

Youth Employment Generation Programme in Egypt

United Nations Development
Programme, Egypt ICT Trust Fund
and MCIT



Youth Employment Generation Programme in Egypt¹

Region	MENA
Country	Egypt
Organization	United Nations Development Programme, Egypt ICT Trust Fund, MCIT
Name	Youth Employment Generation Program (YEGP) in Egypt
Category	Skills development
Start date	2012
End date	2013
Partners	30 NGOs & youth centres, Ministry of Youth (MoY), SFD, MS Egypt, ITI (Edu Egypt program), ELCC.
UN involvement	UNDP
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1. Background and description

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region currently has the highest proportion of youth to adults in its history with over 30 per cent of its population between the ages of 15 and 29 years.² This youth bulge is perceived as a demographic ‘gift’ for its potential for driving socioeconomic growth, but it is also a major challenge considering the bleak employment situation for this cohort. In the Middle East, the youth unemployment rate (ages 15-24 years) is 3.8 times the adult rate and 3.4 times the rate for North Africa. Overall, the youth unemployment rate stands at 27.2 per cent in the Middle East and 29 per cent in MENA, and it is estimated that the bleak trend will continue until 2018. An estimated 35.7 per cent of Egyptian youth are unemployed.³

Egypt is deeply affected by a mismatch between required job skills and those gained in the education system. Unemployment rates tend to be higher among educated youth; 600,000 young people enter the Egyptian labour market annually, but their skill sets are not aligned with the demands of the private sector.⁴

¹ Desk review (May-September 2014,); Interview (10 November 2014); Internal validation (20 December 2014-19 January 2015); Implementer validation (30 April 2015); Final validation (October 2015).

² ILO (2013).

³ Ibid.

⁴ ILO (2014).





The Youth Employment Generation Programme (YEGP) is part of a multi-country initiative launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2012 to respond to the youth unemployment challenge in the Arab transition countries of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. This initiative is structured around several core components tailored to the specific needs of each country and market. Core components of the project included technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills training; on-the-job training in private companies; access to financial and guidance services for youth business ideas and micro-businesses; and job and internship placement programmes. Egyptian youth cannot easily gain professional experience, so the internship is short-term training that allows graduates to develop their professional skills and get to know the needs of the private sector.

YEGP was incorporated into the Egypt Information and Communications Technology Trust Fund, established by UNDP in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. It focused on building the capacity of youth and their employability with an emphasis on information and communication technology (ICT).

YEGP builds on the work undertaken by UNDP and the Egypt ICT Trust Fund for building the capacity of Egyptian micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to leverage ICT in generating employment and creating efficient, better connected and more competitive enterprises through utilizing ICT tools and applications in partnership with civil society organizations

(CSOs). The project, titled 'ICT for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises', was implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Egypt ICT Trust Fund and the Islamic Bank Group for Development and included four phases:

Phase 1: Exploring the situation and identifying the challenges;

Phase 2: Reaching out and professional skills promotion;

Phase 3: Stepping forward towards sustainability;

Phase 4: ICT for youth employment.

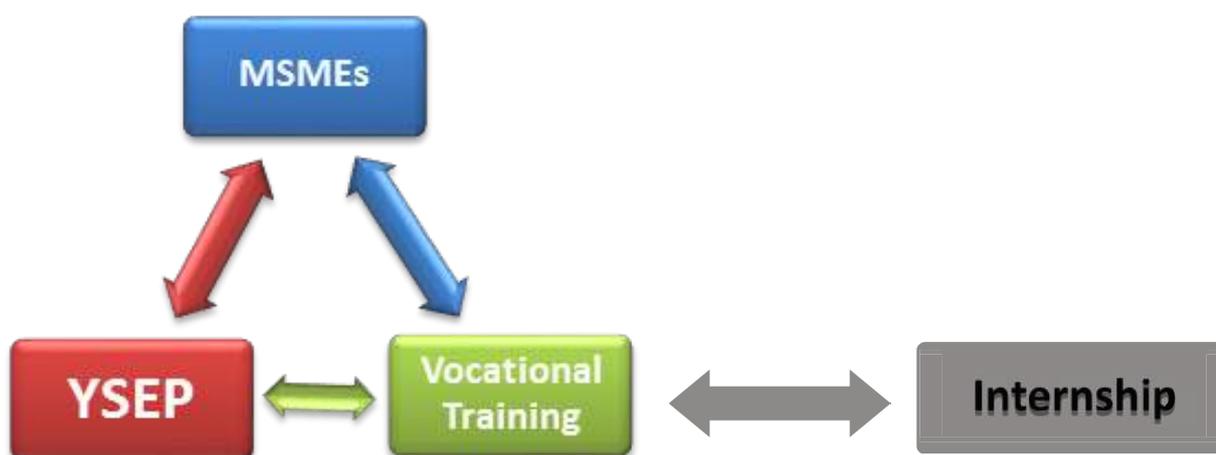
As a result of the knowledge acquired throughout the implementation of the project, YEGP covers the following four main components/activities:

