

Pioneers of Egypt- Tot Boot camp, Al Faiyum, April, 2016

Pioneers of Egypt and Palestine Semi-Annual Report (January 2016 - June 2016)



Synergos
سينيرجوس

مبادرون فلسطين

Pioneers of Palestine

Pioneers of EGYPT

مبادرون مصر



Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Pioneers of Egypt	8-61
Egypt Timeline	10
Pioneers	12-16
Start-ups	17-23
Volunteers	24-31
Impact on the lives of Pioneers of Egypt participants: Phase 1	32-57
Impact on the lives of Pioneers	32-42
Impact on the lives of Start-ups	43-47
Impact on the lives of Volunteers	48-57
Pioneers of Palestine	58-69
Palestine Timeline	60
Pioneers	62-64
Start-ups	65-69
Annex	70
A) Pioneers of Egypt profiles	72-95
B) Pioneers of Palestine profiles	96-111

Introduction

The Synergos Institute fights poverty and inequity through a collaborative approach that engages like-minded institutions and leaders operating at the global and local level, and includes the people and communities whose lives we ultimately seek to improve. We have been present in the Arab world for nearly ten years, supporting social entrepreneurship as a vehicle for social and economic change. We have strengthened the leadership of high-impact social entrepreneurs in the region, expanded the scale and sustainability of their initiatives, and helped create an environment that is more supportive of social entrepreneurship.

We have built the largest network of social entrepreneurs working in the region. With support from Synergos, the initiatives led by our social entrepreneurs are achieving significant impact in sectors ranging from education to health, arts and culture, community development, the environment and technology

Synergos' goal is to advance social entrepreneurship as a way to address poverty and inequity and create employment in the region. We view our efforts as an investment in the emerging leaders who have a key role to play in building the future of the region.

Our key objectives are to:

- Increase the scale and sustainability of hundreds of initiatives led by social entrepreneurs, who are achieving social and economic change in poor and marginalized communities.
- Strengthen the leadership capacity and skills of social entrepreneurs in the region, whether they are experienced or just emerging.
- Build the skills of youth and enhance their potential for employment and self-employment.
- Strengthen social entrepreneurship in the region by mobilizing the Synergos network of social entrepreneurs and increasing the visibility of successful social entrepreneurship activities.

The Pioneers program

The Pioneers program represents an in-depth country initiative to advance social entrepreneurship and increase the scale and sustainability of successful initiatives that bring social and economic change to poor and marginalized communities.

Launched in Egypt in 2011, this model supports active and potential social entrepreneurs at three stages of their lifecycle:



Established social entrepreneurs (Pioneers) whose initiatives have demonstrated positive impact on the lives of people in poor and marginalized communities, and have potential for scale-up and replication.

Start-up social entrepreneurs with strong ideas and motivation, who can benefit from targeted services to get their initiatives off the ground.

The next generation of social entrepreneurs, comprising youth who are making the often-difficult transition from education to employment, and who are matched to volunteer and internship opportunities with established social entrepreneurs, primarily from our Pioneers network.

Impact: 2011-2014

Pioneers have received an integrated set of services including financial awards, technical assistance and training, and strategic linkages to leaders in business, civil society and academia. Start-up social entrepreneurs have received training on early-stage business skills and networking opportunities. The next-generation youth have accessed volunteer training and internships.



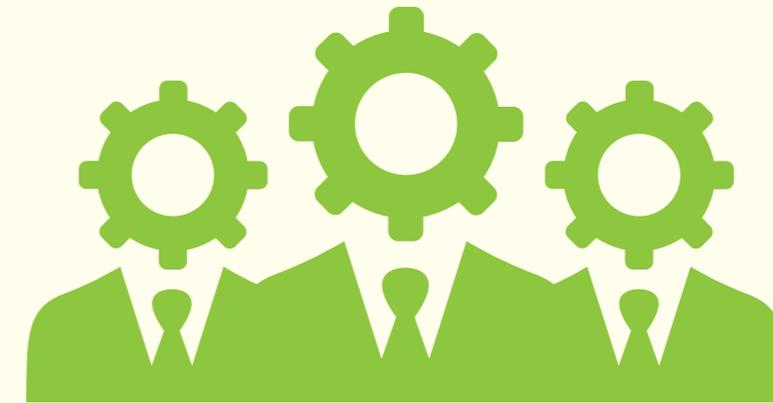
1,300 people
were trained and
provided with
job skills

 60% Male

 40% Female



735 people
were hired by
program participants



13,000+ jobs
were created by initiatives led
by Pioneers



1.8 million people
were served by these initiatives

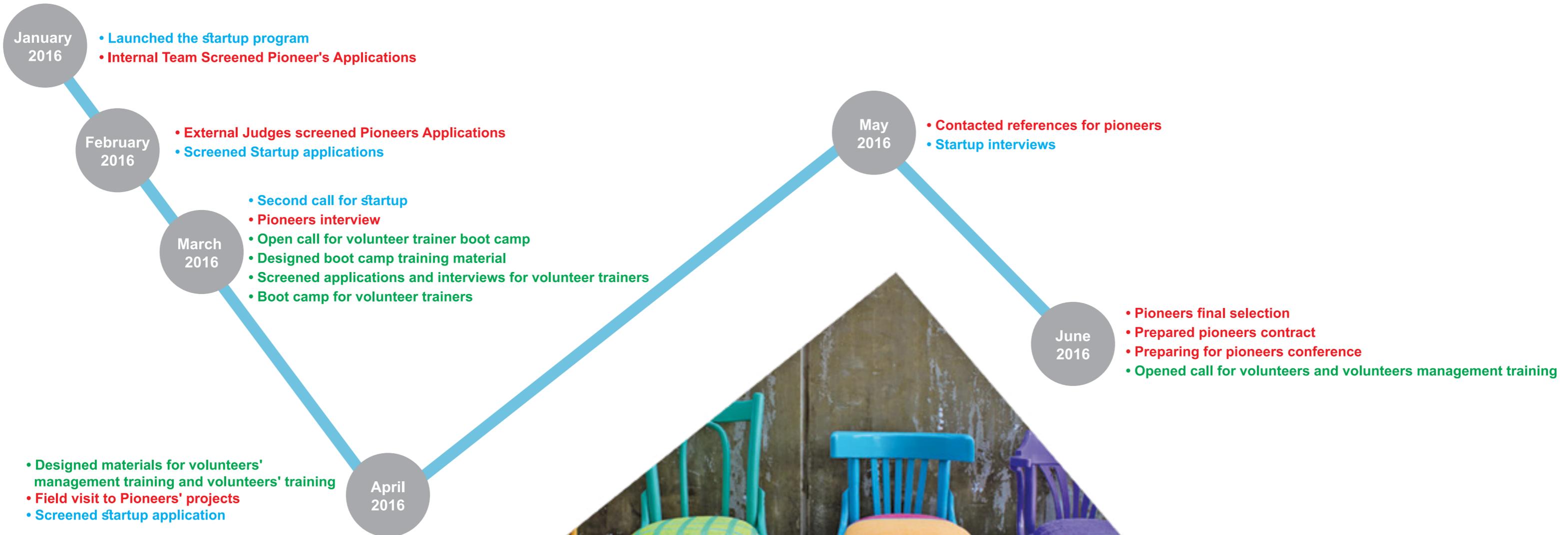
The 2016 class of Pioneers is on track to surpass these numbers for an even greater impact!

Pioneers of EGYPT



*Empowering Egyptian Artisans through an Online marketplace, by Konoz
Yadaweya led by Pioneers of Egypt*

Timeline



Pioneers

Pioneers selection process

Twenty-Three Pioneers were selected after passing the 3 stages of selection. The first stage was the assessment of Pioneers' applications by the local Egypt team and then external judges. The second stage consisted of interviews and field visits to candidates' projects. The third stage consisted of contacting candidate's references. There were a total 155 applications for the Pioneers award. From those 155 applications, 73 qualified for the external judges stage while 82 applications were rejected, and from those eligible, 52 qualified for the interview stage.



Youth-Led and Youth-Served Community Development Organization in Matrouh, Emaar Masr Organization

Team Selection

73 were selected from 155 Applicants

The filtration of applications was conducted by two internal evaluators according to five selection criteria;

- project's registration
- proven success
- innovation
- social impact
- sustainability

External Judges

52 were selected from 73

The selection criteria was based on:

Idea/Solution

Original idea - Creatively adapted - Urgency - Feasibility

Entrepreneur

Commitment to society - Proven track record
Network/Partners - Organizational capacity

Impact

Reduce poverty - Sustain social justice

Potential

Replication - Expansion

Risk was also taken into account.

Interviews

36 were selected from 52

Interviews were carried out by Synergos regional director for Middle East and North Africa and the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer to provide for more diversity of opinions in the decision-making process.

There were four main aspects in the interview process which the interview focused on and set as criteria: "Convincing", "Leader Role", "Awareness of Innovation/Field" and "Ideas for Future Innovations". The purpose of the interview was mainly to get to know more about the applicant, their background, their motivation and interests. It was also an opportunity to hear directly from them about their project, the main reasons behind it and how it was different and innovative. The aim was also to discuss the main challenges facing their projects and how to overcome them. Applicants were also asked about their plans in the future on the short-term and long-term aspects.

Field visit

27 were selected from 36

The field visit stage process was mainly to verify the information given in the applications and to assess the beneficiaries' feedback. During the visit they verified the legal registration and legality of the project. In addition, it was to review all the application questions and answers, as well as to ask new questions following up from the interviews. Also, most importantly, this was their opportunity to provide real proof of their work and activities in action, or as documented in videos or pictures. It was also the chance to see their whole team, whether they were full-time or part-time workers or even volunteers. Even more, questions were asked regarding the budget and their financial plan, the HR team (if any), their networking and the respective field, as well as, to see the overall actual success of the project and its future potential.

In regards to the beneficiaries' feedback, during the visit some of the beneficiaries of the project (if it was available) were asked about their feedback. If there was no opportunity to do this, the alternative was to see documentation as in videos documenting the beneficiaries' feedback. Finally, there had to be more narrowing down round of applications and 9 applications were eliminated by the end of the field visit stage.

Reference check

23 were selected from 27

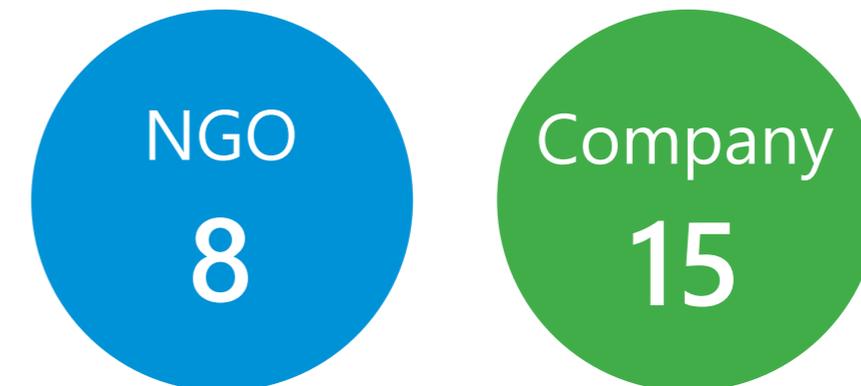
References were predominated checked and verified by phone and email. This gave us more information regarding the applicant's personal characteristics, skills and values, their previous work/relationship and the social benefits that the applicant's project potentially has.

Selected Pioneers Analysis:

Gender Disaggregation:



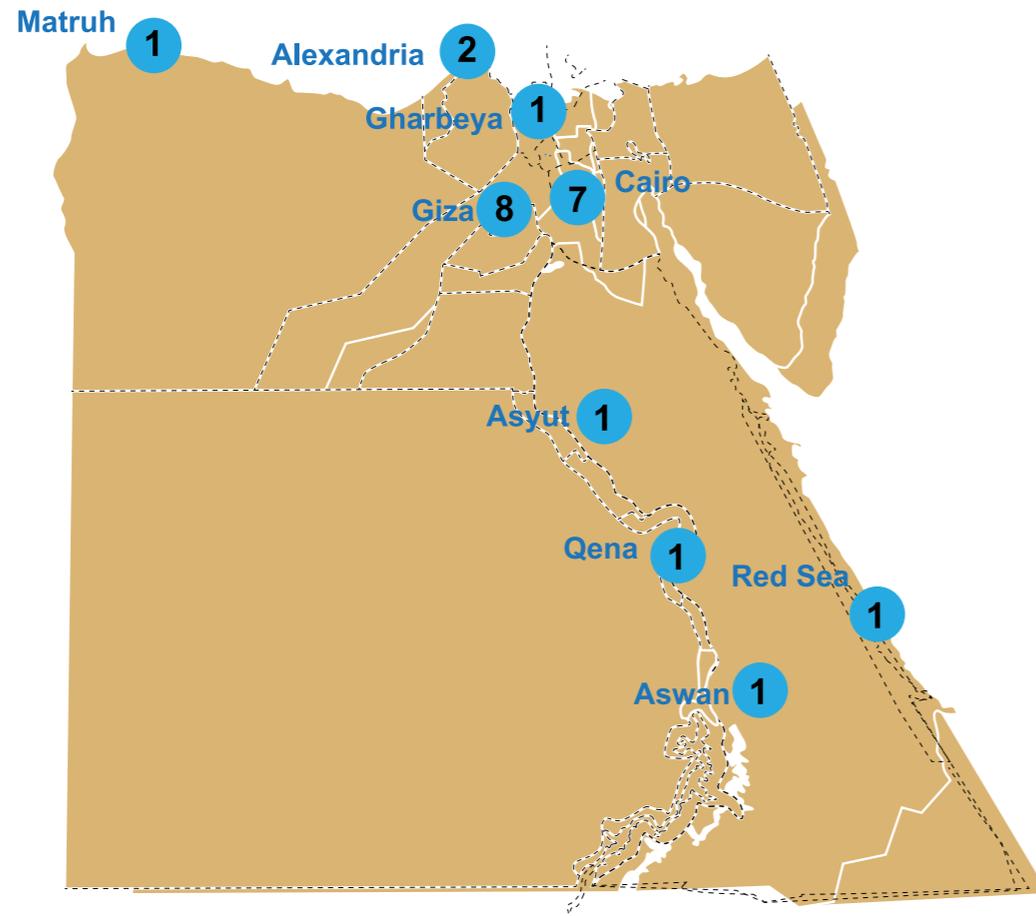
Organization Type:



Thematic area:

7		Community Development	1		Environment
6		Arts and Culture	1		Civic participation
3		Education	2		Health
2		Technology	1		Women's Empowerment

Governorate Distribution:



Start-ups

Start-ups Selection process

Start-ups program launched in **January 2016**

Eligibility Criteria:

Idea or prototype stage, recently established.

Project implemented in Egypt.

Your idea or prototype can be in any sector (Technology, Health, Environment, Arts & Culture, Education etc.)

