



**THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO**

John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement

# **A Practitioner's Guide for Social Entrepreneurs in Egypt and the Arab Region**

**By Ehaab Abdou**

**October 2010**



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Finally, the author would like to thank all the Egyptian and Arab youth who have joined him in meetings, brainstorming sessions and presentations. This guide is based on the author's discussions with them and it addresses the concerns they raised.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR; THE JOURNEY OF AN EGYPTIAN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Ehaab Abdou is a social entrepreneur who has spent more than 15 years working to energize young Egyptians to contribute to their country's development. He is a co-founder of the Fat'het Kheir and Nahdet El Mahrousa ([www.nahdetmasr.org](http://www.nahdetmasr.org)) NGOs. He also co-founded and was the first president of the Federation of Egyptian Youth NGOs.

As a student at the American University in Cairo in 1992 he was active in AIESEC, the world's largest student-run organization, becoming president of its Egypt chapter in 1995. Upon graduation from AUC, he worked in the marketing department of the Nestle food company in Cairo before shifting to the development field. In 1999 he joined the Near East Foundation regional office in Cairo and also co-founded the Fat'het Kheir NGO. Between 2000 and 2002, he worked for the Canadian International Development Research Center (IDRC) Cairo regional office as its regional partnerships and business development manager.

In 2004, Ehaab earned his master's degree in international development from the **University of Pittsburgh**, Pennsylvania. His dissertation focused on local philanthropy, fair trade, and the developmental role of NGOs.

Returning to Egypt, Ehaab designed and co-taught the first undergraduate course on NGO Management offered at AUC in 2006. In the same year, he led efforts to establish the Federation of Egyptian Youth NGOs, which acts as Egypt's primary umbrella for youth NGOs, and served as its first president.

While studying in the US, and based on his Fat'het Kheir experience, Ehaab focused his studies on learning from other countries' experience and reflecting on a strategic plan for youth mobilization. With friends and colleagues in Egypt he helped to co-establish Nahdet El Mahrousa NGO (NM) which now encompasses youth membership within and beyond Egypt

In 2004, Ehaab was named a 'social entrepreneur' by the **Ashoka Foundation** which is a leading global organization providing support for social entrepreneurs across the globe. The stipend and technical assistance offered by Ashoka Arab World between 2004 and 2007 allowed him to dedicate attention to the growth of NM. He then served as NM's managing director until 2009, when he joined the Middle East Youth Initiative. He currently serves as an active board member of Nahdet El Mahrousa and the Federation of Egyptian Youth NGOs.

As a singer-songwriter, Ehaab helped co-found the Ana Masry ('I'm Egyptian') band in 2007, through which he aims to promote tolerance, diversity, national unity and interreligious dialogue through the medium of music ([www.ehaab.net](http://www.ehaab.net) & [www.ana-masry.org](http://www.ana-masry.org)). In October 2009, with Cilantro café chain, he co-produced his first musical album "Gowaya Hagat" (Inside Me).

In his current role as advisor to the Middle East Youth Initiative of the Brookings Institution's Wolfensohn Center for Development and the Dubai School of Government ([www.shababinclusion.org](http://www.shababinclusion.org)), Ehaab brings his expertise and passion for youth development, social innovation and entrepreneurship to a regional level. He currently leads the social entrepreneurship agenda, which aims to better understand and strengthen the potential of social entrepreneurship and innovation to contribute to the Arab region's development challenges. He co-authored the first report on social entrepreneurship in the Middle East, "Social Entrepreneurship in the Middle East: Toward Sustainable Development for the Next Generation", published in April 2010.

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Since many references and examples in this Guide are drawn from Fat'het Kheir and Nahdet El Mahrousa, a brief introduction about each of those organizations is due:

### **About Fat'het Kheir**

Founded in 1999 by a group of fresh Egyptian university graduates, Fat'het Kheir is the first Egyptian NGO to have provided interest-free loans, based on 100% Egyptian funds and 100% volunteer staff. It carries out several successful projects in the areas of education and economic development mainly serving the community of Hadaba El Wosta area in Moqattam. It aims to create an integrated community-development model that can be replicated across the country.

### **About Nahdet El Mahrousa**

Founded in 2002 by a group of young Egyptian professionals, Nahdet El Mahrousa is now one of Egypt's and the region's leading youth NGOs. Considered a hub for young Egyptian professionals, it is the first incubator of innovative social enterprises in Egypt and the region. It has several successful programs and partnerships. Among its flag-ship incubated social enterprises is Egypt's first public university-based Career Development & Entrepreneurship Office in Cairo University and the Young Innovators' Awards which supports research and development across Egypt's public universities. Other incubated social enterprises and organization-wide partnerships cover topics such as civic engagement, tolerance, peace education and public health.



## **INTRODUCTION & HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

The Guide presents a collection of reflections and tips for anyone aspiring to start new development projects or social enterprises. While some of the challenges will be similar anywhere in the world, Ehaab shares here his pointers for success within the contemporary Arab social, economic and political context. An Arabic-language edition is forthcoming.