- (1) Technical and vocational training for MSMEs;
- (2) Youth Social Entrepreneurship Programme (YSEP);
- (3) Vocational training;
- (4) Internship.



Components of YEGP implementation

The YEGP in Egypt was awarded the prestigious World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Project Prize for 2014, a unique recognition of excellence. The contest reviewed 141 projects and initiatives from 44 countries for 17 categories. Projects were honoured, recognized and presented with an award during the WSIS Project Prizes 2014 Ceremony at the WSIS+10 High-Level event in Geneva, Switzerland on 10 June 2014.



Organization profile

UNDP “partners with people at all levels of society to help build nations that can withstand crisis, and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone”.⁵

2. Goal and objectives

2.1. Goal

The goal is to address the mismatch between the skills demanded by the private sector and the skills possessed by youth, enhancing their employability through vocational, ICT and soft skills training.⁶

2.2. Objectives

- Provide youth access to technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills training with an emphasis on ICT;
- Increase opportunities for internships in private sector companies.⁷

⁵ UNDP – About us: http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/about_us.html

⁶ UNDP Egypt (2013).

⁷ Ibid.

3. Target group

3.1. Age group

The target of this programme was youth aged 18-35 years.

3.2. Gender considerations

The project placed special emphasis in the inclusion and creation of opportunities for young women and aimed for a balanced participation of males and females, setting a minimum quota of 35 per cent females in each of the programme components.⁸ The participation of females was highest in the vocational training programme, 55 per cent, and lowest in the YSEP, 25 per cent. As for the MSMEs, 46 per cent of participants were females.

3.3. Ethnic / disability considerations

The programme did not devise a specific strategy for ethnic minorities or people with disabilities, but nearly 10 per cent of the beneficiaries of the MSME training were people with disabilities.⁹

3.4. Targeting the most marginalized / most at risk

The programme targeted marginalized youth, i.e., those living in remote/rural areas or having some kind of disability, and new graduates. A small percentage of participants in the MSME component, less than 2 per cent, were young people without university degrees or school dropouts.

3.5. Human right programming

The project is aligned with basic human rights principles. It is based on the premise of decent work and equal opportunities for all, and promotes youth economic empowerment.

3.6. Youth involvement

Youth were consulted during the setting of objectives and in the evaluation. Youth were also involved in the needs assessments conducted at the start of the programme, doing surveys and interviews to analyse the needs of the community. Awareness-raising sessions were organized in the targeted communities to present the objectives and structure of the project. Feedback from beneficiaries and partners was incorporated into the final design of the project. Throughout the implementation, the monitoring process allowed any necessary changes in activities, in cooperation with the youth. For example, the first training session of social entrepreneurs was organized during a formal school vacation period to respond to the request of the college students.

4. Strategy and Implementation

4.1. Strategies / theoretical approaches / methodologies

The programme adopted a demand-driven approach and was designed as a comprehensive package of services for youth empowerment in the labour market. Local needs assessments were conducted among local ICT employers to understand the skills on demand. Several ICT companies took part in the study, and 36 job profiles were determined. Another study was conducted with the youth to understand their needs in terms of training and their expectations from the jobs. An assessment was conducted on how best to manage youth's expectations and match them with the market.¹⁰

8 Telephone interview with Ms. Maria Tarancon and Mr. Hala Abd El Monem el Sadek, UNDP Egypt (date).

9 Egypt ICT Trust Fund (2013).

10 Interview with Ms. Maria Tarancon and Ms. Hala Abd El Monem el Sadek, UNDP Egypt.

The project has been implemented through a network of 30 CSOs in 16 governorates. These local organizations participated in training-of-trainers sessions, building their own capacities and improving the capacities of their trainers to train the final beneficiaries (see figure below). The partnership with local organizations maximized the outreach to young people.