Selection Criteria:



Selection Stages

Stage 1: Application evaluation

Stage 2 : one on one interview

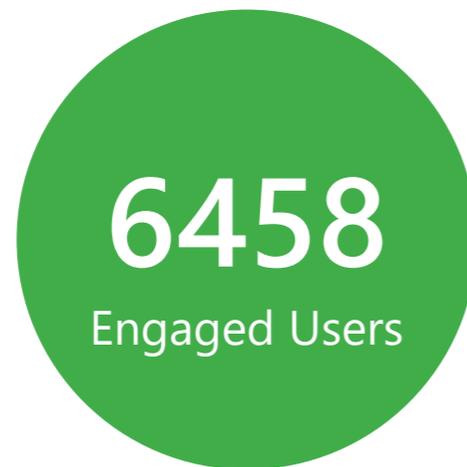
Start-ups outreach

The Start-ups Outreach has been made on two rounds

- The first call has started 1st of January 2016 and ended on 31st of January
- The 2nd call started on 22nd of February and ended on the 20th of March

1- Start-ups social media campaign

Over 20 posts have been made with over:



2- Information sessions

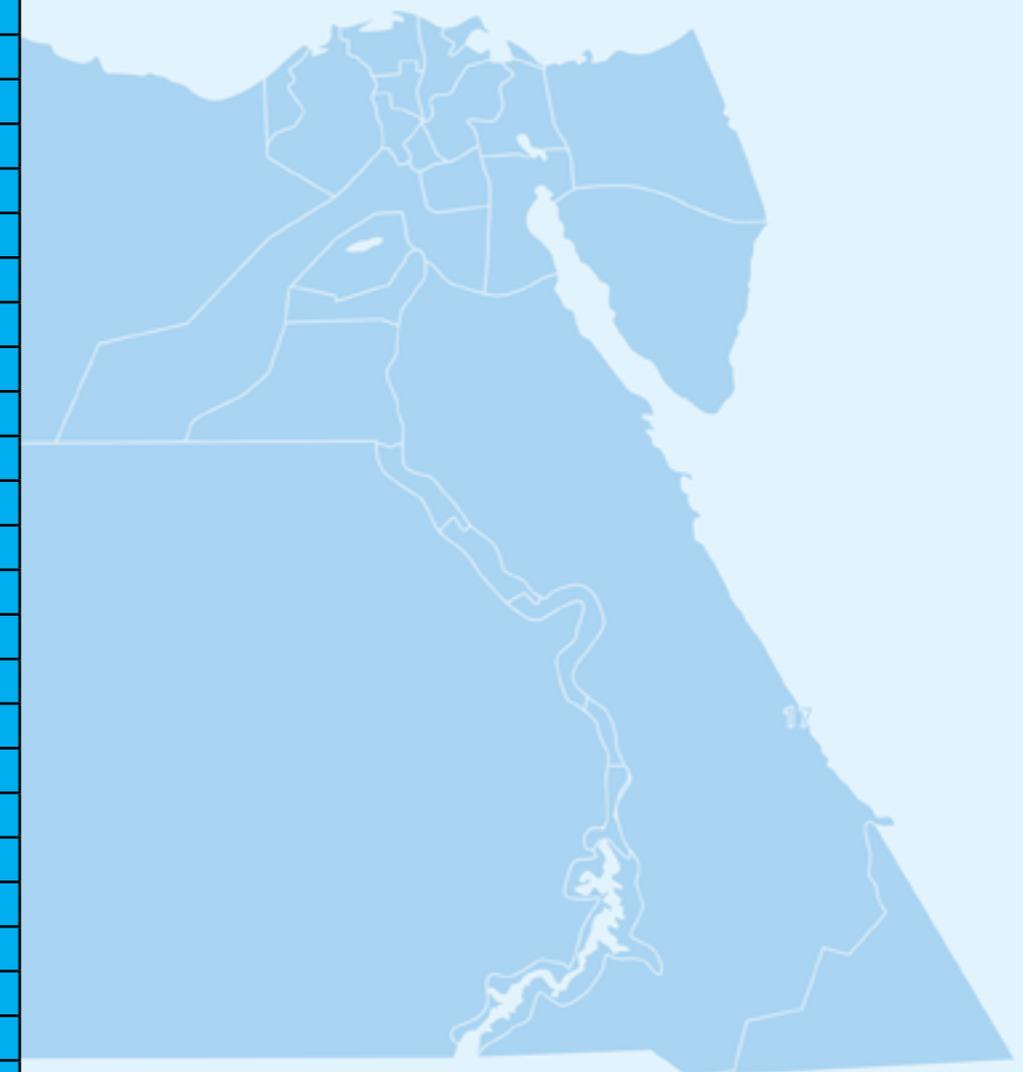
Pioneers of Egypt Team conducted 2 information sessions in Luxor and Assiut in march. In Luxor 18 people attended, Assiut 15 people attended.

In addition to 6 information sessions across Egypt conducted in the previous 6 months

Start-ups applicants :

Geographic distribution :

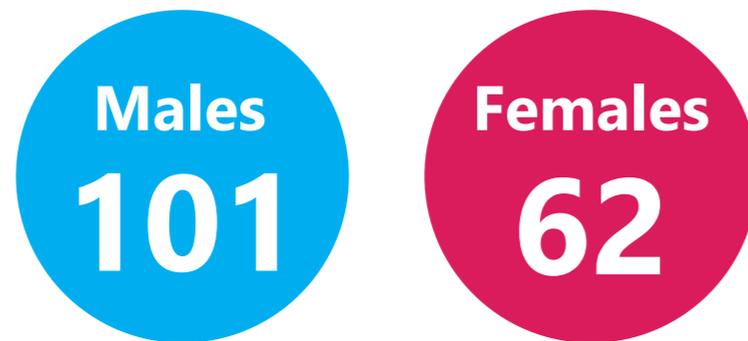
Cairo	32
Giza	25
Alexandria	20
Qena	19
Menoufeya	7
Aswan	6
Minia	6
Beni Suef	5
Fayoum	5
Luxor	5
Qalyoubeya	5
Behaira	4
Red Sea	4
Sohag	3
Assiut	2
Gharbeya	2
Kafr Elsheikh	2
Sharkeya	2
South Sinai	2
Damietta	1
Daqahleya	1
ismailia	1
Matrouh	1
North Sinai	1
Port Said	1
Suez	1
Suez	1



Project Type:



Gender Disaggregation:



Project progress:



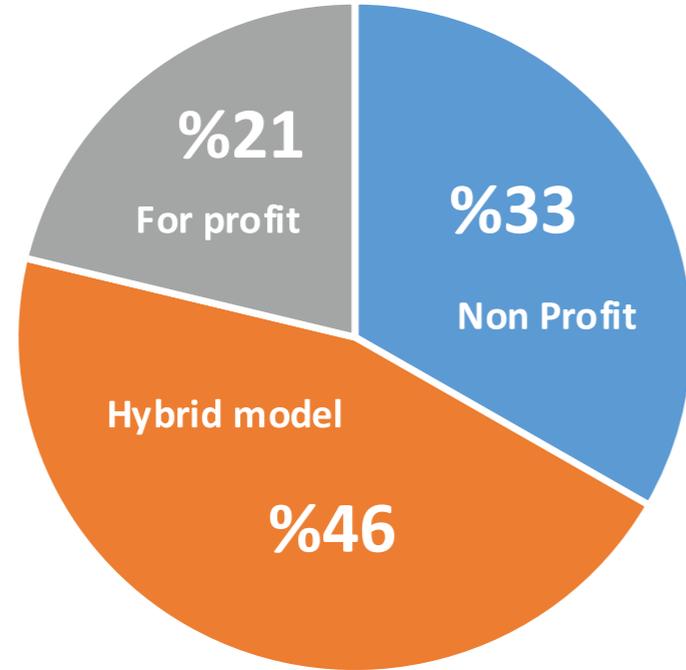
Thematic Area:

- 30 Community Development
- 26 Arts and Culture
- 23 Education
- 23 Technology
- 22 Environment
- 12 Health
- 9 Revenue generation/Employment
- 8 Farming / Agriculture
- 4 Human Rights
- 3 Civic participation
- 3 Tourism

163 Total

Accepted Startups:

Project type:



Gender Disaggregation:

Male



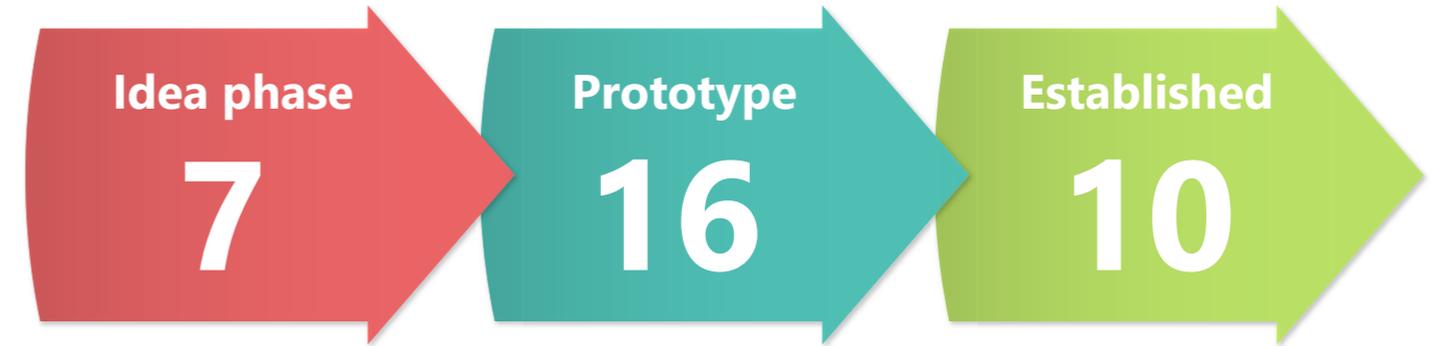
22

Female



11

Project progress:



Thematic Area:



Volunteers

Volunteers Can, the third component of Pioneers of Egypt program aims to

- Promote the concept of Volunteerism of Development
- Promote the concept of Social entrepreneurship between Youth
- Providing 1000 Volunteer with trainings and volunteering opportunities

Program Activities

- 1- Training of Trainers
- 2- Volunteers Call
- 3- Hosting organizations call
- 4- Volunteers Interviews
- 5- Volunteers Trainings
- 6- Volunteers Management Training
- 7- Placement/ Volunteering Club
- 8- Follow-up

1- Training of Trainers (TOT)

Building on a network of 33 volunteer trainers from phase 1, a training of trainers "TOT" was organized by six volunteers, three of which were trainees from phase one which were chosen based on their activism, dedication and passion for voluntary work in the program. The other three volunteer trainers were responsible for mentoring the volunteers during and after the boot camp. This is one of the indicators of the camp outcomes that proved the success of phase one. The camp's aim was to gather new talented youth passionate to be volunteer trainers from different governorates. To be the corner stone which we can build on, as every volunteer trainer will be responsible to implement trainings in their own governorates to qualify volunteers to be effectively active in future voluntary opportunities. The program is going to place them in either Pioneers, start-ups or partner organizations to enhance their skills and increase their future opportunities. We are aiming to reach 1000 qualified volunteers by the beginning of next year.

Benefits:

- Networking
- Sharing experiences
- Acquire needed skills for trainers
- Firsthand opportunities
- Increase self-esteem and self-confidence

Selection Process:

- Online application
- Interview

Selection Criteria:

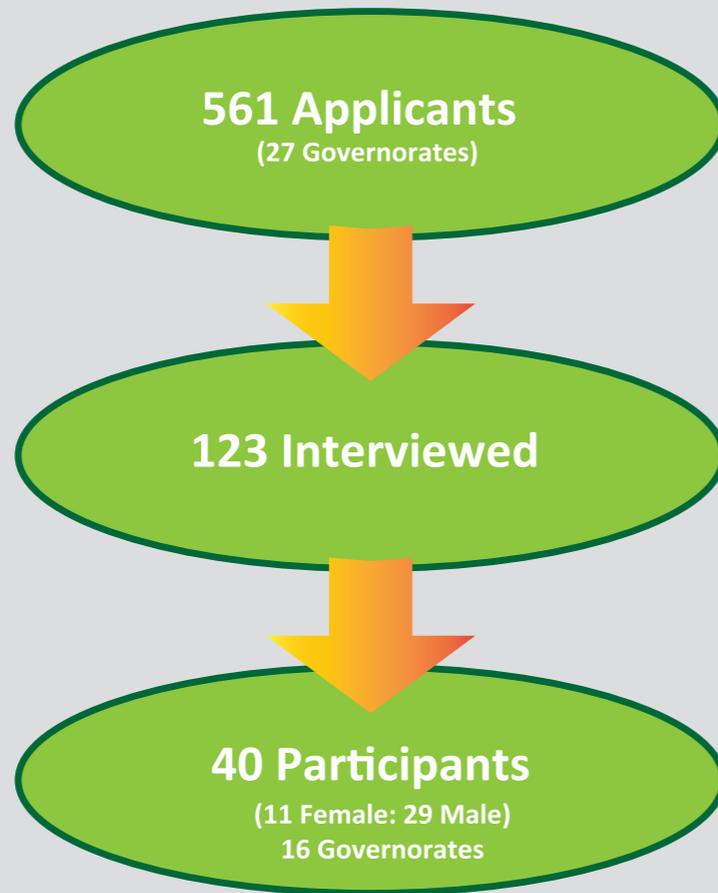
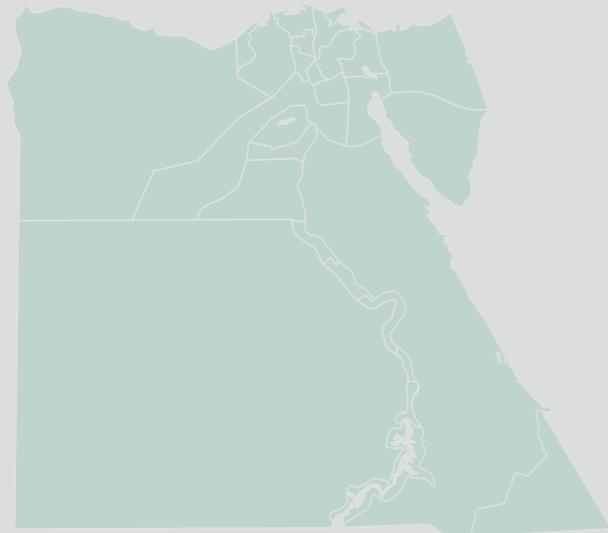
- Willing to share knowledge
- Geographical distribution
- Gender equality
- Applicants' expertise.

Training Content:

- Development and Volunteerism concept
- Team building
- Self-discovery
- Facilitation skills
- Social Entrepreneurship

Bootcamp Applicants

Asyut	4
Cairo	4
Aswan	3
Alexandria	3
Faiyum	3
Minya	3
Sohag	3
Ismailia	2
Luxor	2
El Beheira	2
Dakahlia	2
Al Sharqia	2
Al Gharbia	2
Qena	2
2 Matrouh	2
Giza	1



Participants Feedback

“I have been involved in several training opportunities, but this camp made me appreciate volunteerism more and more, and realize how my voluntary work can make a difference. It was a motivation to follow my passion and achieve my dreams.”
Neveen Saad – Volunteer trainer

“It was the first time for me to see 47 active people all gathered in one place with the same passion and spirit, this was such an uplifting experience.” Mohamed Mahmoud – Volunteer trainer

“An experience that renewed my energy, and opportunity to create networks and accept cultural diversity.”
Ahmed Sakr – Volunteer trainer

2- Volunteers Call

The first call for volunteers opened on the 2nd of June, 2016 and so far, we have received around 500 applications from various governorates. This is the first step to reach our target of 1000 volunteers.

3-Hosting organizations call

The hosting organizations has opened in parallel with the volunteers call, where the hosting organizations will receive volunteers' management training before the placement process commences. In regards to the process, different applications were received so far from different organizations in Matrouh and Al Fayoum governorates wishing to host volunteers in the future with the cooperation of the Volunteers Can program.

4- Volunteers Interviews

Following the call for volunteers, the one on one interviews will be held this month (June 2016) to uncover the interests and skills of each volunteer, and the skills they wish to acquire through the volunteering opportunity, and the suitable field in which they wish to get involved. Moreover, the interview will facilitate the matching of the applicant's interest with the suitable volunteering opportunity.

5- Volunteers Training

Volunteer training will be held after the interviews, in which all volunteers receive training on professionalism and their roles and responsibilities as volunteers, before they begin their placements. This is done either in host organizations, or in locally organized volunteer clubs to begin their own initiative.

6- Volunteer Management Training (VMT)

Pioneers, start-ups and partner organizations will receive training on running Volunteer Management Programs, to guarantee appropriate and effective placements for the volunteers. As part of the training, host organizations are given guidance to develop volunteer job descriptions. Volunteer management training will be held in around 16 different governorates.

