

Annual Report 2015
Swiss Academy for Development

and Youth Employment



Green for Business

INCOME
PROFIT

INNOVATION

VALUE
FOR THE
CUSTOMERS

VALUE
FOR THE
ENVIRONMENT

GREEN
ENTREPRENEUR

Youth unemployment and climate change are putting Egypt's future at risk. Many young people lack prospects and opportunities. SAD supports disadvantaged young people in developing their own start-ups. Sustainability is at the centre of this project. With a lot of creativity and personal initiative, the young people don't just establish economically viable business ideas but also take responsibility for the environment.

ENVIRONMENT
=
LIFE SUPPORT
SYSTEM

Haged, Salua and Madani live in Al-Minya, a provincial town in Egypt, on the west coast of the river Nile. To earn a bit of money, they started looking through the municipal waste together for recyclable materials. The woman and two men collect plastic, metal, paper and cardboard, and prepare the ma-

Nahed from Cairo set herself the goal of opening a small shop selling Nubian handicrafts.

terials for sale to a big recycling plant. All three of them took part in the Youth Innovation Fund Egypt (YIFE) course. Another participant was 25-year-old Nahed from Cairo, who set herself the goal of opening a small shop selling Nubian handicrafts. She wants to revive Nubian culture. Its roots go all the way back to Ancient Egypt. "By working with mainly recycled materials, these ethnic minority women are able to earn their own money," explained Nahed. "In order to sell enough, it is important that the accessories are authentic. At the same time, we'd like to give them a modern touch."

Hamed, Salua and Madani recycle waste such as plastic, metal, paper and cardboard, and prepare it for sale to a recycling plant. Unfortunately, the business wasn't making any money, which is why they took part in SAD's training. They were able to optimise their business idea and were selected for start-up funding. The three young business people used the money to buy machinery to compress the rubbish. That way they can save transport costs, work more efficiently and do something good for the environment at the same time.

A Project for Disadvantaged Young People

YIFE is a joint project of SAD and the local NGO Alashanek ya Balady (AYB). The project is aimed at unemployed young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged families in Cairo and Al-Minya. Like Nahed, many of the participants have had a business idea for a long time. They just don't have the knowledge and capital required for putting it into action. Others are already self-employed because of the lack of employed positions available – like Haged, Salua and Madani. They don't have the know-how to run their businesses profitably either. YIFE provides these young people with the practical knowledge they need.

Unemployment Robs Young People of a Future

It is not just by chance that the YIFE participants attach great importance to recycling. In fact, environmental sustainability is central to the project. The aim is to address two of the biggest challenges facing Egypt at once: youth unemployment and climate change. The country has one of the world's highest youth unemployment figures.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), at 38.9 percent Egypt's youth unemployment rate is three times higher than the unemployment rate for adults. Without a job, it

They don't have the money to have an independent life or to start a family.

is hard for young people to find their place in society. They don't have the money to have an independent life or to start a family.

Climate Change Puts Jobs and Lives at Risk

With its dry, hot climate, Egypt is particularly affected by environmental risks. On the one hand, the country is threatened with the loss of arable land, settlement areas and industrial zones due to rising sea-levels. On the other hand, Egypt gets 95 percent of its drinking water from the Nile and uses 90 percent of the fresh water available. These figures are horrifyingly high. Any degradation in the available water,





Teams selected for funding



Individually coached teams



Business plan competitions



whether due to poor rains, increased evaporation, or contamination by pesticides or sewage, would be fatal. In addition, refuse disposal is inadequate, the air is polluted and agriculture is not very sustainable. Future prospects are bleak. The Egyptian minister for the environment expects that millions of jobs will be lost in tourism and agriculture in the future if the environment continues to change at its current rate. Decreasing agricultural production will also lead to rising food prices. Heat and dirty water will cost between 100 and 1,000 more people their lives per year.

Training for Ecological Business Management

The premise of the Youth Innovation Fund Egypt is that youth unemployment and environmental change are closely related. Prosperity needs a stable climate and a functioning ecosystem. And 'green', sustainable businesses generate jobs. The young

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participants of the month-long course are encouraged to set up their own profitable projects that take into account environmentally sustainable production methods. In the course modules, they learn an entrepreneurial approach to handicrafts. They learn how to set prices, put together a business plan and think creatively. For Haged, Salua and Madani, it became clear that they would be able to manage their company's finances better if they systematically record income and outgoings. The participants gained the knowledge required for turning an environmental problem into a business idea, or for optimising an existing company with regard to an environmental problem, like Haged, Salua, Madani and Nahed who use recycling and upcycling. Other possibilities include energy and water efficient production methods and clean technologies. During the course, Hossein and Yunis, two young cattle breeders from Al-Minya, developed the idea of using cow dung to produce biogas. Top-down teaching is kept to a minimum on the course thanks to an interactive approach. The young people strengthen their social skills

such as communication and problem-solving strategies in group work and mutual exchange.

Start-up Funding and Mentoring to Create Independence

The participatory approach was key to course planning – and for the whole programme. Tailoring the content of the course to the participants' real needs had top priority. After a test run, the course was reduced from

On the course, Hossein and Yunis developed the idea of using cow dung to produce biogas.

three months to one month, and the teaching blocks were shortened. It was difficult for female course participants in particular to attend the whole course because of family commitments.

As well as the course, YIFE also offers mentoring. At business plan competitions participants are able to present their business ideas to a panel of professionals. These representatives of the Egyptian government, the private sector, civil society and development organisations select the most promising projects, which YIFE will support. The aim of the mentoring is to support the young people as they develop their project ideas and to advise them during the start-up phase.

Haged, Salua and Madani presented their recycling project to the panel. Their business idea impressed the experts. They received a start-up grant, which they want to use to buy a

“With the waste compressor we will save transport costs and do something for the environment at the same time.”

compressor: “That way we can press the rubbish and transport far more with the same number of trips. We'll be able to work more efficiently, save transport costs and do something for the environment at the same time.” It would be hard to sum up the idea behind the YIFE project any better than that.



Project

Youth Innovation Fund Egypt – Helping disadvantaged young people in Egypt to help themselves

Duration

2014 – 2017

Partners

Alashanek ya Balady (AYB); U.W. Linsi-Stiftung, Foundation for the Third Millennium, Sawiris Foundation for Social Development (SFSD), Canton of Bern, Migros-Hilfsfonds, Paul Schiller Stiftung