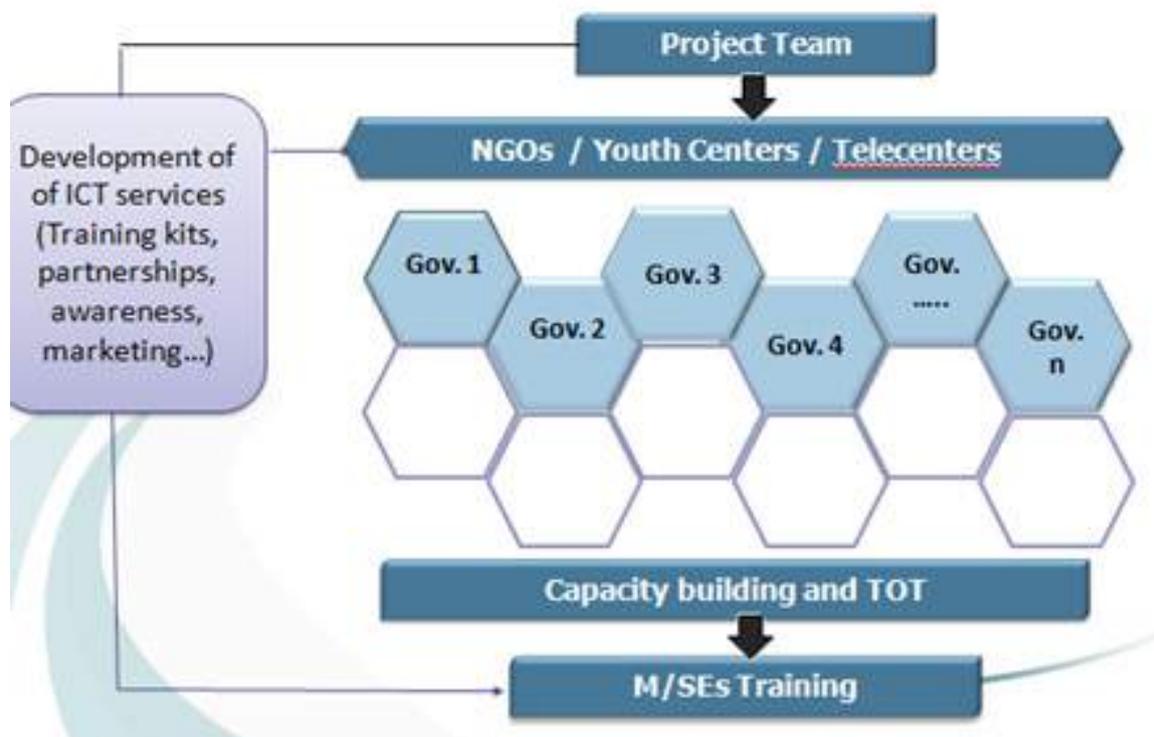


Figure (1) implementation mechanism

Capacity-building and training of trainers

Forty trainers received training in ICT and business administration skills, and they in turn trained 1,852 youth.¹¹ Trainers underwent an interview to evaluate their ICT background, soft skills and experiences. The selected participants received training on:

- ICT skills (Windows XP, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, MS Project, Internet and Outlook);
- Soft skills (presentation, negotiation and communication skills, problem-solving);
- Business skills (Business plan, accounting, marketing and e-marketing, human resources, finance and procurement, inventory control).

Pre- and post-training assessments were performed to evaluate the trainees.

