in Shalateen, Egypt, women work on handicrafts to sell through the Konoz Yadaweya online platform led by a Pioneer of Egypt.
Synergos goals in the Middle East and North Africa
Social Entrepreneurship for Systemic Change

Since 2008, Synergos has worked in the Middle East and North Africa, creating enabling environments that allow social entrepreneurship to thrive, directly supporting outstanding entrepreneurs across the region, and focusing attention on particular geographic areas to ensure greater success for such entrepreneurs.

We are not only helping raise the number of people and communities these social entrepreneurs serve directly, but can also test ideas that can be replicated by others, inform public policy, and provide opportunities to engage business, government, and civil society to modify, in new efforts.

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Pioneers of Egypt, Promoting Social Entrepreneurship and Volunteerism in Egypt.

Pioneers of Egypt, has an overall goal to expand employment and self-employment opportunities, particularly for youth, and supporting the new generation of social innovators.

The program aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

Volunteers program
Enhance the skills of Egyptian youth through a Volunteerism program that will place 1,000 young people at businesses and social enterprises.

Startups program
Enhance the skills and leadership potential of 50 start-up social entrepreneurs who are engaged in promising work, by providing them with training and networking opportunities, to advance their ideas and programs.

Pioneers program
Strengthen Social enterprises in Egypt, by supporting 20 Social entrepreneurs and helping them scale up their social enterprises.

In Cairo, Families with low income generate revenue by planting crops planted on their rooftop farms built through Showered in Egypt.

In Cairo, organizing art performances in public spaces by D-Caf (Downtown contemporary Art Festival) led by a Pioneer of Egypt.
Pioneers of Egypt (July 2015 – January 2016) Timeline

July
- Pioneers of Egypt project launch
- Developing outreach plan
- Designing master plan
- Project team building

August
- Developing an overall monitoring and evaluation plan
- Designing Pioneer’s reporting forms contract.
- Mentoring and training Pioneers of Palestine team in Jordan

September
- Designing selection process and eligibility criteria for (Pioneers – Start-ups and Volunteers)
- Call for pioneers program (8 October)
- UNV event (24 October)

October
- Call for pioneers program (8 October)
- UNV event (24 October)
- Designing needed forms for each component of the project
- Launching the startups program (1 January 2016)

November
- Call for pioneers program (8 October)
- UNV event (24 October)
- Launching the startups program (1 January 2016)
- Developing an overall monitoring and evaluation plan
- Designing Pioneer’s reporting forms contract.
- Mentoring and training Pioneers of Palestine team in Jordan

December
- Start selection process of 20 pioneers (31 December–in process)
- “your start-up realized” event in Beni Suef (12 December)
- Global entrepreneurship week (19 November)
- Jobs and volunteering opportunities fair in Qena (28 November)
- Cairo innovates (24 November – 25 November)
- Ismailia info session (17 November)
- Aswan info session (15 November)
- Red sea info session (9 November)
- Dakahllya info session (13 November)
- Alexandria info session (4 November)
- Cairo info session (5 November)

January
- Launching the startups program (1 January 2016)
Pioneers of Egypt outreach activities

Pioneers of Egypt team engaged in several activities to spread the idea of the program in different governorates. Below is a non-exhaustive set of practical outreach activities that we have implemented in the last three months.

**Information sessions**

Pioneers of Egypt team organized 6 information sessions across Egypt. Its main objective was to raise awareness of the program, clarify the eligibility criteria of the Pioneers, start-ups and volunteers program and familiarize potential applicants to the application and the selection process.

**Publications Distributing**

Publications are one of the important tools that helped us to expand the geographic coverage. That meant to reach not only different governorates within short time period but also to spread the project idea among diverse applicants. Over 2500 flyers were distributed to promote for the three components of the pioneers of Egypt program.

**Social Media**

Facebook is the most popular social network in Egypt, Egypt is ranked as the 14th worldwide in terms of audience size and 1st in the Arab region with 22.4 million users, which is why Facebook was chosen to be the main platform for Pioneers of Egypt social media campaign. Facebook provides a great opportunity to engage in a creative and dynamic way.
Participating in Entrepreneurship & volunteerism related events.

Cairo Innovates
Location: Cairo
Organizer: Nahdet Elmahrousa
Audience: Start-ups, Social innovators.
Objective: Cairo Innovates is an annual international exhibition that aims to activate interest and enthusiasm for science and innovation, increasing Egypt’s productivity and global competitiveness. It gathers innovators, inventors, entrepreneurs in addition to banks, civil society representatives, with presence of media outlets.
Participation: Networking with entrepreneurs and civil society representatives.