7- Placement/Volunteering club

- Volunteer Trainers

The placement process already started with the 40 volunteer who participated in the boot camp. Volunteer trainers were divided upon the 16 governorates to easily reach target groups and beneficiaries. The placement of these volunteers was not only for outreach activities, but also for carrying out and facilitating the trainings and the whole recruitment process for the rest of the 1000 volunteers in their respective governorates. They are also responsible for conducting the interviews in their hometowns or designated areas.

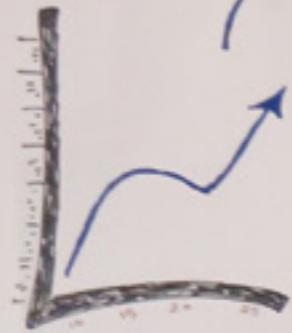
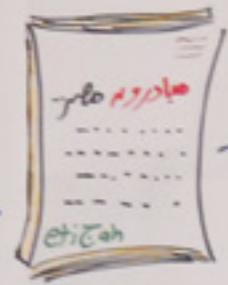
- Volunteering opportunities

Three Volunteering Opportunities were filled by volunteers. One of the volunteer trainers received an advanced opportunity to be part of the Pioneers of Egypt team. This opportunity was provided to her as she showed great potential, dedication and passion.

A pioneer from phase one contacted our team to host volunteers with the cooperation of volunteers can program. The pioneer ask for volunteers with experience in social media and organic farming. Also a start-up from phase one who received volunteers management training asked to host volunteers with experience in web development. We opened a call and around 14 applicants applied for this volunteering opportunity.

8- Follow up

After the placement process, pioneers of Egypt team will follow up with volunteers and host organizations to gauge the satisfaction of both parties.



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2016



Impact on the lives of Pioneers of Egypt participants: Phase 1

This phase of the Pioneers of Egypt program is built on a network of 52 Pioneers , 200 Start-ups and 1000 volunteers from phase 1.

The beneficiaries of the program are leaders or potential leaders working in different sectors with a main aim of “solving the problems of their local community”.

The lives impacted by Pioneers of Egypt program are considered success stories., Pioneers, start-ups and volunteers from phase 1 and working to impact the lives of the beneficiaries from Phase 2.

Impact on the lives of Pioneers

Tamer Taha – Yomken

Creating Impact through Innovation

Yomken’s vision is to transform fahlawa, the Egyptian word for resourcefulness into an economic value. They see themselves as driven by two major engines, innovation and challenges which are both in endless supply and simply need to be utilised. On this basis, Yomken’s founder, Tamer Taha, developed a model of product-based crowdfunding, in the form of pre-selling products which provide a “low-risk financial solution for innovation,” since producers don’t need to pay for materials until they have already confirmed sales orders.

One producer is Adel El-Dib from Batn El-Baqar, a slum area on the fringes of the historic city of Al-Fustat, which was the center of the pottery industry in the middle Ages. In spite of this esteemed heritage, the lack of demand for traditional products led Adel to abandon this trade seven years ago in favour of fiberglass, despite the material being associated with dangerous carcinogens, in the form of inhalable glass wool fibers.



Adel El-Dib, who used Yomken to return to his traditional craft, in his pottery workshop in Batn El-Baqar, Cairo, Egypt.

Yomken saw that the problem faced by Adel and his pottery community could be overcome with a new innovative solution. By introducing Adel to a designer, the pair were able to come up with a creative new design to Egypt’s traditional clay water jar. By adding an extra layer to create insulation, and a tap for easy drinking, the new Clay Cooler can cool water and keep fruit and vegetables fresh. Through this innovation, Yomken helped generate demand for the product, allowing Adel to utilise his skills in this neglected craft.

Tamer believes that “innovation is very contagious”, and Adel’s community in Batn El-Baqar was no exception. Since Adel was able to sell his Clay Cooler through Yomken, other potters have been inspired to develop further innovations in their field. For instance, one wants to develop a clay water dispenser which can fit a large, 5-gallon water bottle. Adel himself now wants “to expand and conquer the global market”, epitomizing Yomken’s underlying conviction, that though people may think there are limits to what they can do, however, with innovation they can push beyond these limits.

As Adel’s example shows, Yomken achieves these goals by bringing people together to solve challenges and fuel innovation, so it is natural that Tamer cites the network effects as one of the major benefits of being part of Pioneers of Egypt Program. This is particularly evident in their ongoing cooperation with fellow Pioneer and innovator Mohammed Raffie, to crowdfund for Raffie’s organization, CORD, which teaches science through robot-building. Thanks to the Pioneers Program, Adel and Raffie are just two representatives of an expanded Yomken network, which continues to create a ripple effect of impact through innovation.

Sameh Seif – Together Association

Increasing exposure to increase impact

Sameh Seif's Together Association has long had a successful and efficient model for waste systems in rural areas. Word of mouth exposure about his successes have been key to the growth and social impact of his association. That was the case of Abd El KoweShaitan village in the governorate of Fayoum. This village of 1,500 residents lies in one of Egypt's poorest areas, with a mainly agricultural economy held back by poor irrigation systems due to both the region's salty groundwater and the lack of a sewage system.

Though Sameh hadn't previously worked in Fayoum, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, who had an office in the governorate, heard about Sameh's work and visited his projects in BeniSuef. They were impressed by his work, and invited Sameh to bring his local-level sanitation system to BeniShaitan.

True to its name, Together Association began in BeniShaitan as it always does, by engaging a local partner, who helped organize a local committee to drive the development of the project. Sameh understands that you can't work successfully in a community until they are convinced of and in are in serious need of your work. To that end, each of the 130 households in the village contributed 200 EGP (\$25), a payment more a symbol of engagement than aiming to cover set-up costs. In BeniShaitan, local engagement went even further, with a local man donating his land to build the treatment station, in exchange for receiving the clean water extracted from the process to irrigate his fields.

Following construction that was organized by a local contractor and supported by Together Association engineers, BeniShaitan now has a functioning sewage system. Houses



Construction underway on the sewage system designed by Together Association in BeniShaitan.



Sameh Seif, founder of Together Association, gives a tour of the sewage treatment plant in BeniShaitan.

connected to a pump and treatment station are maintained by a 10 EGP (\$1.40) monthly fee per household. Where previously sewage was emptied into the nearest ditch, resulting in severe pollution of the village's water supply, waste is now pumped directly from houses to a treatment station, which then produces sludge that can be used as fertiliser, as well as providing clean water for irrigation. The treatment station is large enough that Sameh already has plans to expand and connect the neighbouring village to it as well.

As the case in BeniShaitan shows, spreading the word about Sameh's work truly has the ability to scale his unique solution. It is natural then, that Sameh highlights the relationships and networks he has built as one of the biggest benefits from being part of Pioneers of Egypt program. Through this program, Together Association's exposure has spread to a global audience, opening dialogues with potential partners in places all the way from the United States to Singapore. Thanks to these new connections, Sameh's experience in rural sanitation systems can bring improved health outcomes to communities facing what is a ubiquitous problem in rural areas in Egypt and in developing countries.

Mohamed Raffie – CORD (Competition of Robot Design)

Bringing practical experience and financial sustainability to education

CORD is a productive science communication company that aims to help people learn about the world around them in a practical and engaging way. True to its belief in the power of experimentation, the team had been working since 2011 using an ad hoc approach, but did not have a solid business plan to ensure both sustainability and impact. Over time it solidified its work, and by the end of 2013 had a clear vision of its short, medium and long term goals, and an awareness of which areas needed investment in marketing, research and development.

As a result, the team was well-poised to capitalize on Pioneers of Egypt program, by focusing more on establishing the sustainability of its work. Through the course of the past year, it has developed a number of revenue streams to ensure that its impact continues to be felt.

Foremost among these is Science Crafts, a series of practical science workshops run in schools and after-school activities. In these workshops, which cover everything from building robots to the science behind cooking, children get the opportunity to explore the world around them in a very direct and engaging way. Founder Mohammed Raffie believes that the formal education system in Egypt is very separated from its practical application, and CORD constantly tries to rectify this through its hands-on approach.

By giving people the opportunity to experiment and ensure that there is a positive, practical result in every activity they do, participants get the feeling that they can achieve anything themselves. CORD's experience in these workshops has shown the strong impact science education can have on people. According to founder Mohammed Raffie, "The more connected we are to things around us, the more we understand them and reflect them on ourselves personally. We're here to wonder and the less knowledge we have, the less wonder we're capable of."



Children at Bedayia International School learn science through the Robotikya program offered by CORD (June 2014)

This vision is also evident in an additional revenue channel CORD is developing. This channel involves creating a mobile advertising robot that can move around malls, promoting stores and brands as an engaging and innovative way of marketing. To maintain its educational focus in this endeavor, CORD has developed a unique model whereby each advertising robot will be built by engineering students working as interns with CORD.

The first version of this model was carried out in 2014, when four students from the mechanical and computer engineering faculties of Cairo's Ain Shams University joined CORD for two months. During this time, they received coaching and guidance from CORD staff, while also being given the freedom to experiment with building a robot with the materials available.

From the very first week it was clear the students were "very passionate" about the project. For the mechanical engineering students, it was the first time they had done any practical engineering work, as their studies are entirely based on theory and calculations. Through their experience with CORD, they began thinking in a different way. Instead of opening up their engineering design books to memorize theories, they actively looked for practical solutions to make a real-life robot function. One of the mechanics students, Omar Salah, was so enthralled with the project that he has continued beyond the two-month placement to join CORD on a permanent basis, part-time alongside his studies.

Being part of the Pioneers of Egypt program helped propel CORD forward towards increasing its sustainability. The financial award allowed it to build upon its existing work and develop further prototypes and workshop training materials to the point that it can ensure income alongside its social impact. In addition, the program has opened up new networks to Raffie, creating fresh opportunities to help further develop his business and sustainability. For instance, he is planning on using Tamer Taha's platform Yomken to help sell CORD's robot-making kits. CORD has also offered free workshops to the 'ambassadors' who make large contributions to the educational platform Nafham, run by fellow Pioneer Mostafa Farahat, helping CORD to give back to the educational community on a pro bono basis.

Nada AbdelSalam – Zafir

Invested in the infrastructure for growth

Zafir has a long-established presence as a hub for Egyptian designers, offering them the opportunity to see their designs come to life in real products and in the hands of customers through. Zafir's flagship store in the thriving central Cairo district of Zamalek. In a market where new, young designers struggle to break into established design agency business, Zafir offers a rare and valuable opportunity to sell their products and be truly fairly rewarded. This is a striking contrast to other third party stores, whereas, Zafir has found out firsthand that selling one's work often requires accepting an unfair commission rate, or even worse, having stores fail to reconcile products sold with the amount owed to designers, leaving them out of pocket and often offsetting the profit from other sales.

Since its founding though in 2006, Zafir was unable to grow its business beyond its initial store and occasional promotions elsewhere. Its focus was to direct its limited resources on managing day-to-day operations, rather than develop a larger business development. Zafir's model involves both selling designers' finished products in exchange for a sales commission, and supporting designers to get their work produced through providing financing and conducting product development on behalf of the designer. The latter model is a more profitable and sustainable business line, so co-founder Nada AbdelSalam knew that they needed to be expanding in this area in order to grow, but the team didn't have the resources to make the large time investment needed to seek out new opportunities.

However, that has now changed with the support of the Pioneers of Egypt program, where Zafir have invested in solid infrastructure foundations, which according to Nada, have given them the freedom "to think more strategically than tactically."

One such operational challenge was the sales tracking process which Nada and her staff had been managing manually through Excel spreadsheets as they were unable to afford professional automated software. Thanks to the Pioneers of Egypt program, Zafir was able to invest in this system, saving Nada and her team days of work each month reconciling sales records with products on the shelves and calculating the commission owed to each of Zafir's designers.



Zafir's Cairo store sells diverse range of Egyptian-designed products

This system also provides extremely valuable real-time data, making the business more nimble and responsive to the market. With instant information on sales, Zafir can easily provide feedback to designers on which products are selling best, sourcing more of these product lines and adapting ones that are stagnant. The results of this investment are clear: better income for designers and better business for Zafir.

Equipped with these insights and more free time, Nada has been able to direct more focus on restructuring and coaching the team into more specialized roles dedicated to seeking out new designers and production partners. Since this structure has been put in place, Zafir has increased its reach to designers, product designers and customers, and it already has a host of new products in its pipeline. It also now has the flexibility to research expansion into the whole Arab region, and its large and lucrative market of a young and rising middle class, proud of their language and culture and eager for more local talent and designs, such as Zafir's, which can speak to their identity.

Alongside these very tangible impacts, the benefits of the Pioneers of Egypt program are also present on a much more personal scale. When asked what being part of the program meant to her, Nada's response is clear. Whereas she previously felt isolated in her struggles, becoming part of the network of Pioneers helped her understand why, and she now feels the support of the program and her peers. She says, "It was the first time I actually recognised that we are a social enterprise."

Mina Girgis – The Nile Project

Progressing through curiosity, understanding, learning and empathy to create sustainable, collaborative change in the Nile Basin

The initial spark for the Nile Project was co-founder Mina Girgis' conviction that cultural curiosity drives understanding and learning, which in turn can drive empathy, for both people and the environment. To that end, the Nile Project takes a long-term approach, based around three key steps; inspiration, learning and action, with the ultimate aim of improving sustainability of the Nile Basin through cooperative action of all impacted countries and citizens.

At the inspiration stage, the Nile Project uses music as the "first gateway" to spark curiosity in cross-cultural issues and increase environmental awareness. According to Mina, the Nile Project uses music to make people think about the river that is so central to their lives.

Once that interest is piqued, pre- or post-concert workshops act as the learning stage, to help people understand what they can do to solve the variety of challenges facing the Nile Basin. What excites Mina is that the "multiplicity of challenges creates a multiplicity of opportunities for impact," so that through the learning process people see how their expertise, regardless of what it is, has a role to play in creating sustainability, be it political, cultural or environmental. In the final stage of the process, action begins, as a wide cross-section of people participate in Nile-related activities resulting from the Nile Fellowship and put into practice diverse solutions through the Nile Prize program.

For Mina, the greatest benefit of being part of the Pioneers of Egypt program has been the interaction with Synergos, since they share a similar model for change. Both Synergos and the Nile Project impart change through the "U- Process"; an approach using human-centered design to build solid collaborations between stakeholders. Mina highlights that it was "very useful to find an organization more mature and with greater capacity" in this model, in order to ask practical questions and get specific advice about implementing the process within the Nile Project's work. Guidance from Synergos helped the team to "think more flexibly and expand the way we think about the Fellowship".



1The Nile Project Minya Residency, November 2014. Kassiva Mutua (left) and Sophie Nzayisenga congratulate each other on a collaborative piece of music using Kassiva's Kenyan drums and Sophie's Rwandan inanga.

Throughout the course of the past two years, the Nile Project has seen the power of this approach play out through three musical residencies. In each residency, members of the 28-strong Nile Project Music Collective teach each other their local music styles and share their views of what it means to be a Nile citizen and East African musician. Through the course of the residency the musicians create unique compositions incorporating the diversity of styles and instruments from each of the 11 Nile Basin countries.

Mina effuses excitement at the positive results of the Nile Project's approach to bringing people together. "These people have become a family.

You can see the warmth and love between them." He describes how one particular artist, drummer Kassiva Mutua from Kenya, has found inspiration and support through the Nile Project community.

In Kenya, drums are considered a man's instrument and Kassiva has faced huge challenges within her community for being a female drummer. For her, the Nile Project allows her to "recharge her batteries" after the constant struggle to pursue her passion.

In particular, Sophie Nzayisenga, the first female player of inanga, a string instrument, in Rwanda, has dealt with similar issues with her family so the pair have emotionally supported each other to deal with gender-biases prevalent in their communities.

The collaborative approach used by the Nile Project has built extremely strong bonds between participant musicians, who then act as role models of Nile Basin cooperation. Kassiva describes herself as a "Nile Ambassador," personifying a transnational identity of



2The Nile Project Minya Residency, November 2014. Ethiopian musician Dawit Seyoum playing the simsimiya, a traditional instrument from the northern Egyptian town of Port Said.

cooperation and empathy. In another striking example, given a tense political backdrop of Egyptian-Ethiopian relations due to Ethiopia's proposal to build a new dam on the Nile, Ethiopian Dawit Seyoum has learned to play the *simsimiya*, a traditional instrument from the northern Egyptian town of Port Said. Images of a well-known Ethiopian musician playing a strictly Egyptian instrument provide an important counterpoint to the prevailing political means of confrontation.