4.2. Activities

Micro, small and medium enterprise training

The MSME component aimed to increase the effectiveness and productivity of the young owners and entrepreneurs through the integration of ICT in their operations. The training was



conducted through two modalities, face-to-face and online. Face-to-face training consisted of awareness sessions (one-day events introducing the project), training of trainers and capacity-building. Topics addressed included e-marketing, website development, e-accounting and basic ICT skills. Attendees were MSME staff and/or owners, ages 18-35 years, who had established an enterprise and demonstrated potential to develop and grow. Selection was based on interviews and information about the training was disseminated through youth centres, NGO partners, awareness sessions and online promotion.

The second modality was distance learning training. The programme developed the online platform 'Kayanak' to reach out to youth who could not attend the face-to-face training. At the time of implementation, the political turmoil in Egypt resulted in restricted mobility.

Kayanak mainly targeted youth aged 21-45 years with their own MSMEs. It addressed those who could not attend the face-to-face meetings or did not fulfil all the requirements for this training, which was the availability to attend and have a legally established enterprise. Registration and selection of participants was done online, and the self-learning toolkits were sent to the MSMEs. Promotion of the training programme included a social media campaign and awareness sessions with 15 local NGOs in 12 governorates, part of the partner organizations. These NGOs were selected based on the resources they possessed for mobilizing targeted beneficiaries.

The toolkit which the participants received consisted of two training packages. The

MSME skills package included CDs for planning and business administration skills, finance and accounting, sales, marketing, customer services and basic computer skills. The manufacturing and managing knowledge package included CDs on skills for digital photography, digital video, website development and management and basic computer skills.

Youth and Social Entrepreneurship Programme

The YSEP aimed to inspire youth to launch their own social entrepreneurship projects with high impact in their communities using ICT.

In Phase I (June-September), the 'Tomouh' competition was launched on the YSEP website¹² to attract and select the best entrepreneurship projects; 17 awareness sessions about the competition were conducted in 14 universities with 1,200 youth. In Phase II (October-December), a training of trainers was designed and delivered, resulting in 11 entrepreneurship trainers who providing training to 137 other entrepreneurs. The majority of the entrepreneurship trainers were employees of Egypt ICT Trust Fund and two were project partner staff. The 137 entrepreneurs who followed the training were selected through an online competition and applications were filtered according to innovation, social impact and economic sustainability. Topics addressed included strategic social enterprise planning, social enterprise management and integration of ICT into business. In Phase III (January-February), a committee evaluated the competing proposals and selected five finalists. All participants accessed networking and mentorship services including invitations to events related to youth innovation



and entrepreneurship, conferences and workshops on social entrepreneurship, and one-on-one consultations. These activities served to enlarge the youth's networks and increase their opportunities for success.

Vocational training and internship

Vocational training and internship were combined to provide young people the opportunity to connect with a private sector company at the end of their training. Vocational training was conducted for the partner NGOs and the internships took place in the private companies. The four governorates of Greater Cairo, El-Minya, Aswan and Dakahlia participated. The programme started with a labour market survey in each of the governorates to determine the targeted jobs. Four NGO implementing partners were selected and trained employing the training-of-trainers' methodology. Beneficiaries were trained on skills that matched the targeted jobs and were linked to internship opportunities. The content of the training focused on ICT-related skills including design and graphics, personal computer (PC) maintenance and customer service.

A marketing demand analysis study conducted at the national level surveyed ICT companies of different sizes to identify both their employment demand and the main competencies and training course/programmes meeting the demand. The study also surveyed recently graduated youth to identify skills gaps.

4.3. Innovativeness

An innovative component introduced by the project was the distance learning training for MSMEs.

4.4. Cost and funding

The multi-country YEGP project is funded by the Government of Japan, with \$500,000 provided for Egypt.

4.5. Sustainability

The project was implemented and operated by the ICT Trust Fund, under the umbrella of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. Integrating the project under a ministry provides greater sustainability to the activities. As part of the sustainable components, the e-learning mechanism Kayanak was highlighted during the evaluation as a tool for systematically providing training to MSMEs.

The project promoted networking and cooperation among trained MSMEs with the purpose of building cascade training mechanisms for a transfer of experiences.





