of reducing costs. With an expected decline in the government contribution and fines from workers, the WEA will probably have to rely more on the unions' own ability to finance training in the future.

## **The Workers Education Institute**

The Workers Education Institute (WEI) was established in 1965, with the objective of schooling trainers and tutors to train the local union education secretaries, information and media secretaries and literacy secretaries, and later also the women's secretaries. Initially, the WEI rented its present premises. Partly with assistance from LO Norway, this building was bought by the WEI in 1989 and renovated and enlarged to include dormitories.

The WEI now conducts a total number of 50 courses annually, of which the LO/ETUF project comprises up 25–35. Each course has 25–30 participants. In addition the Institute develops educational materials. The present staff consists of a Dean, a Vice Dean, four instructors, four secretaries, one treasurer, two computer/desk-top specialists, eight general workers and four canteen workers. The Institute has also established a small library. The instructors travel extensively to teach in WEA's local branches.

## 5 The LO/ETUF project at the Workers Education Institute

The LO/ETUF project started on the basis of ideas developed by the ETUF after a visit to Norway in 1979. While much workers education was parallel in Egypt and Norway, correspondence training and the work of Folkets Brevskole (FB) caught the interest of the Egyptians. Knut Holterman from FB was engaged in 1981 and 1982 to assist in developing a project aimed at establishing correspondence courses within the WEA. In December 1982 Ellinor Kolstad was recruited by LO Norway to help to get the project off the ground. She stayed in Cairo for six months, during which time the programme was established along the lines that have been followed ever since. This includes supporting training activities, the development of study materials and some support to an upgrading of the capacity of the WEI. The only major changes have been the termination of the correspondence courses in 1992 in favour of residential courses. This explains the decrease in number of students concomitant with the increase in number of courses between 1992 and 1993 (see table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Project overview

Year	LO budget NOK	Budget total NOK	LO accounts NOK	Total accounts NOK	Seminars	Students	Female students	Books	Other budget items
1981			314,000						
1982			324,000						
1983			338,000						
1984	650,000		472,000						
1985	294,000		375,000						
1986			366,000						
1987	603,000	953,000	554,340	756,538		566	265		
1988						828	225	2	
1989	874,541	1,226,592	795,721	1,008,515	11	1568	245	3	Premises
1990	975,237	1,301,628			10	1988	195	2	Premises
1991	1,169,376	2,155,306		1,743,372	8	1968		2	
1992	459,803	805,901	596,309	1,301,334	13	1527		2	
1993	460,350	824,175	463,280	863,531	38	1646		4	
1994	500,195	1,000,163	490,390	971,757		1069			Fax/ phone
1995	503,743	983,980	480,308	942,505	35	1196			
1996	492,000	1,001,440	513,714	1,053,670	35	1008		4	Car
1997	411,028	969,427	397,757	1,093,175	32	1005		4	
1998	675,000	1,585,057							

Initially, administrative routines were rather weak. After some problems in the early phase of the project, where funds were transferred via ETUF and accounting routines were not satisfactory, new routines were established from 1986. This included the establishment of a special project account in WEI to which the Norwegian funds were transferred directly, and the appointment of an independent auditor. This has ensured proper accounting routines since then.

Non-LO/ETUF activities are financed by the Workers Education Association, and so is one-half of the LO/ETUF project. LO Norway used to finance 2/3 of the project. Altogether, the LO share today comprises approximately 1/3 of the WEI's total income.

From reports available to the evaluation team, it is clear that a positive development has taken place regarding both applications and annual reporting. One question does however emerge concerning the number of books and case studies published, as more studies are reported than the total number listed by WEI. This, it seems, is due to the fact that the publication of the same books is reported in consecutive years. It is not clear, however, whether this means that funds also are duplicated.

The number of courses held has either been according to plans or in excess of the number planned. Hence the take-up rate of funds from LO has been quite high.

In recent years, annual project accounts have shown a small surplus forwarded to the next year's activities. The exception was 1997, where the last LO instalment transferred in 1998 amounted to less than expected in EGP due to the reduced value of the Norwegian krone. For this year therefore the WEI changed its accounting routines and instead of transferring a negative balance indicated that LO should cover the short-fall (EGP 16.271). In general one may ask whether LO instead of the WEI should take the risks associated with fluctuations in exchange rates. In this project, risk remains totally with the WEI, even though this is the financially weaker part. On the other hand, there should be no question of accepting the system when it profits WEI but not in years when this is not the case.