Having raised international awareness about the Nile Basin as a cohesive unit and having built a wealth of practical experience through the musical program, the Nile Project is now taking this forward, along with input and advice from Synergos' Body of Practice, to implement the Nile Fellowship.

The program will select student leaders from among key Nile Basin countries, bringing them together in the same residency approach, before each student returns to create Nile-based movements within their campuses, developing a series of workshops and activities to inspire students to create innovative solutions and a sustainable future for the Nile and its diverse surrounding communities.

Impact on the lives of Start-ups

Ahmed Gamal - Awraq

Our youngest Start-Up has the huge potential to develop social entrepreneurship in Egypt. He has already produced the first version of his product, Awraq, a set of cards designed to help start-ups visualize their business and think about every aspect to turn their idea into a successful project.

Awraq provides 50 cards that are distributed into 6 stages that help anyone with developing their startup, organize their ideas, and transfer it to a real and tangible project. Each card will ask some questions related to a specific point in the project, These cards ultimately provide entrepreneurs with answers which layout an overview of their project, defines its basics and mission. It also supplies a suitable feasibility study, market research, product development strategy and engaging user experience. As well as, a relevant marketing plan, branding, and a human resources strategy to sustain and improve their work team.



The Pioneers of Egypt Start-ups award had a great impact on Awraq, not just through the financial award which will help Ahmed print 150 copies of Awraq but also through the training, Ahmed thinks that the training not only helped him improve his business model but also improve Awraq's content material. All in all, Awraq is suitable for everyone with a creative innovation or idea, and it is perfect for early startups to give them the initial push, as well as be useful for improvement in already established businesses.

Abdelsamea Abdullah – Sailors for Arts

Abdelsamea who has always been interested in Theater, aspires to establish an institutionalized entity operating in Alexandria who mainly works on building the capacity of Artists and developing their technical skills, raising awareness of social and political issues in order to increase the impact of their forms of Art.

Sailors for Arts organized its first interactive forum of short movies back in December 2014, the forum's aim is to support films tackling social issues, enforcing their role as a tool for social change simply by making them available to all social classes. They plan on making the forum an annual event alongside their other Theatre performances and activities.

Abdelsamea is passionate about many things, Art, volunteerism & social entrepreneurship; he started his Journey with Pioneers of Egypt program as a volunteer trainer and since February 2014 he delivered trainings in several governorates, worked on his own Start-up "Sailors for Arts". In 2016, Sailors for Arts also started a new regional project "Mashrou3 Hakawaty" with Bait Al-Hikmah for youth development, a project which aims to empower Arab youth in the art of storytelling in its deferment types, as a creative space for expression.



Hayam ElSherbiny - Girl Power

Hayam ElSherbiny founded "Girl Power" beginning of 2014 to empower young girls, allowing them to experience decision-making, leadership and Developing self-esteem through Sports and finally to express themselves and have fun.

On its Facebook page, Girl Power describes itself as "an initiative that uses sport to develop underprivileged girls and teach them life and social skills to empower them and impact their lives. Girl Power believes that through sport, young women and girls can be inspired to be active leaders and build up a stronger, more efficient work

force as a whole. Seeing sport as a force of gender equality and by providing sports opportunities for women and girls, this engages them to break social and cultural barriers and be encouraged to take further steps and that can help women in all aspects of life in Egypt.

Through Pioneers of Egypt financial Award Hayam will organize a new set of Volunteers trainings to replicate the program in different areas. They have now worked in Talbeya and Mansheyet Naser, two areas where "playing sports for girls was not just a challenge but was actually unheard of". Girl Power believes that playing a team sport really impacts those girls' lives in many ways but truth is, their impact on Girl Power members was also equally valuable and rewarding.



Ahmed Tarek Refaie - INTApreneur

INTApreneur presents a solution for the lack of business knowledge among Egyptian youth. INTApreneur is “a non-profit educational program and platform that inspires, educates and empowers teens to make them able to build their own enterprises whether social or business ones by facilitating to them all the basics and skills that are required to start, organize and follow up with them in any challenges that they could get, and develop the young’s’ culture by let them work in an entrepreneurial environment in a type of mid-term project (2 to 3 months) talking about techniques to build a great startup. The project's product will be a business fair made by the participants represent their project in a type of competition.”

Based in Alexandria, Ahmed Refaie alongside a group of volunteers passionate about Entrepreneurship started preparing the content working on statistics, translating documents to serve as base for their Start-ups accelerator program. In 2016, INTApreneur is now in partnership with The Arab Academy for Science and Technology are announcing the Executive Coordinator & for Committee Heads for Round 2. They are still seeking more workers and volunteers who can take the responsibility of the next round and lead a passionate team to raise the project's objectives. In 2015, INTApreneur started this partnership with The Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport “AAST”; to launch “INTApreneur Round 1 - Summer 2015” which is hosted and fully supported by the AAST’s entrepreneurs’ center SMEC & in their Alexandria campuses. Through the Pioneers of Egypt program Ahmed was able to develop the Training content, develop their database of start-ups working all over Egypt.



Mohamed Azmy – Nubatube

Mohamed Amzy is trying to raise awareness and resist the erosion and demolition of the Nubian culture, language, art and handicrafts. Through Nubatube, it aims to empower the Nubian community in Egypt through visual media and interactive online videos.

By training a group of Nubian media enthusiasts on filming, editing, directing and presenting, to start a Youtube channel posting daily translated videos on Nubian language, history, literature, heritage and arts of the Nubian people. This aims to support cultural diversity in Egypt and revive Nubian identity and culture, and as a way to also empower Nubian women.



Nubatube aims to be a community-empowering tool and a free source for alternative media for Nubians all over Egypt who were forcibly resettled and were taken out of their land and their roots. This can help them remain. Also this will prove useful for intellectuals and researchers interested in Nubian culture and history.

Pioneers of Egypt financial Award helped Mohamed buy the camera equipment needed to start his media studio and Youtube channel, NubaTube In just over one year, the Youtube channel has been quite the success, with about 1,663 subscribers and 70,169 views.

Impact on the lives of Volunteers

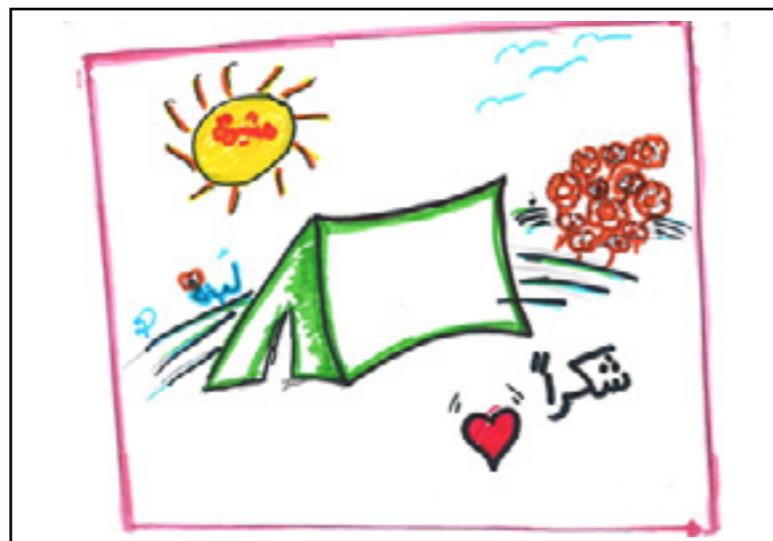
Name: Aya ElHossiny

Age: 23

Governorate: Dakahlyia

Study \ Occupation: Training assistant

Hobbies: Music and sport, Squash, Piano and listening to music specially Jazz and blues.



It is your free space, draw or write anything describing yourself, your experience with "Volunteer CAN". Express.

Can you describe your experience as a volunteer trainer with "Volunteer CAN" program?

The boot camp in Fayoum was my very first experience as a volunteer trainer with "Volunteer CAN" and I had no clue about the organization at first.

I knew about the boot camp through Facebook and I was curious about it so I filled the application and I got more curious about the camp and the organization when I was accepted.

What happened through the 4 days camp was unexpected; it was only four days but the impact wasn't that little whether personally or professionally.

Does it affect your future on the professional or personal level? If yes, How?

Yes, before the boot camp it was an exams period and it was so stressful and it has been a while that I started to lose my interest in voluntary work in different student activities as I was feeling that there wasn't any kind of real impact felt. And because the time of the camp was right after my exams which was really great and the place was kind of new for me, I decided to go for it.

On a personal level, I met new people from different governorates and through the days of the camp either in sessions or free time we were spending a great time together that helped in making friendships in that short period and I had that positive energy that really helped me to refresh my thoughts.

On a professional level, it affected me and I started to feel that right after the camp through my participation as a volunteer trainer with the organization in many experiences that provided me with a space to try and to find out if I am really interested in that field and whether I could see a future in it or not.

If you have the chance to repeat this experience from the beginning, would you like to do so? If yes, what will you change?

Yes, I would like to.

-I would like the camp to be for a week to have more content.

-Have more time for social activities (Outing, field visits, etc.).

Name: Ibrahim Abdel Hafez Mohammed

Age: 26

Governorate: Qena

Study \ Occupation: Bachelor of Arts,
Geography Department.

Hobbies: Internet.



Can you describe your experience as a volunteer trainer with “Volunteers CAN” program?

Briefly, my experience is similar to many youth who graduated from universities and were shocked by the gap between what they studied and what the market actually requires. I felt lost, I didn't know what to do and didn't know anything about volunteerism, although I did some charity works during university.

I started working as a volunteer with “School of Heritage Initiative” and I attended the volunteer management training as a representative from the initiative. It was the first time to know about the Pioneers of Egypt program. Few months later, I participated in the TOT and it was one of the most important events that have ever happened to me. It taught me new concepts about volunteerism and instead of seeing it as a waste of time, instead it might help others and I now believe that it is a learning experience where you can learn and practice more skills through helping others. It was also my first time to be exposed to the social entrepreneurship concept and how it could be part of the development process.

Does it affect your future on the professional or personal level? If yes, How?

On the personal level, I have new concepts about volunteerism and I started exploring my skills and abilities to work on and expand it.

On the professional level, it helped me to improve my role at the “School of Heritage Initiative” through investing in the skills that I learnt.

If you have the chance to repeat this experience from the beginning, would you like to do so? If yes, what will you change?

Yes, I would be very happy to repeat it and improve my attitude towards it. If I would have a second chance I would give more attention to the practical part where I practice my skills.

Finally, I would like to thank people who are seeking change, for hope and for creating the right path. Thank you “Volunteers CAN” program and staff.

Name: Ibrahim Hassan

Age: 24

Governorate: Ismailia

Study \ Occupation:

UNAIDS Egypt country Office Communication and Social

Mobilization Fellow

Hobbies: Horse Riding



Can you describe your experience as a volunteer trainer with "Volunteer CAN" program?

I joined the "Volunteers CAN" in January, 2013. My first thing was the TOT camp to build the capacities of 30 volunteer active trainers with the goal to enrich volunteerism for development. This was done in Egypt through outreaching 1000 volunteers all over Egypt almost in each Governorate. Meeting like-minded people at the camp was essential to one's own benefit to keep believing in the good that is around us and to remind ourselves with the difference that lies between each and every one that drives a great diverse community of change agents.

Does it affect your future on the professional or personal level? If yes, How?

Personal Level:

- Now I have a strong connection almost in each governorates
- I usually meet some of the fellow colleges of "Volunteers CAN" by accident in different events.
- I have new friends
- I saw also some honest moments in the camp when team members spoke about their desire to change and their dream of change.

Professional Level:

- I included this training and other camps and trainings that I participated in "Volunteers CAN" in my professional resume and I applied for UNAIDS with that CV so it was an added value.
- I apply for other grants and I find it interesting thing when people ask me about this experience in an interview and it seems that I have a big interesting story to tell.
- I participated in organizing "Takatof Sustainability Camp" In Ismailia 2 weeks after Fayoum Camp, and I was very lucky to attend that camp especially at that timing to oversee the whole process.

If you have the chance to repeat this experience from the beginning, would you like to do so? If yes, what will you change?

Yes, I wouldn't change things, the community is nice, and I'll try to work more on:

- Frequent meeting and communication
- Networking between trainers , we are all at some active spots in the civil field or other relevant fields
- Participating with the ministry of youth and UNV (Port Said training) was not planned well .The ministry didn't recruite the right caliber to learn about "Strategic Planning". Most of the attendees came to the camp as a hang out in Portsaid with no strong intention to learn.
- We need to focus more on the participant's selection criteria. For example, in the volunteer management trainings the process of selecting the participants wasn't strong, we need to head hunt change agents in each community to make a better impact on people , not to count numbers of the outreach. Still numbers are important.

Name: Mostafa Magdy Kamel
Age: 21
Governorate: Giza
Study: Faculty of Physical Therapy
Hobbies: Photography, Writing,
Travelling and my bike.



“Seed”!
This is how I see myself. I believe I have potential that I can do something great by time, patience and effort.

It is your free space, draw or write anything describing yourself, your experience with “Volunteer CAN”. Express.

Can you describe your experience as a volunteer trainer with "Volunteer CAN" program?

At the beginning I tried to manage my schedule to be able to attend the TOT and I was very happy when I got my acceptance. During the camp I wished if it could be longer. I didn't expect that it would be that much fruitful and interesting and I am glad that it was much better than my expectations. When I came back I had great energy and I was very enthusiastic to use my skills and deliver trainings by myself.

Firstly, I was a bit worried that we might not be able to reach a large number of volunteers and raise their awareness about Volunteerism for Development and later on I became impressed with the impact that we did and how we could reach huge numbers and deliver our message. I am glad that I was a part of it.

Does it affect your future on the professional or personal level? If yes, How?

Definitely! On the professional level, I was very interested in trainings but I hadn't planned to be part of it. It was something that I do when I only have the chance. Now, my way of thinking is more organized. I am able to think of specific topics which need to be tackled, and who needs to know about it? And most importantly, what is the best way to tackle it? The TOT was the right start that I can build on it.

Moreover, after the TOT I got an internship as a trainer with "Volunteer CAN" program, where I became exposed to different people, experiences, and a new work environment. During this internship and in other external training experiences, I noticed an improvement in my skills, performance and improvisation.

If you have the chance to repeat this experience from the beginning, would you like to do so? If yes, what will you change?

I would like to repeat it again and I wish it could be longer to reach more volunteers.

Name: Sabry Magdy

Age: 25

Governorate: Ismailia

Study \ Occupation: Planning & Monitoring

Hobbies: Charity Work.



Nothing better than finding people who we love, around us without asking them.
Thank you "Volunteer CAN".

It is your free space, draw or write anything describing yourself, your experience with "Volunteer CAN". Express.

Can you describe your experience as a volunteer trainer with "Volunteers CAN" program?

When I participated in "Volunteers CAN", most of the people around me were a bit surprised how I am working in a full time job and still have time and will to volunteer in charity groups and conferences. All of these happen because of the will to be an active person who has a dream to develop his country and to be a well-known name in its history like any ambitious guy who loves his country not only by saying that, but also by working and doing effort. People used to tell me "You are a dreamer", proudly yes and I believe in my dream. I have a goal and vision about myself and my country and I am working to achieve it.

Does it affect your future on the professional or personal level? If yes, How?

Yes. The first time I participated in "Volunteers CAN" was in Cairo. I did an interview and they asked me "Why do you like volunteerism? Why do you volunteer?" At that time I was working with children with special needs and I was facing a lot of challenges to deal with them. People kept telling me that you will do nothing and it was a waste of time because it requires a huge effort to improve their skills.