This was done through the online website development and networking on the community development portals Kenanaonline,¹³ mainly through the ‘Ayadina’¹⁴ portal which focuses on MSMEs, the competitions, focus group discussions, graduations and final closing events. A

Activity	Expenditure USD
ACTIVITY1: Increased internship opportunities in private companies and/or other institutions for youth	110,130.56
ACTIVITY2: Increased self-employment and employability of young women and men through access to technical, vocational and entrepreneurial	389,864.72

survey of MSMEs found that 50 per cent of MSMEs, 57 per cent of Kayanak users and 60 YSEP participants were able to transfer the training experience to colleagues.¹⁵

4.6. Replicability

The YEGP programme falls within the scope of a multi-country programme initiative implemented to respond to the immediate needs of youth in the Arab transition countries of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. It provides quick-impact tools to alleviate their unemployment. This multi-country programme is structured around five major components: (1) increased opportunities for vocational training in private companies for youth; (2) increased access to financial services for youth self-employment; (3) increased self-employment for youth through access to technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills training; (4) increased short-term job opportunities for the most vulnerable youth groups through improvement of public infrastructures and/or services and; and (5) support to the formulation of youth employment-generation policies. Each area of intervention is a stand-alone subcomponent of the programme, offering a package of development assistance which can be tailored to the specific needs of the beneficiary countries.

In Jordan, the programme focused on tackling youth unemployment to contribute to poverty reduction and social stability. It concentrated in the governorates where the private sector presence is minimal and youth have limited opportunities for linking with this sector. The governorates were selected based on their levels of poverty and unemployment. The project was implemented in collaboration with the government (Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Interior, Vocational Training Corporation); NGOs (Ruwwad for Development, Jordan Career Education Foundation, Jordanian Center for Civic Education, ACTED); and the University of Jordan.

The final evaluation of the programme implemented in Jordan, conducted in October 2014, recommended replication of the project at the national scale given the results in terms of increasing employment opportunities and promoting entrepreneurship. It recommended that the scale-up be conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Higher Education and Social Fund for Development with the aim of promoting the programme among youth, especially new graduates.

¹³ Kenanaonline is a group of seven knowledge sub-portals that provides specialized knowledge in the fields of small enterprise development, health, women empowerment, agriculture and farming, youth empowerment, educational and vocational training.

¹⁴ <http://ayadina.kenanaonline.com/>

¹⁵ UNDP (2013).



5. Evaluation of effectiveness

The final evaluation report of September 2013 concluded that the programme was “in complete relevancy to the needs of youth, MSME owners and entrepreneurs, in addition to its relevancy to the government policies and labour market requirements”.¹⁶ The programme was successful in achieving its targets and exceeded the number of trained youth in some of its components.

Beneficiaries demonstrated the ability to apply the acquired skills: 60 per cent of MSME trainees applied the acquired ICT skills (e-marketing, website development and e-accounting system); 38 per cent of MSMEs trained through the virtual portal Kayanak developed their own web pages and marketed their projects; 80 per cent of the entrepreneurs trained through the YSEP component applied their ICT and social entrepreneurship skills or used the available networking/mentorship services; and 57 per cent of vocational trainees had internship or job opportunities using their ICT skills.¹⁷

MSME component

The expected number of trained MSME youth owners was 1,500, but the programme managed to train 1,852 youth on ICT and business skills. A pre- and post-project assessment was conducted to test the acquisition of knowledge and skills among beneficiaries. The scale employed ranged from one to five. The trainees’ pre-project assessment scores on ICT skills ranged from 1.38 to 3.37 prior to training, and increased to 3.34 to 4.35 after the training. The scores registered for business skills ranged from 1.56 to 1.86 and improved to 3.67 to 4.¹⁸

Some 60 per cent of the on-site trainees applied their acquired ICT skills in the following ways: development of website; usage of Excel for accounts; set-up of electronic accounting systems; efficient usage of Microsoft Word; and electronic shopping skills.¹⁹

Some 38 per cent of the MSMEs that received training developed their own websites to market their projects; 80 per cent of trained entrepreneurs applied the acquired ICT and social entrepreneurship skills or used the networking and mentorship services; and 90 per cent of vocational trainees obtained employment opportunities requiring ICT skills.

Through the Kayanak portal, 320 MSME training packages were delivered and 2,000 training materials were printed and distributed among the implementing partner NGOs in the targeted governorates.

