Soha Mohamed
Attending CIES 2015 was my first and last chance to participate with GSE in an international conference, after a year on my graduation. The conference was huge. Many sessions taking place at the same time, which made me very meticulous about which topics to attend. The workshop I attended on the first day was really impressive. It guided me with other attendees to understand what is to customize an educational plan according to available inputs and circumstances. On the following days, I tried to attend presentations related to my theme of interest: ‘Citizenship Education, ‘Equality & Social Justice Education’, ‘Global Education’ and other related themes. Although not all the presentations were up to the expected level or even focusing on their topics, some were very interesting covering special points. A presentation that addressed the diversity of teachers’ personalities and how far it can affect their way of teaching and their communication with students. It showed that there is no ‘typical teacher’s character’ that should be expected. Another presentation was on how those two MA students started, at a very early age, achieving students’ mobility by creating colored paper passports for KG students and simulating the whole process of visiting new places and getting to know about those places.

**Presentation Title:** “Citizenship Education In Egypt: A Critical Content Analysis Of The Egyptian Citizenship Education Textbooks, After The January 25th Revolution”.

**Abstract**

**Objectives:** After the January 25th Revolution, which was led by youth, the younger generations were seeking more political and civic knowledge. It became an urge for this kind of knowledge to be presented by the formal educational institute, in order to provide a correct reliable source. This research analyzes the five ‘National Education’ textbooks that have been issued and taught in public and vocational secondary schools after the revolution, to track how far the concepts and the principles of citizenship have been reflected. The research examines the progress of the content of citizenship education as presented in the Egyptian textbooks, known as ‘National Education’, after the January 25th Revolution. In addition, this research sheds light on the gap that might exist between theoretical knowledge in textbooks and what students experience in their real lives.

**Theoretical/Conceptual Framework:** This research presented literature that discusses citizenship education on both global and Egyptian levels, in an attempt to collectively articulate the objectives and purposes of teaching citizenship education in general, focusing on the content in particular.

**Results:** The results show that there has been a remarkable improvement in the content of the ‘National Education’ textbooks, especially those taught in the academic year of
2013/14. On the other hand, such improvement could be in vain as these textbooks are presented in the Egyptian educational system as a pass/fail subject that does not add to the final grade. Accordingly, despite its importance in building ‘good citizens’, citizenship education does not receive the same attention as other subjects that count in the grade point average (GPA). Hence, the Ministry of Education should focus more on finding low budget policies and pedagogies to invest in the content of such textbooks to really achieve citizenship education objectives.

Ahmed Zorkani:
I felt that it is a huge accomplishment to have my individual presentation proposal accepted by such a big conference as CIES 2015. Especially with it being the 59th iteration. I felt it speaks a lot about the quality of work produced by myself, as a fresh graduate of the MA just last February. It was an attestation of, and reward for, the quality of work that was the culmination of the MA. I have presented at quite a few international conferences, such as AMICAL and AECT. By far, the CIES community was the most relevant. This lead to an exchange of knowledge and networking among real peers, real field experts, and due to the size of CIES, a really diverse community. I am also very proud of my GSE colleagues, both graduates and students, for whom I have attended great presentations.

Presentation title: “Teaching beyond classroom walls: an intervention study of classroom action research on applying the flipped classroom model”

Abstract:
Students spend more of their studying time in their homes and/or at different other locations, than the time they spend face-to-face with their instructors in a classroom. Thus, this limited classroom time is precious and needs to be utilized to the maximum benefit of the learners.

Traditional teaching methods that utilize one-way lecturing inside the classroom, use-up this valuable and limited classroom time, leaving little time for interactive activities and active learning to take place. In addition, lectures become something in the past of the learner, having already happened, and learners will never re-live them again. Furthermore, good note takers could have been able to take notes, while slow/absent ones, may not have such good notes.

Instead, flipping the classroom can be utilized to free most of the face-to-face time. The model is that the conceptual and theoretical parts of the content, which used to be lectured in the classroom, get delivered as online videos, interactive online modules, or even as readings. Students view these online deliverable at their homes before class. Enabling them to view them at their own pace, take notes at their leisure, and have the luxury of reviewing
them repeatedly when needed. Then the practical aspects of the content, that used to be homework, are carried out inside the classroom. Class time can then be used to carry out active, collaborative, and cooperative learning (Tucker, 2012). Transforming the instructor to a guide, a facilitator, and a mentor for active learning in the classroom, rather than a lecturer. Utilizing student-centered instructional strategies such as cooperative learning, inquiry-based learning, and peer instruction to allow the learners a greater level of independence. This would motivate the learners and enhance their twenty first century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration, as well as life skills like being flexible and adaptable to change (PMIEF, 2014).