During the TOT, I met people who proved to me that if there is a will, there is a way. People how faced a lot of challenges and they were very strong to deal with it and do whatever they want. It is an inspiring experience that motivates me to restart with a positive attitude, continue and believe in what I do regardless of what people and stereotypes say.

If you have the chance to repeat this experience from the beginning, would you like to do so? If yes, what will you change?

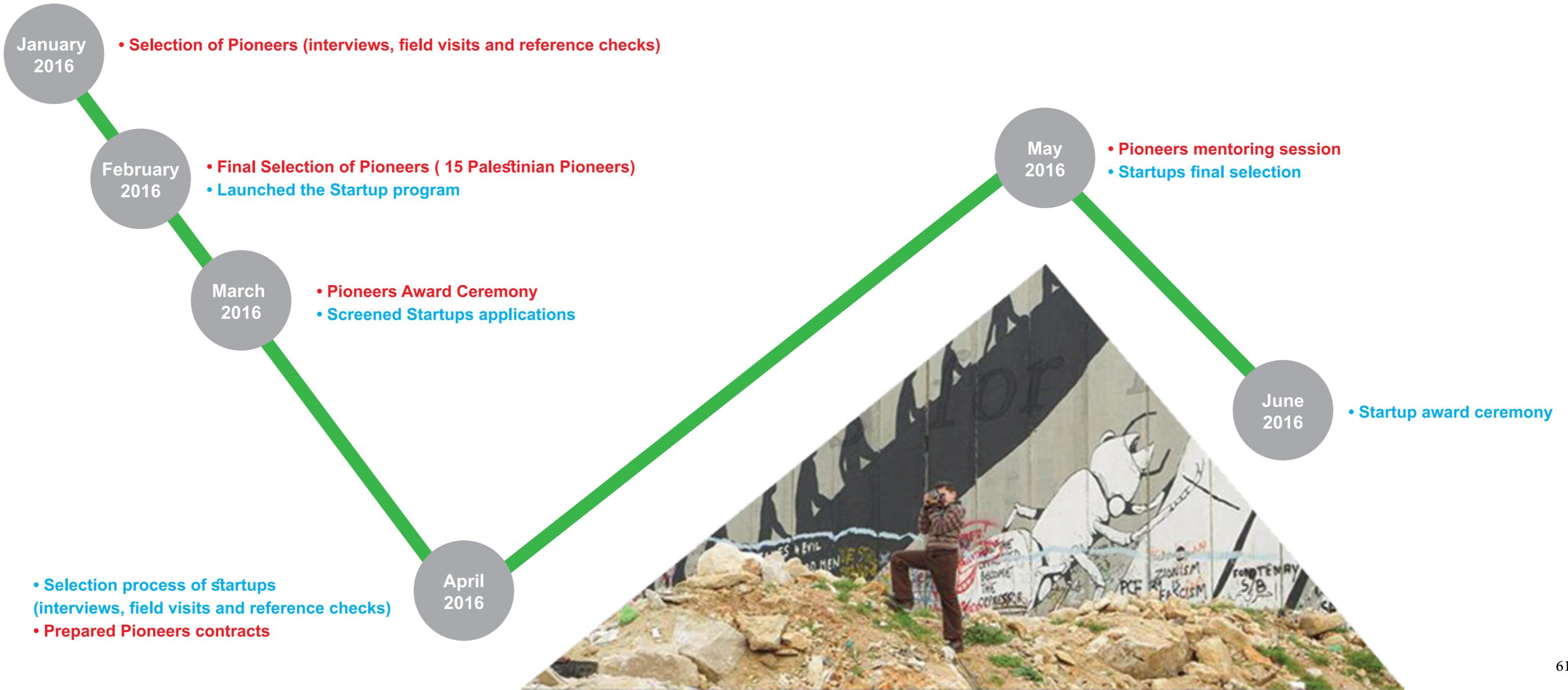
Definitely. I would be happy to repeat this experience and to learn from any faults. For instance, I would focus on one project to work with perfectly instead of joining a lot with no real impact.

Pioneers of PALESTINE



Project by Alrowwad (Pioneers for life for culture and arts ,
led by an Awsi fellow Arab world social innovators).

Timeline

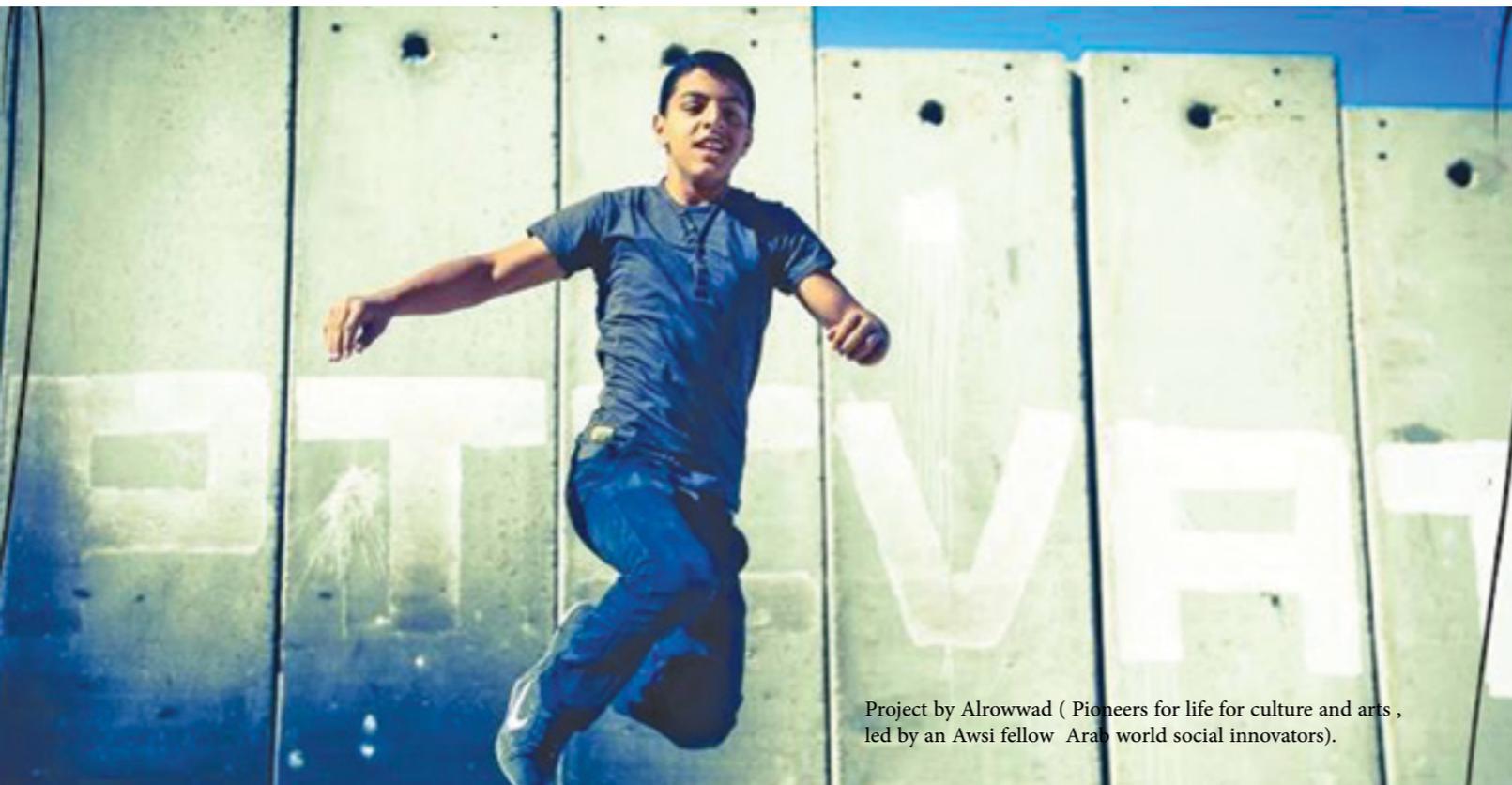


Pioneers

Pioneers Selection Process

15 Pioneers were selected after passing 3 stages of selections, first stage is the application assessment through Pioneers of Palestine team. The Second stage was the interviews. The third stage was contacting the references and field visits to candidates' projects.

15 applicants were selected from 35 received applications based on the scoring and selection stages.



Project by Alrowwad (Pioneers for life for culture and arts , led by an Awsi fellow Arab world social innovators).

Team Selection

(30 were shortlisted from 35)

The filtration of the applications and the interviews were conducted by more than one staff member according to;

- Proven success
- Innovation
- Social impact
- Sustainability

Interviews

20 were selected from 30 shortlisted applicants

Interviews were carried out by two or more team members to provide more diversity of opinions in the decision-making process.

The purpose of the interview was mainly to get to know more about the applicant, their background, their motivation and interests. It was also an opportunity to hear directly from them about their project, the main reasons behind it and how it was different and innovative. The aim was also to discuss the main challenges facing their projects and how to overcome them. Applicants were also asked about their plans in the future on the short-term and long-term aspects.

Field visit and Reference Checks

15 were selected from 20 applicants

The field visit stage process was mainly to verify the information given in the applications. It was also the suitable time and place to verify the legal registration and legality of the project and to be aware of any legal issues facing the project, if any.

In addition, it was to review all the application questions and answers, as well as to ask new questions following up from the interviews. Also, most importantly, this was their opportunity to provide real proof of their work and activities in action, or as documented in videos or pictures.

It was also the chance to see their whole team, whether they were full-time or part-time workers or even volunteers. Mostly the references were checked and verified by phone or email. This gave us more information regarding the applicant's personal characteristics, skills and values, their previous work/relationship and the social benefits that the applicant's project potentially has.

Selected Pioneers Analysis:

Thematic area:

- 5  Community Development
- 4  Health
- 2  Education
- 2  Arts and Culture
- 1  Women empowerment
- 1  Civic participation

Organization Type:



Gender Disaggregation:



Start-ups

Start-ups Selection process

Start-ups program launched in **February 2016**

Eligibility Criteria:

Idea phase

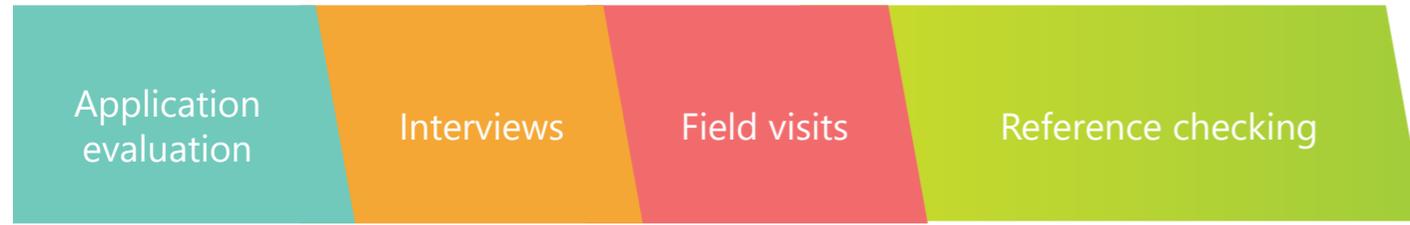
Established

Prototype

Selection Criteria:



Selection stages:



Startups outreach

Through social media specially Facebook through Pioneers of Palestine page
Personal outreach to local organizations

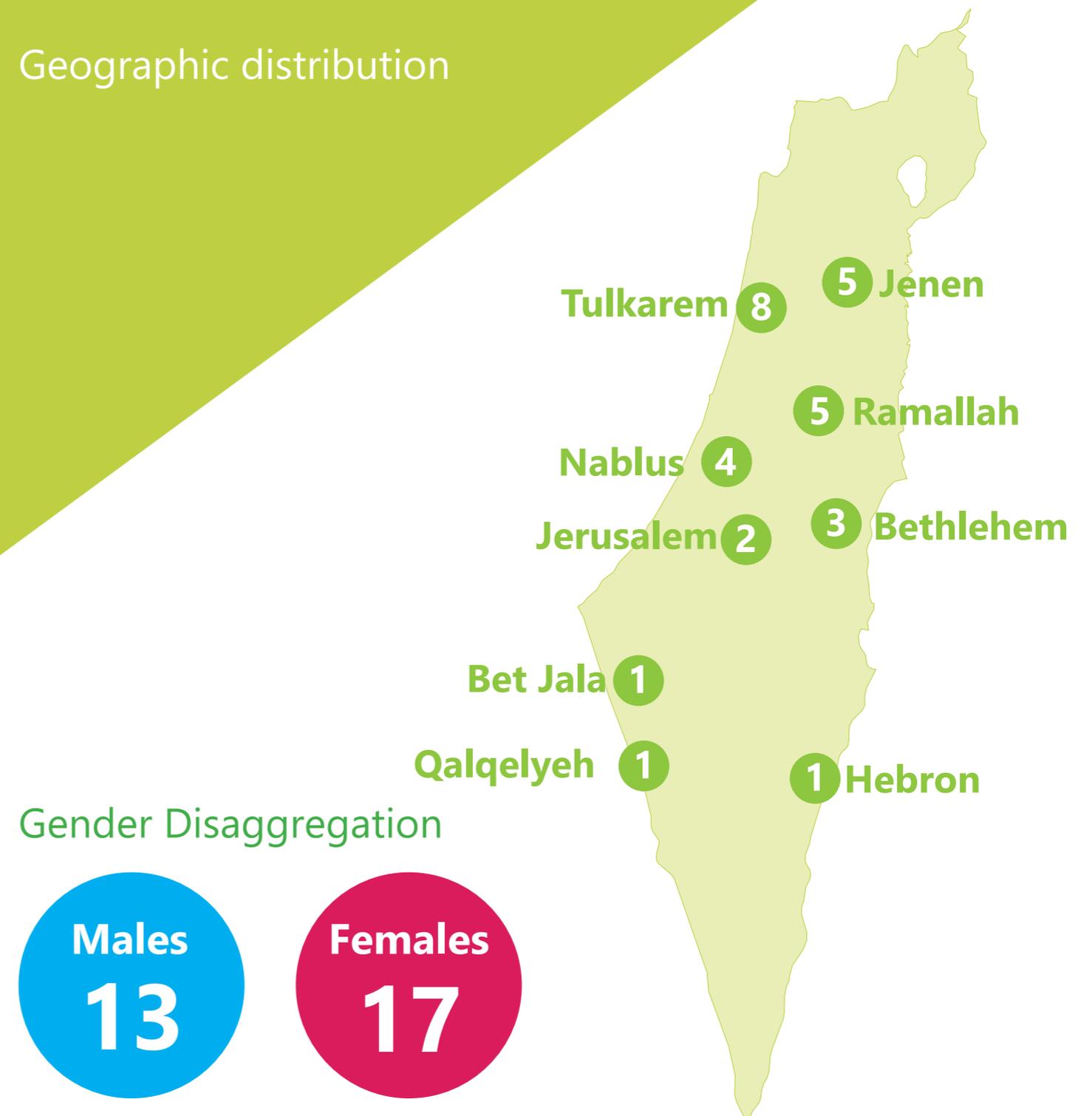
Startups Applicants:

There were 30 applications received for the Start Ups program.