## **Trade union training for women**

Since 1989 the institute has trained more than 1000 women. As can be seen from the tables below, female participants have mainly, but not solely, been trained through separate trade union courses for women. Several of the women interviewed by the evaluation team, including the Women Secretary in the Bank and Finance Workers Union, expressed the need for training of both types. All WEI participants – male and female – are selected and recruited by the national or local unions themselves. The WEI merely draws up a yearly plan of activities and presents this to the unions with a general description of the kind of candidates that should be nominated.

The number of female activists in the Egyptian trade unions movement has gradually increased, mainly through the establishment of women's committees in the national and some local unions. Over the past two years, the number of national unions that had a women's committee has risen from a handful to more than half of the 23 national unions. We also learned that an increased number of women had been elected to the local commit-

tees at the last election, though the initial number had also been very low. In the Telecommunication Union the number had increased from 20 to 47. The total number of women elected in local committees rose from 623 elected in the 1991 election to 900 elected in the 1996.

At the national level, the ETUF's Women Secretariat also conducts some seminars and training for working women, partly based on funds from abroad. Some of the ideas and initial training of instructors used by the Women Secretariat originated in the LO/ETUF sponsored activities at WEI, like the women's camps. However, it was the impression of the evaluation team that the ETUF Women's Secretariat could still do more to support and utilise the women's education activities provided by the WEI.

Educator at both the WEI and the ETUF Women Secretariat have found residential courses better-suited for training women than non-residential courses. The women are then away from their homes and are free of the pressure to do housework in addition to attending the seminars. However, both in Tanta and from the Telecommunication Union Women Secretary, the problem of getting the women to attend courses was mentioned. Too often women who were qualified could not find the time to attend because of housework and childcare responsibilities.

In Tanta, 30 per cent of the participants in the two courses on trade union skills and one on collective bargaining held for WEI during the last year were female. Here the ETUF branch federation had established their own women's committee.

Table 5.2 Courses for working women in 1997

Trade Union/Place	Date	Males	Females	Total
Minia Centre	4/1 till 9/1	–	30	30
Koum Umbo	12/7 till 17/7	–	28	28
General Trade Union of Education and Scientific Research	16/8 till 21/8	–	26	26
Sohag	12/7 till 17/7	–	27	27
Assiut	15/2 till 20/2	–	24	24
<i>Total</i>			135	135

The curriculum for the courses aimed at working women includes both general trade union skills and more specific problems that women encounter in trade union work. Gender sensitivity courses include topics like the role of women in society and in the trade union movement.

There can be no doubt that the emphasis on training women in the LO/ETUF project has paid off. Of the ten female former participants interviewed, half had been trained before taking up their first trade union position. Several of these mentioned that the training had been instrumental in engaging them in trade union work and enabling them to take positions within the unions. Former course participants were found in many new positions, such as national women's secretaries in unions like the Bank Union and Telecommunications Union. Additional evidence of the quality of the work undertaken by WEI in this field was the fact that the AFL-CIO-run Solidarity Centre in Cairo used the WEI, its

Table 5.3 Courses on gender sensitivity in 1997

Trade Union/Place	Date	Males	Females	Total
General Trade Union of Military Production	29/7 till 1/8	–	24	24
Menoufia Governorate	2/9 till 6/9	–	25	25
General Trade Union of Military Production	25/6 till 28/6	–	23	23
Menoufia Governorate	13/7 till 16/7	–	25	25
The Institute	10/8 till 13/8	10	22	32
<i>Total</i>		10	119	129

female instructor and its material in activities for working women in their activities both in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries such as Lebanon and Yemen.

Despite this and as can be seen in the tables below, the number of women trained in non-targeted activities remains small. For 1997, more than 30 per cent of all persons trained were women, but this is due solely to the women and gender sensitivity courses.

## Correspondence courses

The original idea behind the LO/ETUF project was to develop correspondence courses. The following nine such courses were developed: Adult education, Industrial health and safety, Contemporary international trade union movement, The problems of Egyptian working women, Labour relations, Management and collective bargaining, Skills of trade union work, Preparing instructors and Teaching basic literacy.