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**Nashwa Moheyeldine:**
Attending the CIES, made me feel, WOW, there's a lot going on there! The CIES, Comparative and International Comparative Society is one the largest international conferences that brings together world-wide scholars and practitioners of education. On a single day, there would be six sessions, each for an hour and a half. During each of these sessions, 25 panels would be running at the same time. Each panel includes 4 presentations, presenting their research and experience, on a common theme. It really takes you a lot of time to make up your mind and choose which panel to attend. All of them are just amazing! Other than the panels, the conference had other wonderful opportunities!

**Special Interest Groups (SIG)** The CIES has special interest groups, within the huge field of education. These include Citizenship and democratic education, Global literacy, Peace education, Early childhood Development, Middle East and lots more. Following the special interest groups panels allow you to easily track the panels of your interest. At the same time participating in the SIG, allows you to meet scholars and practitioners in your field of interest, and build your networks.

**Meeting Distinguished professors** Meeting Linda Darling Hammond, Carlos Torres, Michael Apple and more authors you have been reading for, is a great opportunity.

**Cinematic Spaces of Education Festivalette** The conference provided a platform for displaying international films that bring local education issues and reality to the conference space! A wonderful experience. I hope next time we would be able to bring an Egyptian film to conference.

**International exhibitors** Simultaneously, during the conference, international Universities and organizations, displayed books for sale as well as flyers of their work

**New Scholars/ Publications Workshop** I find out about a new committee, that organized special workshops for those researchers new to the field of academia. The various workshops gave tips on publishing, choosing your career path and building networks.

**Panel Title:** Privatization, economic development and education
Presentation title: Reinventing education through student voice: Towards a humanistic private education in Egypt
Abstract:
Panel of 4 GSE students, chaired by Dr Nagwa Megahed (GSE faculty).

Panel topic: Civil Society Organizations and Youth Movements in Support of Humanist Education: Case Studies of Educational Initiatives for Peace-Building, Empowerment, and Global Citizenship in Egypt

Shereen Aly

Attending CIES conference in March 2015 was the most important academic experience in my Master’s journey. Knowing that I have witnessed several transformational experiences through my Master’s journey, however attending the conference is for me the peak. I have gained so much from this experience on different levels. Mainly the exposure to all these scholars and researchers who are interested in the same field I am interested in (peace education). Also gaining access to a lot of publications and books related to my research interests and learning about new publications that were coming up. And having opportunity to share our work and research which opened possible channels for publishing and conducting joint research projects.

Presentation Title: Egyptian Youth Building a Peaceful Community: A Case Study of "Selmeyya" Movement

Abstract:
During the past three years, Egypt has undergone huge transformations at all levels; political, social and cultural; and it is believed that this is only the beginning of a long journey. Through this period, it became clear that the Egyptian society is not as tolerant as it would like to be, there is still discrimination against religion, ethnicities, social classes, political ideologies, etc. A dire need to create a culture of tolerance, acceptance and co-existence has emerged and become obvious. In turn, questions concerning the role of education in the Egyptian community arise; what are Egyptians educating for and can peace education be a viable solution? Realizing that peace education is the way to unite any fragmented society, in 2012 a group of youth-led initiatives and organizations decided to create a movement called “Selmeyya” - meaning peaceful or in peace, which was a cheer used during the 25th of January 2011 revolution. Their main goal has been to work together towards “promoting the culture of peace”. This study examines “Selmeyya” as a movement from the following aspects: a) The motivation and drives for this group of youth to focus on peace education; b) The structure of their initiatives, how the curriculum are designed and whether they fit within Ian Harris" (2007) categorization and model of peace education; c) The dynamic of creating a youth movement, which is not common in Egypt, and d) how this collective youth movement has affected the initiatives of peace education and vice versa. Employing a qualitative approach, the study relies on in-depth interviews and participant-observation for data collection. The findings of the study represent the first
attempt to document youth movement and many of the initiatives and projects under its umbrella in Egypt, an area that is striving for a better understanding of its contexts, dynamics and implications for societies in transitional periods.