Project progress:

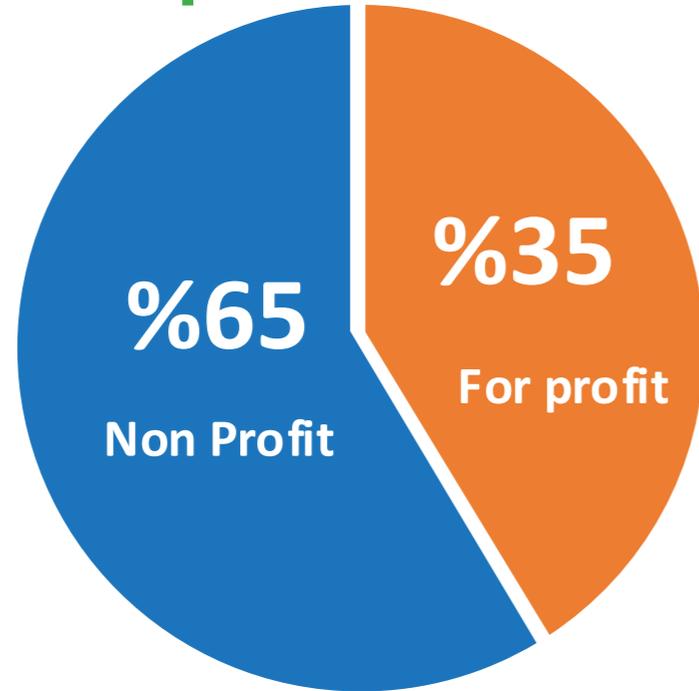


Geographic distribution



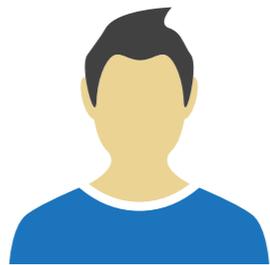
Accepted Startups:

Project type:



Gender Disaggregation:

Male



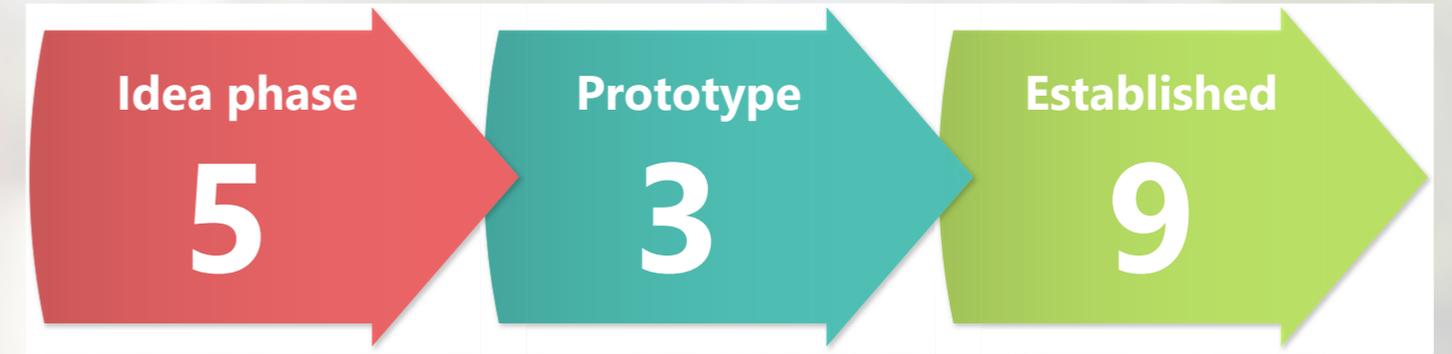
7

Female



10

Project progress:



Project Type



ANNEX

- A) Pioneers of Egypt profiles
- B) Pioneers of Palestine profiles

Pioneers of EGYPT profiles



Inclusion for Better and Active Development through Arts & Culture by Eskenderella

Hamdy Reda **Artellewa Space**

Reviving Culture and Creativity in Ard El Lewa



Hamdy Reda is a visual artist, photographer, graphic designer, and curator. He is the founding-director of Artellewa Art Space in Ard El Lewa, a densely populated poor district of Cairo. Reda established Artellewa in 2007 to create a free space to support emerging artists and local community members. Artellewa aims to be an inclusive space for the development of visual arts, and mainly to offer and facilitate artistic projects, workshops, as well as art exhibitions.

This creates a unique opportunity for Egyptian and foreign artists to interact with the local community and environment, notably with children and youth to discover and enhance their musical and artistic skills and talents. That way, Artellewa is a “creative space” that bridges the gap between artists and society in an inclusive area.

Artellewa uses art to enrich the civic and cultural life in Ard El Lewa through different activities; including concerts, exhibitions, theatre performances, workshops and trainings regarding performing arts, photography, visual arts, and education. It aims to revolutionize the artistic and cultural environment as well as allow for easy and diverse access to its resources.

Artellewa’s space gives people a safe zone where they can freely express their own opinions, socialize and discuss different social issues as part of artistic and engaging activities. Reda dreams to see Artellewa replicated by other artists all over Egypt to support cultural and artistic development in slums and other disadvantaged areas.

Ahmed Mahmud Hamed El Hefnawy- Knowledge for All

Knowledge is the key to Development



Ahmed Hefnawy is one of the founders of "Knowledge for All". The idea and passion behind the "Knowledge for all" project came as a response to the current widespread levels of illiteracy and ignorance in Egyptian society. "Knowledge for All" is mainly a platform for knowledge, with their main program titled "Knowledge-rod", which intermingles and links various concepts, methodologies, and perspectives to build a sustainable, renewable and almost unified base of knowledge that is accessible to every citizen.

Based on research and brainstorming, it was agreed that there will be four essential aspects of knowledge; Life, Ways of Thinking, Management, and Communication. Even more, 80 different and interesting topics were picked to be discussed in different sessions, seminars and workshops. Hefnawy believes that there is a 'compass for knowledge' specific for each individual, starting by evaluating one's own knowledge and knowing what they aspire to learn and become. This will lead to a greater understanding of their knowledge path and work to achieve one's goal in life depending on their personal capabilities and surrounding environment.

By disseminating and providing easy access to valuable knowledge through the innovative solution of "Knowledge for All", Hefnawy believes this will support youth as well as reduce poverty and promote social equity in Egypt.

Khaled Hamad Khaled shoaib- Emaar Masr Organization

Youth-Led and Youth-Served Com- munity Development Organization in Matrouh



In 2011, Khaled Hamad started his voluntary work after which he wanted to benefit the people of Matrouh. The governorate has a major problem of low education levels and awareness. Hamad wanted to go after and tackle the root causes of these vital issues affecting the youth and the people of Matrouh.

Build Egypt Organization, or "Emaar Masr" in Arabic, is the first youth-led and youth-served organization working in Matrouh. It aims at enhancing citizenship values, promoting volunteerism, and correcting misconceptions of the people of Matrouh, (a governorate) inhabited by a majority of Bedouins. Since Hamad started running the organization, it had successful awareness campaigns about HIV/AIDS, child marriage, and pre-marital medical tests. From 2015 to 2016, "Build Egypt organization" reached 6000 beneficiaries through their different programs.

In parallel, Build Egypt organization works on different development programs, "I am a volunteer" which targets school students, "Prepare yourself" a training program that equips youth with the required skills to meet market demands, "Seed" to prepare the children before their first entry to school, also helping children with learning difficulties, using innovative and interactive education method.

Hany Jamal-Kotob w Hagat

Reading is The First Step towards Development



Hany Mahmoud founded “Kotob w Hagaat”, in order to achieve his dream to cultivate people’s minds and provide channels for youth to be more aware of their literary heritage. Books & Stuff, or “Kotob w Hagat” in Arabic, is a mini public library at Ard El Busary, near Dar El Salam- an area highly deprived from social and cultural activities. The place holds different cultural activities, such as musical events, seminars, and film and documentary screenings. Also in exchange of a nominal rental fee, people are able to borrow books.

As books in Cairo are available to buy or borrow at many outlets, however, they still remain expensive and unaffordable to most people. There are also few cultural spaces to freely discuss, analyze and criticize what people usually read. This library with its multidisciplinary services offers a broad range of opportunities to youth, and provides to Egypt a glimpse of creativity and hope. The aim is to revive eager spirits, and spirituality, for better thoughts. Jamal hopes to see “Kotob w Hagat” replicated in different districts by other people in Egypt through variable visions and perspectives.

Hala Lutfy - Hassala Film

Supporting Emerging Filmmakers and Ending Centralization



In an attempt to smooth the bumpy road through the film production journey, Hala Lutfy established Hassala in 2011. Filmmaking is a very hectic and expensive process and filmmakers usually go through a lot of obstacles, namely bureaucracy, in order to carry out film production in Egypt. Hassala is not a production company; rather it is a filmmakers cooperative, supporting independent emerging filmmakers. Support services include technical capacity building workshops enabling filmmakers to produce non-commercial movies at a low cost, and providing them with mentorship throughout the whole process, helping them explore different filming locations and techniques. The cooperative only gets a low percentage of the profit and the rest goes to the filmmakers.

Giving independent filmmakers a chance to express themselves and to reflect upon and inform their local community’s issues is one of Hassala’s main objective. This is motivated by Lutfy’s belief that “Knowledge is Power”, and that Art is an important tool to spread knowledge and raise awareness in the community.

In the near future, Lutfy aims to establish filmmakers schools in different governorates in Egypt. She also plans to work on an advocacy campaign to amend film production laws and to form a syndicate for independent filmmakers. She hopes this will enrich the Egyptian film-making industry and develop artistic talents and awareness.

Muhammad Shazly Barbary Dahy- Ro'ya NGO

A Visionary Development Organization in the Red Sea



Muhammad Shazly is one of the founders and the chief executive of Ro'ya, the first youth NGO in Al Qusair, part of the Red Sea governorate. Shazly believes that volunteerism is one of the main keys to youth and community development.

Ro'ya, or "Vision", thinks that development of the Red Sea's local community has to start with youth development, cultivating young people minds, raising their awareness on social issues, and developing their skills through seminars and workshops. One of Ro'ya's objectives is to improve the quality of life for the local community through the establishment of small economic projects to increase people's income. Coming from a border governorate with a rich and unique culture, Shazly felt the responsibility to preserve and revive his cultural heritage and raise awareness about it all over Egypt.

Ro'ya targets school students through "school camps" and youth and adults through variable activities. It offers cultural events, football school, kids cinema -where kids can learn how to analyze and criticize a work of art- and toys theatre -where they learn values in a subliminal way through storytelling. Ro'ya also has its own radio channel and library. Muhammad's NGO work relies on raising awareness and the social development of youth and women in the Red Sea governorate.

Ayman Sabae -Shmaseya

Innovative Community Healthcare Solutions



Aymas Sabae's idea drives from the lack of trust in the current healthcare system in Egypt and its lack of reliability in terms of solutions. The absence of a satisfactory remedy to health risks in different communities in Egypt is not only his concern, but one that is shared by many Egyptians. Sabae is particularly focused on geographic and financial access to quality healthcare among uninsured individuals, low income populations, the informal sector, and geographically remote areas. The idea seeks the creation and diffusion of an innovative gradually implemented, community-rooted and dynamic healthcare system that can account for the scarce resources and poor infrastructure. This community based system allows access to a comprehensive health insurance package that is owned and monitored by the people themselves. The sustainability of any healthcare system relies on solving the absolute lack of community communication, participation and debate about the proposed laws, through direct ownership of the healthcare system by the beneficiaries. Though, the organization is based on the belief that citizens' engagement and community participation are the main prerequisites to ensure success of any intervention.

One of the main components of the community health cooperatives is the community assessment process of hospitals. This component is currently up and running at www.eghospitals.com. This online platform is a monitoring tool providing valuable community assessment data for a growing number of hospitals across Egypt, helping people in being part of a community health cooperative. Another component calls for a coalition between uninsured and disadvantaged people to motivate them in having their own medical insurance and consultancies for low fees.

May Zein ElDein-Alhassan Foundation for Differently Abled Inclusion

Advocates Inclusion for Physically Challenged Humans



May founded Al Hassan Foundation in 2013 to be a role model on how to transform a personal tragic accident into a success story to empower, motivate and rehabilitate physically challenged and disabled people.

In 2011, Hassan, May's son, had a tragic car accident after which he became a wheelchair user. After experiencing the endless obstacles wheelchair users have to face in Egypt, May decided, along with 13 friends, to take a bold initiative in order to make a difference in Egypt and in the Middle East. Alhassan Foundation aims to provide "tailored solutions" for people with physical challenges and wheelchair users. It also supports their families to overcome any challenges and to make the best use of their different abilities regardless of social, educational and financial backgrounds.

Altering the perception of disability, the Foundation seeks to change the perspective of the society on physical challenges and on their endless abilities through inclusion within the community. One of the Foundation's pillars is to provide adequate solutions for wheelchair users, whom will add value and become productive members in the society.

The Foundation's mission is to enable wheelchair users and their families to overcome their daily challenges by using their capabilities, through implementing eight different programs: Egyptian Information Hub, Transitional Period, Customized Wheelchair, Source of Living, Equipped Ride, Social Awareness, Sports and Activities, and Kids on Wheels.

Mohamed Hegazy- Transport for Cairo

Digital Mapping of Formal and Informal Transportation in Cairo



Mohamed has always been fascinated by the urban environment and the city. As a researcher of Open Data, he was always shocked by the data revolution and access to information, and the lack of available data on Egypt.

Based on some of his research and personal experiences, transit users have poor access to information in order to get to their daily destinations. Little to no information is available on routes, stops, services' frequency or schedules exist neither in analogue nor in digital form. Furthermore, 40% of Cairo's transportation is covered by informally organized minibuses - with no related information existing at all. This poses a social challenge. The average Egyptian has to rely on unreliable word of mouth in order to plan his/her trip, therefore missing the opportunity to choose the fastest, cheapest or most convenient routes. This is a social issue that affects every Egyptian commuter.

To tackle this issue, Hegazy was inspired to release a map on Cairo's transportation system with the potential of scaling it nation-wide, in what he described as "Imagine being able to know what transit route to take from the click of a phone." The innovative methodology has been tested and proven in other countries of the global south, including Nairobi, Dhaka and Manila. Through TfC, daily commuter will have access to formal and informal transportation - including bus & metro systems - in a digital and printed format, through the online website, a phone application and a printed map. This will not only save time, but it will be an economical asset for many Egyptian commuters in the capital. Hegazy believes an affordable and quick commute is key to any successful employment and therefore, it is crucial for the economic and social well-being of Egyptians.

Waleed Shawky- Medicine for All Foundation

Affordable Medicine for Uninsured for Better and Effective Society



Waleed Shawky is a pharmacist who founded Medicine for All in order to help narrowing the gap between the misuse of medicine and the uninsured patients through a unique system of collecting, sorting and redistributing medicine for poor and needy patients in non-urban areas.

Shawky's idea started through his work at his pharmacy, when customers started giving him the extra medicine they had to be redistributed to poor and needy patients. One night, he noticed there were more than 100 bags of unused medicine in a room in one of the mosques. This led him to start an initiative for affordable medicine for all uninsured and disadvantaged individuals.

The NGO proved its success, when it received requests for medicines that could not be found in any pharmacy, but were at the organization. The initiative has benefited 600 people in 2006, and 3,000 in 2015, who otherwise would not have had access to the medication they needed. The value of the medicine collected was worth 2,000 LE monthly in 2006 and 50,000 LE in 2015. In addition to this, it is estimated that Shawky's work helps serve most vulnerable in the community, but also the pharmacies and in doing so, it cultivates a spirit of volunteerism and community cohesiveness.

Hayam Reda Alfy Nazer – Fekra Association

Opportunities and Development for Upper Egypt's youth



Hayam first founded Fekra in 2014 to tackle the severe inequity and its subsequent social consequences in Upper Egypt, specifically in the governorate of Assiut. One of the main social problems facing Assiut and Upper Egypt is the lack of opportunities and activities available for its youth. Youth constitute a major part of the community and if they are neglected and left idle, this can cause many social problems, especially if they are not equipped with relevant skills for a good job opportunity to guarantee them a sustainable future.

Aimed at youth from the age 14 to 25, Fekra's (or "idea") innovative idea is simply to provide the marginalized youth of Upper Egypt with the basic right to education and learning, and to have confidence and support to make a difference in their communities. Hayam feels that the targeted youth group in Upper Upper lags behind their urban counterparts and that Fekra Association is to trying to bridge this urban-rural gap in youth development.

By support and education to help youth discover their talents and develop them, in addition to train them practically on how to think about others around them and serve them through what they have of talents and abilities. Hayam believes creativity and honesty is what makes Fekra unique with its caring, encouraging and supporting approach. Fekra's main mission is to empower and support Upper Egyptian youth through workshops, trainings, and talents development, and it offers them also some volunteering opportunities.