Conducting correspondence courses along the lines followed in Norway soon proved unworkable, because the postal services were too unreliable. Instead, a system was developed whereby students would meet with their teacher, get new books and study materials, and then hand in their written work at the WEA branch offices. Over the years, however, these correspondence courses were gradually scaled down, finally stopping completely in 1992. According to Mr. Mustafa, the reason was that the courses, which were aimed at those who were to become local tutors, only managed to impart information but not teaching skills. It was judged to be an inefficient use of resources. The idea of having trade unionists sitting at home with the study material in-between meetings with the teacher at the branch offices did not work, so the meetings with the teachers developed into normal courses. However some people, like the Tanta region branch secretary, felt that the correspondence courses had yielded good results. He actually was in favour of the continuation of these courses. Also the Postal Workers Union mentioned the correspondence courses as useful.

The original objective of the LO/ETUF project was to establish workers education in Egypt by means of correspondence courses – so-called “distance learning”. This objective has not been met. Some lessons have been learned, however. The main lesson was that teaching by correspondence transferred information to the students, but fell short of transferring skills. In an institute whose main objective is to teach trainers, the development of



skills is of course vital. The methodology of correspondence course has not, however, been taken up by other parts of the WEA, where transfer of information plays a more central role. The LO/ETUF project cannot be said to be unsuccessful even if the original objective has not been met. Nonetheless, it would have been natural for the WEI and LO to undertake some sort of evaluation before shifting away from the main objective of the project in 1992.

## Literacy training

Of current activities, the literacy training courses comprised a category of their own. Over the past few years, The demand for such courses within the union movement has decreased, probably due to the general reduction of illiteracy in Egypt and because, in the new economic environment, unions naturally move away from socio-political activities towards core trade union work. The latter should be encouraged, as the unions will need all the resources available to maintain their membership and take on the new tasks of protecting their members and undertaking collective bargaining. Instead of reducing their activity in the field of literacy training, the Institute has devoted some of their resources (including funds from LO/ETUF) to teach literacy trainers in the police force, as can be seen in table 5.4. Even if these trainers are to work with illiterate conscripts from poor families, this is not an activity that falls within the guidelines of the project; it also fall outside the general objectives of Norwegian trade union development co-operation.

The best solution might be to remove the entire literacy training component from any future projects. If the WEI wished to continue with this activity, it could seek other sources of finance.

Table 5.4 Courses for eradicating illiteracy, 1997

Trade Union/Place	Date	Males	Females	Total
The Police	3/5 till 22/5	26	1	27
The Police	5/7 till 24/7	22	5	27
The Police	7/6 till 26/6	30	–	30
The Police	4/10 till 23/10	28	–	28
The Police	1/11 till 20/11	23	4	27
<i>Total</i>		129	10	139

## **Trade union rights, collective bargaining and privatisation**

Training in trade union rights, including the new labour law and international labour standards, started in 1994. Collective bargaining started as one subject within the correspondence courses but has in recent years been developed into a residential course. The first course on privatisation was held in 1995, after privatisation had been a subject on the courses of collective bargaining the year before. All three topics represent important new approaches in the development of workers education in Egypt, where the WEI and the LO/ETUF-sponsored project have been frontrunner. Many, including the head of the Postal Workers Union, mentioned that the WEI had been a pioneer in introducing the subject of trade union rights into worker education in Egypt.

Table 5.5 lists the trade union rights courses held in 1997. These courses include subjects like workers' rights within the framework of human rights; trade union rights and freedom in Egyptian legislation; the structure and objectives of the ILO; ILO conventions on the right to organise and collective bargaining; Arab labour standards; and mechanisms for protecting trade union rights.

Courses on privatisation, listed for 1997 in table 5.6, include subjects like; the reforms of Egyptian economy and the role of ETUF; the impact of economical changes on the labour market; and the legal aspects of the privatisation process.

The curriculum in the collective bargaining courses, listed for 1997 in table 5.7, has been developed over time. Instructors at the WEI have been able to benefit from literature on international experience, the findings in the case studies and other Egyptian sources, as well as from the experience and feedback given by the participants. The WEI has become a focal point for know-how on collective bargaining in Egypt today, as reflected by the fact that also the Ministry of Manpower and the Employers Associations have called upon the instructors from the institute. Subjects through at the courses for unionists include Egypt's economic reform policy; the basis of collective bargaining; strategy and structure of collective bargaining (with role play); contract language; arbitration; complaints procedure; and how to implement agreed contracts. The WEI gets constant feedback from former participants who have used this knowledge in local negotiations. The courses were mentioned by several of the national unions and former participants as being highly relevant and in great demand.