**Shaimaa Awad**

Attending such a great international conference like the CIES is a rich learning opportunity. I also consider myself very lucky as this is my second time to attend this conference; last year in Toronto (CIES 2014) and this year in Washington D.C. (CIES 2015). Presenting in this conference twice is a great accomplishment as having my name amongst such big names of famous scholars is an honor to me. Also something to be mentioned is the distinguishable presence of GSE through its leaders, faculty, graduates and students. This allowed for a sense of support and pride and a good representation of AUC in general within such an international well-known academic society. In addition to the previous, the conference provides a huge opportunity for exchanging experiences, networking and exposure to different cultures.

The conference this year was really rich and dense. Even the number of workshops provided on the first day and their contents varied. The program contained many rich research topics. However, I tried to narrow down my selection to my topics of interest which included citizenship education, global citizenship and teacher education. I really enjoyed the cinema festivalette that presented real movies from different countries which reflected the educational situations in those countries and the obstacles that people face there.

Our panel was a successful one; we were four presenters all GSE students. The attendees were really impressed by our researches and topics. It is also worth mentioning that our panel was a Peace Education SIG highlighted session.

**Presentation Title:** “Civil Society Organization Support to Global Citizenship through Character Education in Egypt A Case Study of the Human Foundation Organization”

**Abstract:**

With the rise of globalization and the need to have a set of universal values respected by all humanity regardless of differences in cultures or religious beliefs, the importance of global citizenship education has emerged. As mentioned by many scholars that we live in a highly connected and interdependent world, where the actions of some citizens on one side of the globe greatly affect other people’s lives, thus all our lives, jobs and even the food we eat are also connected and affected by global growth. Thus, it is becoming profoundly needed to get a generation of people who are fully aware of and able to meet the current problems that confront humanity. Research showed that the more the notion of interconnectedness...
and interdependence of the world is recognized, the more the need for having some universal values like tolerance, fairness, acceptance, compassion and respect for diversity that help in stimulating a sense of universal belonging and oneness with the humanity. These constitute basic global citizenship values. This study focuses on the experience of a civil society organization in implementing a character building program for Egyptian children. Theoretically, the study is grounded in relevant literature and theories related to the field of global citizenship education, especially in terms of dealing with the moral aspects of it. Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative approach. This includes a) undertaking document reviews of the program’s purposes, components and procedures of implementation; b) collecting qualitative data using a survey with open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews with the program designer, twelve trainers, three public school social counselors who facilitated the implementation of this program at some public schools; and c) conducting observation of the program implementation in two classrooms in a private school. Findings of the study revealed that the civil society organization examined in this case study and its education program support school and community in building well-rounded Egyptian characters who possess moral values and manifest those values in their relationships with others. This perceived impact of the program is aligned with other programs for promoting global citizenship and the required traits of global citizens. The study recommends the integration of similar character education programs in Egyptian schools which would act as a beginning for introducing Global Citizenship Education to Egyptian students.

Heba Shaheen
This was my first time going to a conference, and this wasn’t any conference, it was a very special one; it felt like attending the Oscars, but for educators. In the CIES I saw people I only read about in my research work. CIES was an eye-opener to different research from different countries. The whole experience was a very inspiring one, where I got the chance to meet with people from very diverse backgrounds and countries. I attended many general sessions, on various topics like global citizenship education, socio emotional development in education, integrating technology inside the classroom, privatization, and African practices in the field of education. I also learned a lot about the UBUNTU concept, which was the theme of the conference. Ubuntu emphasizes the collective responsibility we should have towards our culture, where we share, respect and participate together in our communities. A very peaceful approach that need to be part of our everyday practices. I also attended Special Interest Group (SIG) sessions on sustainable development, as that’s the scope of my research. I figured out that Egypt is still so behind in the field of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), as compared to other countries. Most advanced countries are more concerned with the aspect of social justice in ESD, while Egypt is still
trying to establish the environmental segment of ESD, which most developed countries are
done with. I was very proud to be part of this panel and do my presentation in front of most
of the GSE faculty. I felt so embraced by the support and care that Dr. Samiha gave me on a
personal level; she was so worried about me because I was staying alone in the hotel. On a
professional level, I’d like to thank the GSE faculty who strengthened us and encouraged us
to attend such a reputable conference. I have always heard them say they’re very proud of
us, and I say we’re very honored to have you as our role models and delightful educators.

**Presentation title:** Civil Society Engagement and Education for Sustainable Development
(ESD) in Egypt: A Case Study of the EduCamp Initiative.