YSEP

Pre-and post-intervention assessments were conducted for the trainees who received the entrepreneurship training. Results showed significantly improved knowledge of participants on the topics they were trained on: strategic social planning; social enterprise management; and integration of ICT into business. The scores of pre-course testing were not high; 31 per cent of the attendants passed the test, scoring between 50 per cent and 69 per cent, while the remaining 69 per cent scored below 50 per cent. This shows that the attendees possessed moderate backgrounds about the business and management in general. The post-intervention assessment showed that 25 per cent of participants scored over 90 per cent; 27 per cent scored above 80 per cent; 17 per cent scored between 70 and 79 per cent and 31 per cent scored between 51 and 69 per cent.²⁰

16 UNDP (2013).

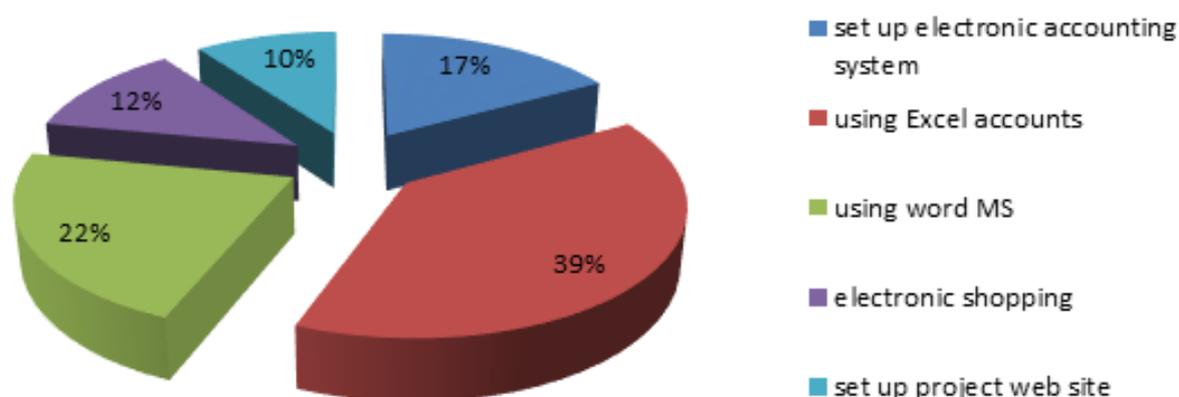
17 Ibid.

18 UNDP (2013).

19 UNDP (2013).

20 Ibid.

Figure (9): Application of MSMEs Training Skills



In Phase III, 'Tomouh' competitors were filtered and of the 65 qualified business plans, the top 10 were selected and invited for the final arbitration event. The ideas selected were evaluated by an external committee to select the top five competitors, who received in-kind awards to support the implementation of their projects.

The results of the survey indicated the effectiveness of the 'Tomouh' website, with 50 per cent of those who responded to the survey saying they learned about the Tomouh competition from the website, 30 per cent from a partner NGO in their area and 20 per cent from the university seminar.

Vocational training and internship

Some 211 youth completed the basic level of vocational training, consisting of basic ICT and soft skills, and 234 youth graduates received advanced training on soft skills, engineering, web design, programming and graphic advertisement. In addition, 42 youth graduates completed a business skills training. Fifty-seven per cent of the trained youth obtained an internship (33 per cent) or job opportunity (22 per cent)