## **Development of training material**

The WEI has worked systematically to improve the available teaching materials, using illustrations, small stories, and dialogues to improve the text. The Institute has further been working to adopt a modern and reader-friendly language. This is based on a strategic decision taken after some discussion and aimed at bridging the gap between the written Arabic and the everyday spoken language. In countries like Egypt this gap is a real problem hampering both reading skills and the circulation of written material among workers.

Table 5.5 Courses on trade union rights, 1997

Trade Union/Place	Date	Males	Females	Total
General Trade Union of Commerce	3/5 till 8/5	27	–	27
General Trade Union of Banks	24/5 till 29/5	27	–	27
General Trade Union of Commerce	26/7 till 31/7	19	1	20
General Trade Union of Administrative Services	20/12 till 25/12	25	–	25
General Trade Union of Education and Scientific Research	4/1 till 9/1	38	–	38
<i>Total</i>		138	1	139

Table 5.6 Courses on the role of the trade unions in privatisation, 1997

Trade Union/Place	Date	Males	Females	Total
General Trade Union of Engineering Industries	5/7 till 8/7	29	–	29
General Trade Union of Commerce	3/5 till 6/5	25	–	25
General Trade Union of Post	7/6 till 10/6	25	12	37
Port Said Governorate	8/3 till 11/3	29	–	29
General Trade Union of Commerce	5/4 till 8/4	25	5	30
General Trade Union of Education and Scientific Research	2/8 till 5/8	24	–	24
Kafr El Dawar	9/8 till 12/8	22	–	22
General Trade Union of Education and Scientific Research	23/8 till 26/8	20	–	20
General Trade Union of Administrative Services	13/12 till 16/12	23	2	25
<i>Total</i>		250	19	269

Table 5.7 Courses on collective bargaining, 1997

Trade Union/Place	Date	Males	Females	Total
Trade Union of Commerce	6/9 till 11/9	25	–	25
General Trade Union of Health Services	22/11 till 27/11	24	1	25
General Trade Union of Administrative Services	6/12 till 11/12	28	–	28
Local Federation	20/12 till 25/12	25	–	25
General Trade Union of Administrative Services	13/9 till 18/9	36	3	39
<i>Total</i>		138	4	142

The Institute has gone from handouts to sturdier books that the participants can also use for reference later on. This was a point that nearly all the former participants interviewed found very useful. A book like *Trade Union Skills* is printed in approximately 2,000 copies a year.

From a longer-term perspectives, it is clear that the Institute needs to start educating the union officials that training is a necessity and that unions should contribute some of their own funds for this purpose. This is especially true of the local unions, where most the money is to be found. One step could be to start charging at least a minimal amount for the study material produced by the Institute. This could be done by establishing a fund for developing and printing material.

Table 5.8 List of publications produced through the LO/ETUF project

Book Title (in English translation)	Year of Issue
Adults Education Manual	83/84
Occupational Health and Safety	84/85
The Contemporary Trade Union Movement	85/86
The Relationship between Woman and Negotiations	86/87
The Working Woman and Egyptian Society	88/89
Trade Union Skills (4 editions)	88/89, 93, 95 and 97
Studies in the Preparation of Tutors	89/90
How to Educate Illiterates	90/91
Basic Principles of Adult Education	91/92
Collective Bargaining	93/94
Case Studies on Chemical Hazards, 1 and 2	94/95
A Case Study on Trade Union Freedoms and Rights	95/96
A Case Study on Occupational Safety (Textiles Sector)	95/96
A Case Study on the Work Environment and Related Legislation	95/96
3 Case Studies on Collective Bargaining, 1, 2 and 3	96/97
A Case Study on the Role of the Trade Union Organisation in the Stage of Economic Transformation	97/98
A Case Study on Gender Sensitivity and the Role of Legislation	97/98

## Pedagogical methods

The WEI would appear to be at the forefront in the WEA when it comes to developing new pedagogical methods. On the basis of the recognition that this is adult education, an increasingly participatory approach has been introduced, one that makes use of the experience already held by the participants. Objectives of the training are explained to the participants and the training is systematically assessed by the use of evaluation sheets. According to Mr. Mostafa, there is a clear change from ten years ago, both regarding pedagogical me-

thods and more user-friendly study material, although some union leaders still insisted on giving regular lectures when asked to contribute in seminars and courses.