In addition, Fekra uses interactive methods such as games, videos and activities to deliver the information for youth to make it more fun and accessible. Fekra recently also held a training day for senior students at the Moshir Ahmed Ismail school in Assiut. Fekra continues to work hard on education, raising awareness and youth development in Assiut.

Sanaa Ser Elkhelm – The Cultural Alliance for Reviving Heritage

Uniting the Handcrafts Sector and Protecting Cultural Heritage



Sanaa Ser Elkhelm founded the Cultural Alliance for Reviving Heritage in 2015 to help form a network between different organizations working on reviving cultural heritage through craftwork and arts. The Alliance works with culturally rich cities, different governorates representing the diversity of the Egyptian culture, from border governorates, upper Egypt and the Delta region . Currently they work in Sinai, Aswan, Matrouh, Kafr Elsheikh, Minia, and Cairo.

The Alliance's main objective is to empower youth and women working on the production of traditional handicrafts by linking them to different opportunities to sell their products and increase their income. The alliance aims to break away from the general trend of many organizations which purchase the products from the craft workers and sell them while taking most of the profit.

Another objective for the alliance is to enrich and introduce people to the diversity of Egyptian culture, through varied cultural events where people get to know the history and traditions of different governorates through reciting poetry, stories, traditional dancing and by displaying traditional handicrafts.

The alliance aims to establish handicrafts training center, and to form an alliance between different African countries in the near future.

Sally Bahgat-Oasis Community Center

Sustainability and Eco-Friendly Solutions for a Better Egypt



Sally Bahgat established the Oasis Community Center as a sustainability education center, which is a 10,000 square meters piece of greenery and desert land carrying eco-friendly buildings and facilitating children's environmental activities.

In order to help solve the problem of scarcity of energy, water, and food, the Oasis Community Center provides curricula-based-education, hands-on training, and practical show-casing to school kids on sustainability issues. This is done through "Khadra", a long-term education project for children from Public schools and orphanages about environmentalism, where children learn about gardening, upcycling and recycled fashion. Oasis also works with children from international schools and university undergraduates.

Through "Khadra" Oasis in partnership with PWC aspire to be part of the solution for environmental sustainability in Egypt by educating and encouraging school children to make lifestyle changes and to adopt simple habits to manage solid waste, conserve energy and water.

Sally wishes to see this center replicated nation-wide as satellites, acting as local flagship for sustainability education all over Egypt, and thereafter for all Arabic-speaking countries. The satellites shall be operated by women from the locality, serving the neighboring schools, and university students; Satellites will then be a game-changer of the education scheme nation-wide, as well as opportunities for women's employment.

Nawal Mostafa-Children of Female Prisoners Association

A Life Without Stigma for Female Prisoners and their Families



Nawal Mostafa established the Children of Female Prisoners Association in 1990 in her efforts to eliminate the social stigma and negative attitudes toward female ex-prisoners. Many ex-prisoners face rejection, ostracism, and aversion after they are released from prison.

These women go out commonly face no chance to explain the reason for their incarceration. This situation occurs regardless of whether their crime is murder or theft, or a failure to pay an installment for a small appliance or TV.

The association focuses on poverty-related cases, but it will also be establishing a training workshop inside Qanater prison to train prisoners before their release to prepare them for integration into a new, clean life away from the specter of crime and poverty. In an attempt to break the vicious circle of crime, the Association economically supports female prisoners through revolutionary solutions, training and employment opportunities, calls for equity and inclusion for the mothers and their children, and supports them socially and psychologically.

The Association involved the Ministry of Interior and Prison Service sector in their work and budget, providing services, facilities, health care solutions, food supplies, clothes, and blankets to newborn babies and their mothers, and visiting different prisons on monthly basis. It also works on online awareness campaigns to end stereotyping and misconceptions of female prisoners and raise awareness about their issues.

Nawal continues to work hard to make a difference in the community outlook for female prisoners.

Amal Hashem- Tanwira Cultural Institute

Supporting the Cultural and Artistic Sector in Qena



Amal Hashem founded the Tanwira Cultural Institute to fill the gap in the underdeveloped cultural and musical scene in Qena. There is a great need for artistic and cultural places in Qena as there is a lack of suitable venues and spaces to hold cultural and musical events.

Tanwira is derived from the word "Light", believing that Arts and Culture has a positive impact on small, ossified communities, and also art can be used as a peaceful tool in educating and raising awareness. Through Tanwira, social issues can be brought under the spotlight and tackled through art. There are many different activities and workshops that the institute offers; including visual arts, drawing, sculpturing, calligraphy, origami, making pottery, as well as holding film screenings, poetry nights, concerts and language courses.

Tanwira is planning to form a theatrical team and musical band to perform periodical shows in different cities, spreading positivity, and raising awareness. Tanwira targets youth and adults to help them discover and develop their talents and it aims to be a leading organization in Upper Egypt, in serving youth, creating networks between governorates, and being a pioneer and promoter for peace and creativity through art.

Rania Salah Sedik – Gebra

Reviving Egyptian Handicrafts through Green Solutions



Rania Salah Sedik established Gebra in order to support marginalized local communities to be economically and socially empowered through supporting unique cultural green handcrafted production. Gebra follows the Egyptian tradition of cultural production, handicrafts and local traditional guilds who have survived for thousands of years. Gebra also aims to support highly skilled talented workers in order to protect disappearing traditional Egyptian crafts while using natural resources with low environmental footprint.

Gebra aims to create sustainable livelihoods and enhance the societal status of artisans and promote environmentally-friendly solutions; as well as enable peasants find employment in their own rural communities rather than having to move to Cairo. Gebra works with and funds community development projects in different artisans' communities in Suhag, Sinai and other governorates to promote Egyptian culture and support cultural diversity. Bringing together fresh designers and highly skilled artisans to work on innovative designs with green local innovative materials as well as green solutions, it is also the first initiative to use wood made out of midrib of palm tree in manufacturing as the base of home decor line. Moreover, Rania is working on reviving Egyptian handicrafts through storytelling, videos and media which will reflect on craftsmanship, ending centralization and reducing poverty.

Gebra's long-term goals include opening more local outlets and creating a reliable online platform that would cater to local and international needs of Egyptian handcrafted products. Gebra continues to spread awareness on the importance of heritage.

Muhammad Ashraf- Shagra fel Madrasa

Overcoming Economic, Environmental and Educational Challenges through Farming



Muhammad is the founder of Shagra fel Madrasa, a local initiative to help combat global warming and provide for the lack of activities at schools with a profitable educational project. Its activities include; planting trees at schools, corps at rooftops, help students learn how to protect their environment and start giving their own community. It is also an alternative income source for schools.

Students, teachers and other people working at school learnt and started replicating the model in their own houses and rooftops. Through promoting planting and rooftop farming, Ashraf is enhancing citizenship values and raising awareness among children about environmental responsibilities. Realizing how it is important to start looking for alternative solutions to save the environment and raise income levels, students perpetuated the process in different neglected areas at the school. Neighboring houses started farming their rooftops after noticing the school top, and the school became widely known in the neighborhood, by El Shagra School ("The Tree School").

Hamdy Zidan - Eskenderella for Cultures and Arts

Inclusion for Better and Active Development



Hamdy Zidan is the chief executive officer of Eskenderella. Eskenderella was founded back in 1999, but its role in the development of cultures and arts is vital at this time in Alexandria. Egypt's second largest city, once one of the most prosperous and multicultural cities of the ancient world, has seen a recent rise in social tension, destruction of cultural and architectural heritage, along with lack of cultural spaces for artists and youth. This makes Eskenderella's work and support indispensable for being an inclusive creative space for everyone. Eskenderella focuses on creating justice through co-working and it is considered to be a cultural space open to minorities and marginalized groups, at Kom el Dikka, which is a historically rich, multicultural place, and yet is a relatively socially disadvantaged area in Alexandria.

Eskenderella believes that art is a human right and is not merely a luxury; it aims to narrow the gap between artists and the society while it nourishes citizens' minds and souls.

Eskenderella holds a wide variety of activities, working in public spaces; streets, homes, coffee shops, to preserve individual and societal heritage as a part of reviving Alexandria's unique heritage and history. Eskenderella also shows film screenings about the city's cultural heritage, and offers performing arts, street carnivals, presenting city folklore, storytelling for historical anecdotes, research and documentation to raise awareness about cultural freedom and social justice issues in the city. Currently, Eskenderella is preparing a garage to be used as a working space, with the aim to increase the number of beneficiaries, mainly youth and artists.

Ahmad Muhammad Saleh Hassan - El Madina

Developing Alexandria's Artistic and Cultural Sector



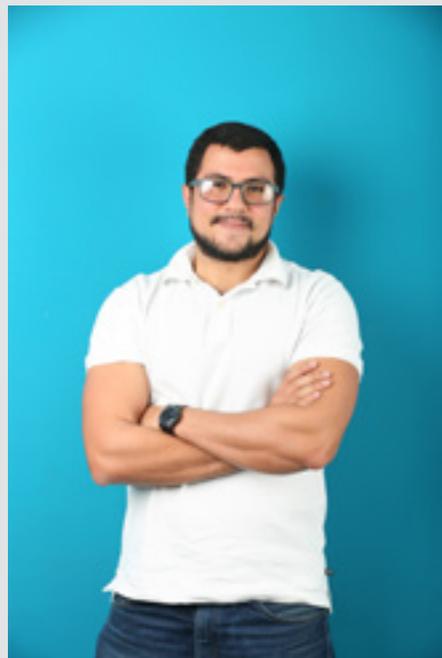
Ahmad Muhammad founded El Madina in 2000 in Alexandria. During the late 1990s, there were little presence and production resources for independent artists. Similar to Cairo, there are many restrictions in place when it comes to independent artistic expression and activities. El Madina was born out of a need for a cultural space in Alexandria that provides a platform for free artistic expression whether in arts; theatre, music or dancing.

El Madina works in arts and culture through training, production, culture space management and supporting artists and youth initiatives. Also it seeks to spread a culture of "democratization of the arts" in Alexandria and transform public spaces and marginalized areas to spaces where people can practice free expression and create a cohesive social environment characterized by pluralism. El Madina also works on empowering women and children through storytelling workshops. After the January 25th revolution, they started advocating for street art through holding workshops, trainings in different districts and organized street carnivals. El Madina calls for multicultural exchange through travel, networking and self-reflexivity, offering residencies to international artists, curators, writers, musicians and more. El Madina are keen to target people from all different social and economic backgrounds.

El Madina's Studio aims to promote performing arts and multimedia for a wider audience to enable the youth group's sustainability to support the creative economy of culture which can play an influential rule in sustainable development and social change.

Ahmed Salaheldien - Ingraph.Me

Utilizing Mobile Technology for Better Opportunities



Ahmed Salaheldien created Ingraph.Me which is a mobile application that makes it easier for people to search for relevant careers and opportunities in their local surrounding. Ingraph.Me can be considered as an Egyptian social network, or a platform between individuals and organizations, where people with relevant skills and passion can easily locate organizations providing events, jobs, workshops, services and products. Ingraph.Me is geared towards matching people and their skills and interests with relevant opportunities that suit them best. It will also be helpful for anyone wishing to do a career shift as it facilitates fast and easy connectedness with experts in the local area with relevant career tips and events, and with all the “know-how” of the new field. Organizations are also able to articulate news, polls and surveys across this ecosystem.

Being a new innovative approach of networking based on interest and skills, many unemployed Egyptian youths can be able to utilize this tool in order to find opportunities relevant to them.

By encouraging users to add their interests and skills while the app connects them to every piece of information in terms of events, people, organizations, news, products, services and even jobs in their surroundings.

All of this is only available at our fingertips through the mobile application which will keep users updated and tuned with info stream tailored based on interests. It will also give the publishers over the platform a 100% reach for the whole interested or skilled demographic in this ecosystem.

Mahmoud Abdullah ELAfifi - Ehlam

A Dream to Develop El Mahala's Local Community



Mahmoud Abdullallah is one of the founders of Ehlam organization, it was formed as an initiative in 2011 and after proving its success, it became an organization serving El Mahla El Kobra's residents with future plans to also serve the whole El Gharbia governorate.. The founders changed the organization's specialty from charity to development, in order to serve more people and in order to guarantee its sustainability, in an industrial community, which lacks a lot of activities. Given the lack of space for youth in the area of Mahala, and the centralization of most cultural events and activities in Cairo, Ehlam aims to provide a new space for creativity and culture.

They work on providing and distributing supplies for the poor, eradicating illiteracy, doing awareness campaigns at schools, cultivating people's culture and promoting volunteerism for youth. Ehlam aims to end the centralization of cultural scene, which is mostly present in Cairo, and provide tools to El Mahala's residents and youth by implementing workshops, seminars, organizing cultural events, different courses and activities. This includes also creative writing, music, calligraphy and language courses.

They have been working on a cultural project called Dedosia- Al Mahla's name during the Pharaonic age-, which already established a public library -with 1000 books - where people can access to read, and borrow for a nominal fee, without the need to buy or travel to Cairo. This revives and spreads a much needed cultural space and scene vital for the cultural and social development of youth and people in El Mahala.

Rasha Aly Soliman- Ladies Corner

Empowering Women-led Projects and Entrepreneurship



Rasha Aly established Ladies Corner, an online platform, to promote and achieve gender equality by reducing unemployment rates for women, and by providing them with relevant opportunities to enhance their skills and capabilities. In light of high unemployment and a lack of information available for women in Arabic on the internet, Ladies Corner offers a free service and expert knowledge for women in many relevant fields to help women realize their full potential in the public and private sphere.

Ladies Corner also provides assistance for women's small-to-medium projects in need of start-up capital, and all this can be done online (www.ladiescorner.com). This assists women who have small economic projects providing them mainly with an online store where they can sell their products, and offering marketing tips and consultations. Ladies Corner is a unique website, offering educational articles written by professional women discussing different topics such as parenting, self-development, relationships, health, diet, home decor, art and crafts. The articles aim to increase the knowledge and develop the skills of Egyptian women and motivate them through sharing experiences, success and inspirational stories. Offering women consultations on several topics makes ladies corner a unique platform for women's empowerment. Women can also benefit from dealing with experts in different fields of education, health, nutrition, arts and more, who provide assistance in Arabic in these relevant fields.

Ladies Corner is a new innovative approach to ease challenges and hardships that women face in Egypt.

Shaymaa Kadry - GISR Institution for Survey Research

Scientific Research and Surveys for Informed Awareness and Better Decision-Making in Egypt



In order to pave a better future for all Egyptians, Shaymaa also hopes all these efforts will help change how Egyptians perceive opinion surveys and reduce the widespread skepticism surrounding surveys and research that is vital for better decision-making in any society.

GISR was launched in 2014 as a women-led independent polling and survey research firm that strives to achieve impartiality and follow a rigorous scientific methodology. Given that public opinion research is recent in the Arab world, however, since the Arab spring, there has been an increasing interest in surveys and research in Egypt and in the region. Still, it is now always research that adheres to solid scientific practice and there is also a social lack of trust, along with credibility issues and suspicion of research centers. GISR aims at challenging this by providing society a peaceful and legal channel with new knowledge about people's opinions, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors gathered through various methods of data collection. This is done through high quality and ethical research in survey design, survey sampling, survey implementation, data collection, data analysis, and reporting.

GISR has managed to work with several international organizations such as International Labour Organization and Care International. Projects done varied between conducting impact assessments, projects' monitoring and evaluation, surveys for research purposes and training. GISR Academy also offers courses and workshops with a very low cost and sometimes for free, to educate those who are interested about various topics in the field such as questionnaire design and writing reports. There is also a community service program specifically for students, where GISR promotes survey research by training and mentoring students. Even more, it offers a kids workshop designed for kids in schools to foster a culture of dialogue and debate, to help children formulate opinions of their own on various topics thus, learning to respect the value of diversity in opinions.

Pioneers of PALESTINE profiles



Project by Alrowwad (Pioneers for life for culture and arts, led by an Awsi fellow Arab world social innovators).