with ICT companies, while 45 per cent were not able to find a job.²¹

Monitoring and evaluation

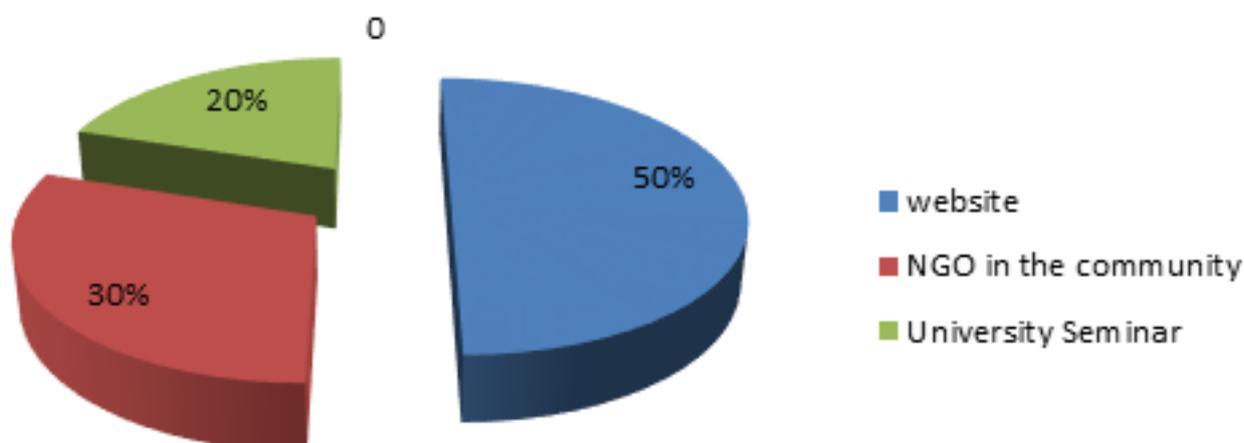
The programme developed a monitoring and evaluation manual to provide guidelines for the monitoring of results at various levels, as well as to help the monitoring and evaluation staff collect qualitative and quantitative data. The programme employed a monitoring and evaluation logical framework of output, outcome and impact.

Each of the activities of each of the components – MSMEs, YSEP, vocational training – were monitored through various methods including:

- Field visits to the training sites;
- Regular phone/e-mail communication with NGO implementers;
- Technical reports submitted weekly and monthly by the implementing NGOs;
- Observation and focus groups;
- Online tracking systems (for the YSEP, Kayanak, vocational training and internship).

²¹ Ibid

Figure (13): How do entrepreneurs know about Tomouh competition



6. Strengths and opportunities

- The programme was adapted to local needs of the Egyptian MSMEs, which maximized the effect of the training programme and its impact on improving the practices of the MSMEs.
- Linkage with the private sector for on-the-job training and market needs assessment to tailor training and related materials. This was done through the partners NGOs, which conducted needs assessment in their local communities and linked with private sectors leaders from the start to identify their training needs. After the project helped to build the capacities of youth, the companies were satisfied with hiring qualified graduates.
- The use of distance learning methods helped to overcome the challenges posed by the political situation in Egypt and allowed young entrepreneurs in remote areas to access the training.
- The establishment of a partner network with over 30 CSOs in Egypt, which allowed YGEP to reach a larger target group of youth.

- The organization of the Tomouh competition encouraged entrepreneurs to launch and implement their projects.²³

7. Challenges²²

- Political challenges: the political turmoil in Egypt hindered the implementation of project activities, particularly in remote governorates, and constrained the participation of trainees. The effects were mitigated by the launch of distance learning (Kayanak).
- Delays in achieving set project targets. This was mitigated by ensuring regular meetings and communication with partners, clarifying goals and timelines.
- The limited time for the programme implementation made it difficult to reach out to youth beneficiaries. To overcome this, the project partnered with EduEgypt, a programme providing summer training workshops in 13 universities.

²² Summary of the challenges identified by the evaluation, UNDP (2013).

²³ Email feedback by Ms. Maria Tarancon, December 2014.

8. Next steps and the way forward

In Egypt, the model is currently being replicated in six governorates in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO). In this new phase, there is a specific focus on persons with disabilities. Through ICT Trust Fund and UNDP, components featured in this project continue to operate and be delivered through other mechanisms and projects.

9. Lessons learned and recommendations²⁴

- Replicate the project at the national scale in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Higher Education and Social Fund for Development to promote the programme among youth.
- Strengthen the capacity of CSOs in ICT and training skills in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs.
- Kayanak proved to be an effective tool for providing distance learning training.
- Increase cooperation with universities and the private sector through social corporate responsibility to promote entrepreneurship training and provide technical assistance to young entrepreneurs.
- Improve the tracking of beneficiaries and follow-up to capture long-term results of the programme.

10. Components to consider for scale-up in MENA

- Increasing the diversity of vocational training and linkage with private sector for more internship opportunities.

- Distance learning entrepreneurship kits provided through portals such as Kayanak.

11. Resources

- Kayanak training package
- YSEP training curricula
- Success stories booklet

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Photo credits: UNDP.