Teaching techniques employed include group discussions, brainstorming, role-play, self-study, use of the library and the use of case studies. Especially the use of case studies prepared by the WEI was reported to be successful. The WEI has also started using AV aids like overhead, slides and video. To some extent the new pedagogical methods seemed to trickle on down to the training exercises held in the 55 branches, but here traditional lecturing still played a major role. Branches were not in general equipped with any technical aids like overheads or videos.

Several of the participants and users interviewed, like the Postal Union Education Secretary, called for longer courses and more detailed and tailor-made introductions and material. Some also wanted a series of courses with a definite progression. This may be needed, especially in a system where some union officials are trained so often as in Egypt. Participants interviewed reported that it was not uncommon to attend three or more courses per year. At the WEI, no one was allowed to attend the same course more than once.

Some also called for more exposure to experience from other countries. Even though one should proceed cautiously here, it was apparent that the international experiences that had been brought in by the LO/ETUF project and other courses provided vital input for union officials engaged in reshaping the Egyptian trade union movement to enable it to carry out its new roles.

## 6 Conclusions and recommendations

The overall impression of the Workers Education Institute is that of a well-run, smoothly functioning institute, very much able to conduct training and fulfil its role within the WEA and under this project. Administrative and reporting routines seem to have developed over the years to a satisfactory level, as have planning routines, implementation and internal evaluation.

Most important of all: the WEI has developed into a dynamic organisation, a pioneer in introducing new topics and new learning methods. This takes place in interaction with the national unions and with participants from the national and local levels. The knowledge generated is also transferred into the development of teaching materials, making for example the book on collective bargaining probably the most important reference document on this issue in Egypt today.

The major weakness of the project is therefore its dependency on donated funds. The kind of donations that LO Norway has provided should never become a substitute for permanent local funding. The intention is simply to help activities get off the ground, not to function as a subsidy of running costs. The LO/ETUF project at the WEI has been running ever since 1981. Here, however, it should be noted that donated funds comprise only about one-third of the total WEI turnover. Moreover, the funds have been used to support various innovative activities, the most successful of which have trickled down into locally funded activities.

During these times of transition, the ETUF is in a general danger of rebuilding its training and education, relying too much on foreign donations and hence forgetting to teach members to pay for this service.

The transition of the Egyptian economy is still very much in an early phase. The ETUF has a tremendous task ahead in adapting to the new environment. It is the belief of the evaluation team that the LO/ETUF education project has been helpful for the ETUF in preparing a new generation of trade union officials, especially through the pioneer role played by WEI in schooling female trade unionists and in developing courses and training material in collective bargaining and trade union rights. It can therefore be recommended a continuation of the project on a small-scale innovative basis.

It could be relevant to introduce some new activities into a possible prolongation of the project. One such activity would be training of organisers. Until now, the recruitment of new members has not been a major activity within the ETUF, but in the future it will be vital in order to get into the private sector. Another possible activity would be to look into how the Egyptian trade union movement should react to the establishment of workers' shareholder clubs in the enterprises.

**Other recommendations:**

- To get a better understanding of the role of collective bargaining in a market economy, the full-time staff at the WEI should be offered the possibility of relevant training outside Egypt.
- To increase local revenues collected by the WEA, at least a minimal amount should be charged for the study material produced by the WEI. This could be done by establishing a fund for developing and printing materials.
- Literacy training within the police force falls outside the general objectives of Norwegian trade union development co-operation. Literacy training should not be a component of any future projects.
- Greater emphasis should be put on recruiting female participants to all courses, parallel to maintaining the special courses for women.

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## Appendix 1 Programme for field visit

Monday 16/11/1998:

- Meeting with Mr. Abdel Salara Ayad, Deputy General Director of the Workers Education Association; discussion: project, programmes, participants and methodologies.
- Meeting with some of the female instructors engaged by the Workers Education Institute to implement project programmes for the working woman.

Tuesday 17/11/1998:

- Meeting with Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Mostafa, Dean of the Workers Education Institute. Preview of education programmes, lists of participants and training methods. Recognition of the Egyptian counterpart's viewpoint concerning project inputs, and discussion of suggestions.