United Nations volunteers fair
Location: Cairo
Organizer: United nations volunteers program.
Audience: Volunteers, Social innovators.
Objective: offering volunteering opportunities, highlighting the positive impact of the participating projects on the society.
Participation: Through an assigned booth, we spread the word about the program and explained the applications and the selection process.

South Valley university (jobs and volunteering opportunities fair)
Location: Qena
Organizer: Career development center – South Valley University
Audience: Volunteers
Objective: introducing “the volunteers can” program to South Valley University students. Networking with development associations in Qena Participation: Through an assigned booth, we spread the word about the program and explained the applications and the selection process.

Global Entrepreneurship week conference
Location: Red Sea
Main organizer: Middle East Council for small Business & Entrepreneurship
Target Audience: Pioneers and start-ups
Event objective: Networking with the most Entrepreneurship eco system in Egypt
Type of participation:
A Session on community engagement as a driver for social entrepreneurship.

ODAR Academy – your start-up realized
Location: Beni Suef
Organizer: Beni Suef governorate and ODAR Academy
Target Audience: Start-ups
Event objective: promote social entrepreneurship and social investment in upper Egypt. Networking with organizations, initiatives and student activities in Beni Suef
Type of participation: Through an assigned booth, we spread the word about the program and explained the applications and the selection process.

Social Media Outreach
The members of our Facebook page “Mobaderoon” before launching of the second phase of the program were 4924 members, but by the end of the first quarter the page likes almost doubled to reach 8,632. Below you will find some statistics related to gender classification, members age, and Engagement and members countries.

Gender classification

44% Males
56% Females

Our Facebook page is popular among different countries

1 Egypt
2 Saudi Arabia
3 USA
4 Jordan
5 Syria

From October 2015 to January 2016:
• Total Page Engaged Unique users: 13,869
• Total Reach: 219,767
Social Media Analysis – Pioneers of Egypt Facebook page

The analysis of this data helps to assess the strength of the Pioneers of Egypt network. 47 different pages have a connection with “Mobaderoon masr” Facebook. The diagram below illustrates the state of the Pioneers of Egypt network on January 2016, which will be used as a baseline diagram to monitor the growth of the network during the program. Each circle representing an individual, organization or entity.

The closeness of each entity to another through a link signifies a close relationship between the two entities. This is determined by frequency and type of interactions between the two entities. The larger circles identify entities with a large following within the network.

Selection process of 20 pioneers (31 December-in process)

Duration of the application was set for 3 Months, which started from the 8th of October till the 31st of December 2015.

The selection process is divided to three stages,

1) Application Evaluation

The first stage which consists of two steps, is an ongoing process starting with opening the call for the applicants and ending by the 31st of January 2016. The first step is the filtration of applications by two internal evaluators according to five selection criteria; project’s registration, proven success, innovation, social impact and sustainability. The second step is the screening of applications by external judges, who are familiar of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Egypt. External judges will evaluate the application according to very specific criteria, first the Idea, they score the originality, creativity of adaptation, Urgency and feasibility of the idea. Then the entrepreneur’s commitment to society, their proven track record, network and partners, their organizational capacity. The impact of the Idea on reducing poverty and sustaining social justice, the final criteria is the potential of idea replication and expansion.

2) One to one interview and field visits: Planned on February

3) Contacting the references: Planned on February
The applications received were very diverse, 155 applicants covering 81% of Egyptian governorates, 11 different thematic areas, their financial resources varied investments, grants, donations and self-funded projects.

Gender Disaggregation:

- 72% Males
- 28% Females

Thematic area:

- 40 Arts and Culture
- 36 Community Development
- 22 Education
- 20 Technology
- 17 Environment
- 7 Civic participation/democracy building
- 5 Revenue generation/Employment
- 4 Health
- 2 Human Rights
- 1 Tourism
- 1 Farming / Agriculture

Through an innovative approach combining music, education, and an innovation platform, the Nile Project led by a Pioneer of Egypt addresses the cultural and environmental challenges at the root of the Nile conflict.
Conclusion and recommendations:

In the preparation stage, we redesigned announcement, application, reporting forms according to the lessons learned from the first phase of the program. We used different strategies of outreach (info sessions, events, contacting stakeholders, flyers distribution, and social media coverage) to attract the target beneficiaries of our program (social entrepreneurs, startups social innovators, and volunteers).

While we were scoring the pioneer applications we noticed that we succeeded to reach approximately all the governorates of Egypt, except four governorates out of the 27 governorates (Kafr el-Sheikh, Beheira, North Sinai, south Sinai), so we are preparing to cover these governorate in the startups & volunteers projects. The thematic areas, covered by pioneer program applicants, were very diverse, and we are planning to approach more projects working in the health, agriculture and human rights sector for the startups project.

A chair, fabricated with eco-friendly material made by weaving discarded plastic bags by Reform Studio led by a Pioneer of Egypt.