Yousef Al Haj Qasem - Fina Alkhair



Yousef Al Haj Qasem, has created "Fena Al khair" a network of givers in Tulkarem Palestine dedicated to reducing poverty through the concept of "Entrepreneurship of Individuals". Yousef significantly advanced the sense of social responsibility and community involvement through creating a network of social activists, youth, and privileged people to bring social change and poverty alleviation. Instead of providing one-time financial assistance to help the poor, Yousef and his networks examine carefully ways of helping people in need in order to become productive members of the society and eventually paving the way to other less fortunate.

Yousef has already created change for 200 people and involved over 500 youths in the process, through training, voluntary work and community engagements. Yousef has become the go-to-man for officials, organizations and locals when it comes to creative solutions to difficult economic situations. He has become vocal in his area when it comes to people in need. His credibility and ability to bring together privileged people and volunteers to address poverty in Tulkarm allowed him to reach hundreds of people in a short period of time with significant impact on their life. His main approach is not only helping individuals financially, but also enabling them to become productive members of their communities, a good example of what opportunity and willingness can achieve.

Elida Zaghmout - Beit Ashms



Elida Zaghmout is the first Palestinian Kids Yoga certified teacher and a co-founder of Beit Ashams, which is a non-profit community center based in Beit Jala. Beit ashams is becoming a community of all ages including kids, teens, women/pregnant women, men and the elderly. Beit Ashams aspires to become a safe and hopeful community to hundreds of people in Palestine that believes in peace, justice and equality through unique and innovative tools like Yoga, Meditation, Women Circles, Aikido, a book-club, Deep Relaxation Sessions and healig through Music, Arts and Movements. "Kids of Music" is a unique and important program Beit Ashams runs, a program that integrates kids with special needs "mainly kids with Down's Syndrome" with other kids.

Elida and her community center have become a go-to-destination by many people who are seeking inner peace, love and bliss. Through helping people embark on a journey of self-discovery that will help people accept themselves and lead to accepting others and become more active in creating a new and better future in their homeland.

Maysa' Al Sha'er - Kazdora W Sora



Maysa' Al Sha'er is a co-founder of Shaghaf organization for digital expression that enables youth to create meaningful content of their digital expressions whether it's audio, video or blogging as a mean to help youth express themselves, their culture and their communities.

Maysa' initiated Kazdora W Sora that brings young bloggers, photographers and any interested individuals on a journey of discovery of Palestinian cities, villages and the refugee camps in Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon, to document culture, traditions, stories and social issues through videos, blogs and photos.

Maysa' aspires to create a YouTube show called "Ya Rayeh" for every city, village and refugee camps in Palestine in an innovative young and attractive way for all interested people worldwide.

Maysa' strongly believes the documentation of these journeys will help educate Palestinians and the world about the different communities and struggles they face, she also believes that telling these stories will eventually break barriers between classes and break stereotypes.

Yasmin Khawaja - Empoword



Yasmin Khawaja is a young entrepreneur. She has started Empoword Project that gathers a community in which all forms of writers and poets mainly related to spoken words and writings are attracted to. In the form of a community, artists can build networks and bonds and inspire each other to share their work in order to improve its quality and sustainability. She is working to help this community echo the words and ideas beyond these intangible as well as physical borders. An empowering community in which whispers and shouts are heard and resonated.

Empoword aims towards the social, emotional and mental aspects of artistic expression and growth. By cultivating a safe space in which youth can freely discuss social issues and personal issues through the form of artistic literal expression. The youth which resides within bound physical walls and a conservative culture are to be empowered to grow bigger than what these barriers can contain, and beyond the capacity which these restrictions can withhold.

The main program is the events Empoword hosts on a regular basis. Each meeting has a theme and hosts well-known and established writers and poets, competitions are organized for the participants. In addition, working on publishing the participants work online via social media and platforms such as YouTube and they collaborate with spoken word communities such as "Outspoken London".

Nisreen Shahin - Palterhal



Nisreen Shahin is the co-founder of PalTerhal a social entrepreneurial Palestinian company which aims to enhance the quality of life through outdoor recreation, adventure, experiential education and training programs. The company provides high quality and safe outdoor experiences that serve a wide range of segments in Palestinian society including kids, teenagers, youth, employees, families and elders. It also puts special emphasis on targeting troubled, at risk and special needs youth.

PalTerhal aims to serve the people by encouraging local tourism and outdoor recreation as a tool to learn about Palestine, appreciate nature and the environment, release stress, increase self-confidence and enhance capabilities. In addition, they created a venue for corporations to invest back into communities through PalTerhal. Corporations usually donate money to certain projects however, through PalTerhal they help these corporations develop and cultivate their social responsibilities by being immersed and connected to the communities. The unique qualities these corporations offer through being involved are not only through capital, but also through the people. Therefore, they help revitalize the economic capability of certain communities through social tourism.

Hani Abu Ghazleh - Fadfid



Hani Abu Ghazleh is CEO of Fadfid, it is the first Arabic online platform that enables individuals to seek professional psychologists counseling from around the Middle East. Usually marginalized and oppressed groups will not seek any psychological support because of social stigmatization. Therefore all sessions are booked and conducted online, providing extra level of comfort and privacy not found in the traditional process. As such, this incentivizes individuals to sign up without having to worry about the negative quotations associated with seeking psychological counseling. Hani sees Fadfid as a method of solving social issues related to depression, violence against women, addiction and trauma from loss.

In addition Fadfid provides free sessions for people who can't afford it through their pool of counselors through building relationships with corporates and funders to help cover these sessions' costs.

Through providing these opportunities, Fadfid is empowering individuals to become more productive and active members of the society.

Nader Jayosi - ElBarrio Fitness Club



Nader Jayosi is the Founder of ElBarrio Gym "an open space and boxing gym." Which is thriving to become a hangout spot that provides kids of underserved communities a healthy environment of self-expression and creativity. The revenues made by ElBarrio helps fund school programs and community activism.

Nader uses a dynamic and innovative approach to physical exercise that he views as a window into an enormous creative potential and a path to actualization and empowerment. His approach has helped transform In-Risk youth into becoming boxing champions and eventually turned their life around.

ElBarrio was built using reused materials from the immediate surrounding community. The rubber tires they got from junkyards cranes, the wood from a carpenter whose warehouse is their neighbor and the roof covering is 500 meter long camouflaged netting that the Israeli army had left behind.

ElBarrio built relationships with the Ministry of Education to sponsor forty kids per year from eight public schools (five from each). The sponsorship is comprised of three parts, each part satisfying an aspect of the holistic approach that ElBarrio aims to deliver. First is the boxing training, second is academic help and the third aspect of ElBarrio's sponsorship is the 'ElBarrio Squad.' The Squad is ElBarrio's mechanism of giving back to the community: the forty students will form a team to volunteer wherever needed, and will always show up with an attitude of professionalism and a go getter spirit.

Odeh Qura'an - Bits and Knits



Odeh Qura'an is the Founder of Bits and Knits that is targeting the marginalized of the Palestinian society including cooperatives, women, youth and elderly through facilitating their access to entrepreneurship opportunities.

Bits and Knits is a for profit organization that is making use of the E-commerce system trend and developing it in a way that serves cooperative needs. As it strengthens the cooperative and individual local producers in many aspects such as production quality, packaging and distribution which enables them to access the market with high quality products that will be able to compete in local and international markets.

In addition, Bits and Knits markets these products online for international communities, which eventually help these cooperatives and individuals, sell more products and sustain fair incomes. So far, Bits and Knits has benefited 75 families and is aspiring on the short term to benefit at least 200 more families.

On the long term, Odeh aspires to build a store, which views as a platform. This platform will enable the cooperative members to create their own stores, post their own products, reach international markets and communicate with their customers and eventually increase Bit and Knits' beneficiary base.

Raeda Mansour- Ajyal



Raeda Mansour is the co-founder of Ajyal Elderly Program which has a proactive nature, explores potential contribution of the elderly people in Palestine, especially the marginalized and underprivileged ones and seeks to re-engage them back into society as active citizens.

The idea of the program is carrying out many joint activities between the elderly and the youth to facilitate communication between the generations, which helps each generation to understand and be aware of the other group's way of thinking, dreams, challenges and daily struggles. They provide a platform where youth hear and learn from the experience of the elderly which helps in sharing and passing the knowledge through the generations.

From the onset of the program, a committee of senior members started participating in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the various activities, helping us to understand and respond to the needs and interests of the elderly. As a result, many clubs were created that meet their interests including yoga club, book club, drama club, choir club and the continuous education club.

In addition, they have other activities like, psycho-social activities, health, physical, spiritual and recreational activities. This allows for the full expression of the elderly's voice and presence, in addition to contributing to poverty reduction as they lead a healthier lifestyle and practices. Ajyal program has become a model as many organizations emerged after its success in this field; they adopted their vision in Bethlehem Governorate as well as other areas in the West Bank.

Sliman Mukarker - Power Group

Sliman Mukarker is one of the founders of "Power Group" established in 2012, working in the field of media and artistic production. The group creates a space for creativity; provide job opportunities for youth and women. Through the Group's work they aim to lower youth dependence on companies and NGOs that apprehend their ambitions.

Power Group consists of three sub-divisions: Power Help, Power Productions and Radio Power. Through Radio Power, Power Group devotes efforts to reflect the Palestinian youth's point of view, towards the issues that they face every day. Radio Power seeks to stir up the public opinion on the issues raised through their various radio shows, also to influence the associations that are responsible for making decisions. They want to increase community awareness about the issues that are at stake. They create a unique platform for youth to discuss taboo issues such as atheism, gay rights, demotic violence and so forth.

Power Group seeks to empower young people and to increase community awareness of the issues affecting their lives. Power Group uses voluntary work as a tool for change to target the less fortunate of the community. And it uses visual arts as well in an attempt to draw the society's attention to issues related to youth and women, aiming to make a serious change.

Tala Abu Eid - Al Hara Theater



Tala Abu Eid is the co-founder and the coordinator of Al-Harah Performing Arts Training Center/PARC in Beit Jala.

PARC was created to tackle high unemployment rate in Palestine. Possibilities available for young people who are not interested in studying at University, especially they have very limited departments. PARC was created to offer youth much needed creative vocational training in theatre in order to provide opportunities for new careers that are not available in Palestine.

PARC offers a two year training program in: Light, Sound, Costume, Stenography and managing cultural and artistic projects. The program is divided into 5 stages with local and international trainers, local and international internships at different performing arts spaces, and a graduation project. Through these stages, students are able to build their capacity in local and international environments and develop their skills thus making new contacts that increase their opportunities in obtaining jobs after their graduation.

As a result of the first pilot, PARC will graduate 25 students' ages 17-30 years old from cities, villages, refugee camps and marginalized areas from Palestine who are ready to enter the job market. PARC benefited 19 local trainers from the West Bank and Jerusalem and 16 international trainers from different countries around the world. Many local and international partnerships with performing arts organizations were involved.

PARC changed the lives of several young people who will contribute to the development of the Palestinian Performing Arts sector and to the economy of their families and communities in the future.

Rami El-Khateib -School Olympics



Rami El-Khateib is the founder of the School Olympics Project, which encourages the Palestinian school kids to disconnect from the virtual and internet being, in order to give them a chance to make and communicate with new friends in a fun and entertaining way.

Rami and his dedicated team have started with this change last year, when they gathered 200 kids from 10 different schools around Palestine to participate in entertaining Olympic Games that established the friendship between kids of the same school and also to give the opportunity to engage with different kids from other schools and cities.

Olympics competition is planned to take place every year as there are more schools requesting to join this program, the schools are very enthusiastic to join because they realized the importance of such activities that many kids are unable to participate in this modern world. Rami focuses on bringing traditional and group building games that help kids to play collectively even after the Olympics are over. The School Olympics Project delivers strong social and community change that defends equality for girls, in that they have the same rights as their boy classmates and this would stress the mental behavior of the boys in order to easily accept the girls playing and enjoying time in sports like others.

George Zeidan - Right to Movement



George Zeidan is the community leader of Right to Movement, a movement that is trying to bring awareness of the Palestinian inability to move freely within the country, the limitations imposed on Palestinians such as the separation wall, the settlements, checkpoints, and others. In addition, the fact that Palestinian women do not have the ability to move freely and do what they like to do whether, dancing, singing or running. Through various physical activities such as running we want to encourage youth and women to explore Palestine and challenge those limitations by defying the existing structure and help raise awareness regarding these issues. Through this movement, a proper atmosphere is created for the Palestinian people particularly for women to feel welcome and be able to practice running. In the Palestinian community women usually don't have space to join any kind of running practices in public and this movement helps provide this space.

The movement has been organizing free training in three Palestinian cities to encourage people to exercise and to train for the Palestine marathon that the movement has established. Running is a worldwide connection and we believe it will bring more awareness worldwide about restrictions on Palestinian movement.

Their running focus on trails along the restriction zones in order to raise awareness of local and international communities about their inability to enjoy a normal life.

The Movement's short term objective is to keep holding training three times a week in the these three areas and encourage more people to join. On the long run, we hope to create more running communities that train together on a weekly basis to promote the Palestinian right to movement.

George Mansour -Qader:

Since Establishment in 2008, QADER introduced several innovative models for supporting the rights and inclusion of PwD in the Palestinian society, focusing on key thematic areas including, enhancing role and performance of relevant stakeholders (Universities, local authorities, civil society organizations) towards the inclusion of PwD, Enhancing commitment of official institutions towards supporting and fulfilling the rights of PwD, and enhancing the participation of PwD in economic and social life. Among those models; enhancing access and participation of PwD in higher education, supporting the participation of PwD in labor market and promoting the role of local authorities.

Access and participation of PwD in labor market is a key cornerstone to their empowerment and active participation in social and economic life. To achieve this, two dimensional approach should be utilized. From one side, PwD should have access to educational and skills development programs. From another side, equitable opportunities in labor market for PwD should be ensured either through self-employment income generating projects or employment at private or public entities.

Up to now, more than 100 persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities, were supported to join labor market through establishment of income generating projects or job placements. Besides that, George is a senior trainer in project management. He delivered many training courses and workshops to hundreds of young males and females.

George Mansour is an activist in the disability rights movement in Palestine. He is a cofounder of QADER for Community Development; a pioneer Palestinian nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting better wellbeing of persons with disabilities (PwD) in Palestine. Shortly after establishment, George commenced his responsibilities as Executive Director at QADER.

Tamara Abu Laban- Women Make A change



Tamara Abu Laban is the initiator of the project: "Women Make A change". The program aims to eliminate the stereotypes of women, and defy negative assumptions. Through using social media tools, the project empowers women and teaches them not to underestimate themselves.

"Women Make A change" is a unique project that motivates women to speak up, to get their voices heard. Tamara and her team work with young people, both women and men. They believe that big changes come from young people, where men are supporters and women believe in their selves and capabilities, for a better future.

The effective and powerful tool here is the new media; therefore, young trainees first learn the methods of social media to change how the society views issues related to women through using social media campaigns. They learn how to write their stories, filming and editing.

As part of this program the participants get to meet women who are pioneers in Palestinian society "successful leaders, interposers, politicians...etc." they are exposed to a positive perspective especially around gender issues.

Tamara thinks that the most challenging part is that the youth participants are young people who come from marginalized areas where women's rights are never addressed in their families or at schools. They come from patriarchal societies where many families oppress women. How ever the goal of this program is to educate these youth in order to change their attitude and to transform them into women rights advocates.

The output of the training is when the participants make short films about women. This doesn't only help them to realize how they have been changed but also helps to spread women successful stories around the communities to be role models for the rest of young women.

The youths who were special and showed their hard work during the training will be working as part time trainers giving the same training to other youth.

Social media tools help these videos to reach more Palestinian people and not only Palestinians but; people in several parts of the world, which helps to alter the negative images and stereotypes of Palestinian women. In addition, this program will teach media skills to the youth to become significant part of their lives and most importantly; this creates job opportunities for them.

A Cultural Village Revitalizes a Region's Economy, New Hermopolis Cultural Village