**Abstract:**
This study focuses on the EduCamp Initiative for Sustainable Development, which
represents an example of a “Multi-level cooperation of Multi-stakeholders.” Through a
partnership between European and national Egyptian universities with local stakeholders
and NGOs, and TEMPUS being the funding international agency, the EduCamp initiative
intends to upgrade both the Egyptian curriculum, in terms of ESD, and the teaching
methodologies therein. The EduCamp produced toolkits that include student-centered
activities to enhance problem-solving skills and critical thinking. This study examines this
initiative and the collaboration between the Ministry of Education (MoE), the German
International funds (GIZ) and the American University in Cairo (Center for Sustainable
Development). The initiative is implemented in public schools in slum areas in Egypt
aiming at building a school-community partnership for sustainable development. The study
examines the EduCamp’s activities in a public school located in a slum area in Egypt called
El Warraq. These activities include development of a summer educational and recreational
program with hands-on activities that bring key sustainable development concepts to
school students, in the form of games, outdoor activities, group discussion, experiments,
etc. Around forty teachers, from two public schools, will go through a training program to
empower their teaching pedagogies, and then will implement what they learned in the
summer program. Depending on qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis
that include document review, surveys, observations, focus groups, and interviews, the
study addresses the following questions:

- What is distinguished about the EduCamp initiative, as a development project in terms of
  its innovative approach and its implementation strategy in Egypt?
- Within El Warraq context, how did the participants in this project perceive the
  collaboration and engagement among teachers, students, NGO, MoE, GIZ and the
  community?
- To what extent did the community engage in the project’s activities (resist/support)?
- What are the similarities and differences as well as the impact of the EduCamp Initiative compared to other ESD initiatives in other countries?

The study emphasizes the need for a participatory approach and a paradigm shift to achieve a more effective/sustainable educational reform. In that the three spheres, of economy (funds), politics (MoE), and the community must join forces and work ‘horizontally’ to achieve education for sustainable development in slum areas in Egypt.

Ola Hosny:
Attending and presenting at the CIES conference was a breakeven point in my life! It was a real experience that added much to my thoughts and believes. Being a member in such a rich opportunity participated in modeling my work vision and carrying further commitment to education development in Egypt. For now, the following bullets explore my main benefits of attending and presenting at the CIES, and I’m sure more will arise.

Networking Meeting experts, professors, and professionals from all over the world was very inspiring for me! Although it is my first time to participate in an international conference, to some extent I was able to establish contacts with new people with different backgrounds and from different countries, an issue that I believe would support me in my future research.

Publishing Opportunity Presenting my work in an international conference helped me find two publishing opportunities. I’m not yet sure about their credibility, but I’m confident now that participating in international conference help scholars bring their work to light.

Funding Possibility Participating in the CIES helped me get familiar with different funding opportunities not only for attending international conferences, but for funding new research ideas as well.

International perspectives Attending multiple sessions and getting involved in diversified discussions and working groups provided me with a new lens of my work. The opinions I heard and the perspectives shared were extremely helpful in opening new terms to my research that I can focus in the future, incorporating more global factors and data.

Culture Exchange Having the opportunity of meeting different nationalities and chatting with them widened my vision to globalization and its importance in integrating it in the non-formal education as well.

Presentation Title: “Young Rural Women’s Perspectives on the Impact of Education Supported Development Projects on their Lives: Cases from Upper Egypt Governorates”.

Abstract:
Young people in any country are the main agents for growth, development and transformation. Among young people, the poor are highly dispossessed from entering the
labor market due to their poverty, low education quality and lack of life skills. Non-formal education in Egypt was born to fill this gap in formal education in reaching the poor and to contribute to the improvement of the economic, social and cultural well-beings of underserved communities. This study gives a special attention to young rural women of the poor, being the most deprived segment of the education and employment services in Egypt. Through the implementation of different development projects, young rural women are targeted to be prepared to act as role models to effect positive real changes to their communities, releasing their capacities that have been jammed with the unequal gender, socio-economic and power relations. Nevertheless, there is dearth of data on the extent of change such projects have affected to the communities from the beneficiaries' perspectives. The study focuses on three developmental projects implemented in the south of Egypt governorates (known as Upper Egypt governorates). It examines young rural women's perspectives on the impact of these education supported development projects on their lives. A mixed methods approach is implemented where qualitative and quantitative data were collected from a sample of 37 women who participated in these projects. In addition, project staff, parents and community leaders were interviewed and responded to survey questions in order to identify socio-cultural factors that enabled or hindered the potential impact of these projects. The findings of the study offer a better understanding of development projects implemented in Upper Egypt governorates, in terms of their relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.