Wednesday 18/11/1998:

- Meeting with participants in the "Course of Trade Union Skills" implemented by the Workers Education Institute through the Programme at Helwan Centre for Workers Education.
- Meeting with Mr. Mostafa Mongy, First Vice President of the Egyptian Trade Union Federation, at Helwan Centre for Workers Education.

Thursday 19/11/1998:

- Review of the education programmes and documents (*continued*).
- Meeting at the Workers Education Institute with Mr Ibrahim Ramadan, President of the General Trade Union of Health Services and President of the Regional Trade Union Federation of Giza Governorate, to discuss how the Union has benefited from the programme.
- Meeting at the Workers Education Institute with some of the female leaders and the Secretary of the Working Woman of the General Trade Union of Health Services as an example of female WEI graduates who have attained leading positions in the trade union organisation.
- Meeting with Mr. Magdy Sharara, one of the trade union leaders at the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan city as an example of the male WEI graduates who have attained leading positions in the trade union organisation.

Saturday 21/11/1998:

- Meeting with Mr. Hamdy Yaseen, President of the General Trade Union of Postal Services, to discuss how the Union has benefited from the programme.
- Meeting with Mr. Hassan Ead, Former Secretary of the Egyptian Trade Union Federation for International Relations and one of the veteran trade unionists who laid the foundations of the Cooperation Programme between Norwegian and Egyptian trade unions.
- Meeting with Mr. Magdy Ead, Secretary of Workers Education at the General Trade Postal Services, as an example of WEI graduates who have attained leading positions in the trade union organisation.
- Meeting with Ms. Ragaa Rushdy, Secretary of the Working Woman at the General Trade Union of Postal Services, as an example of female WEI graduates who have attained leading positions in the trade union organisation.
- Meeting with Mrs. Aisha Abdel Hady, Secretary of the Egyptian Trade Union Federation for the Working Woman and Child Affairs.
- Meeting with Professor Dr. Ahmed Hassan Al Boraei, National Co-ordinator of the Draft Labour Law.

Sunday 22/11/1998:

- Meeting with Mr. Farouk Shehata, President of the General Trade Union of Banks and Finance, to discuss how the Union has benefited from the programme.
- Meeting with Mrs. Nahed Basyouny, Secretary of the Working Woman at the General Trade Union of Banks and Insurance, as an example of female WEI graduates who have attained leading positions in the trade union organisation.
- Meeting with Mr. Ahmed Abdel Zaher, President of the General Trade Union of the Administrative and Social Services, to discuss how the Union has benefited from the programme.
- Meeting with the Secretary of the Working Woman at the General Trade Union of the Administrative and Social Services, as an example of female WEI graduates who have attained leading positions in the trade union organisation.
- Meeting with Mr. Essam Refaat, Editor-in-Chief of *Al Abram Iqtsadi Magazine* (Al Ahram Economist).
- Meeting with Dr. Emad Eddin Hassan, Director-General of the Workers Education Association.
- Meetings with Workers Education tutors and trainers at the Workers University.

Monday 23/11/1998:

- Departure for Tanta (Gharbiya Governorate). Meeting with some graduates from Project Courses to get their impressions and to inquire how the project was beneficial for them.
- Meeting with some of the instructors engaged by the Workers Education Institute to implement the programme.

Tuesday 24/11/1998:

- Meeting with Mr. Bakry Farghaly, President of the General Trade Union of Communications Workers, to discuss how the Union has benefited from the programme.
- Meeting with Mr. Salah Idris, Secretary of Workers Education at the General Trade Union of Communications Workers, as an example of WEI graduates who have attained leading positions in the trade union organisation.
- Meeting with Mr. Ahmed Yacoub, President of the General Trade Union of Commerce Workers, to discuss how the Union has benefited from the programme.
- Meeting with Mr. Emad Al Eleemy, Secretary of Workers Education at the General Trade Union of Commerce, as an example of WEI graduates who have attained leading positions in the trade union organisation.

Wednesday 25/11/1998:

- Meeting with Mr. Elsayed Moharned Rashid, President of Egyptian Trade Union Federation.
- Meeting with Mr. Ahmed Al Arnawy, Minister of Manpower and Immigration.
- Meeting with Professor Walid Kazziha, American University in Cairo.

Thursday 26/11/1998:

- Meeting with Mr Hamdy Moward Ibrahim, Instructor at WEI.
- General Review of the work of the Evaluation Committee.

# Evaluation of Education Activities at the Workers Education Institute in Cairo



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