For the purpose of this Guide, a social enterprise is defined as an entity, whether an NGO or company, that sets out to achieve social impact based on a business model that ensures its financial viability and sustainability.

The Guide builds on both personal experience and discussions with young social innovators and entrepreneurs in Egypt and across the region.

### **How to use this Guide**

The Guide is divided into four main sections. In the first section, the reader is encouraged to focus on understanding oneself, one's own vision and motivation. It then moves in the second section to identify key tips and insights in dealing with other actors, focusing on two key stakeholders; namely volunteers and the community. The third section focuses on how to get started developing an initial idea into successful implementation. The fourth and final section is closely linked with the third section and emphasizes the importance of effective communication - a recurring theme throughout the Guide – by providing key insights and tips.

This Guide is structured to address the various facets needed for a successful development project or organization. It is also suited for scaling up existing projects or social enterprises that are further into their life cycle. It will be especially useful to those seeking to develop their initiatives into impactful social enterprises while generating sufficient income to maintain financial independence and sustainability.

This Guide assumes that you are motivated to start your own development initiative or are already in the early stages of implementing one. For those who remain undecided whether to commit to an initiative of this kind, some of the benefits of your engagement in such activity will include:

- Bringing new meaning and self-satisfaction to your life
- Getting to really know and learn from your community and country at large, in all its diversity
- It goes without saying, this is an investment in your community or country's future.

- Gaining new knowledge and experience
- Developing new skills, social or otherwise
- Building a new network of contacts

This Guide provides many tips and suggestions which can be summarized briefly::

- Persistence, persistence, persistence!
- Never give up; use setbacks as learning experiences
- Think big and shoot for the stars
- Too much analysis leads to paralysis. So, do reflect and research but start somewhere!
- Don't worry at the outset if you lack a clear vision or have more questions than answers- it is healthy in the beginning
- Patience with results. Remember that development is a non-linear, complex process. What counts in the end is that you gave it your best shot, and tried your best to research, study and address the issue.
- Don't burn yourself or the team out fighting to see immediate results. Keep in mind that if you are working on the root causes of an issue, profound change might not come about in your lifetime.
- So make sure to celebrate the many small joys and achievements along the journey!

Readers will find useful forms, tables and links in the Annex at the end of the guide.

## **Conceptual Framework of the Guide and Flow**

This Guide will hopefully serve as a useful tool to provide the right mix of insights, tips and inspiration. Each of us will have their own individual and very unique experience and will develop their own wisdom, style and tools. However, it is often useful and wise to at least be aware of others' experience and try to avoid some of their mistakes and build on their successes. We hope this Guide will help do that so that young social innovators and social entrepreneurs in Egypt and across the region would have a fruitful experience as they work on themselves, work with others and work on their project ideas and dreams. We also hope this will be a first edition and that future editions will bring in experiences and insights from other social innovators from Egypt and across the region.

This Guide is divided into four main sections. In the first section, the Guide starts by focusing on one's understanding of oneself, one's own vision and motivation. It then moves on in the second section to build on that, identifying key tips and insights to dealing with others focusing on two key stakeholders; namely volunteers and the community. The third section focuses on how to start working on one's idea and the different aspects involved in that. The fourth and final section is closely linked with the third section and emphasizes the importance of effective communication, a recurring theme throughout the Guide, through providing key insights and tips.

# Getting Started

## I. GETTING STARTED: WORKING ON YOURSELF

### About This section

This section provides some tips for working on yourself. It is divided into four main subsections. The first subsection “Your Mission in Life” provides tips and insights on how to define one’s mission in life as relates to their civic engagement and role in social and community development. The second subsection “Personal planning” provides some tips on setting a mission as well as effective use of time, among other aspects. The third subsection then “dedicating yourself to the cause” focuses on some key tips and warnings to avoid some stereotypes on how to manage one’s attitude and behavior towards oneself and towards others. The fourth and final subsection is dedicated to one of the key success factors or failures to many youth initiatives which is staying motivated.

### I.1. Your Mission in Life:

#### Identifying your mission and optimizing your contribution:

- It is not as easy as it might sound. It can be a life-long endeavor to find your real mission in life, so you may as well start early to increase your chances of finding one! Usually, a good place to start is to look at which issues trouble you or keep you up at night. You can also find clues in the skills, education and connections you’ve gained, as well as the people you meet. This is an ongoing process! Things change, including your passions, interests... even your mission and roles in life!
- Ask yourself what your passions and your skills are. Both are equally important. If you can find the intersection between them, you’ve reached a point many people spend their lives trying to find! In some cases, just finding your passion is good enough, as it motivates you to develop the skills you need to pursue your passion. In addition, examining your skills and education is an important way to help you identify possible areas for your intervention. It is important that you optimize your intervention and ensure you are adding value to whatever issue you choose to undertake. It is not just about doing good for your community, but finding the thing that fulfills your passion while utilizing your skills and education to the utmost.

**Tip: Think outside the box when taking stock of your skills!**

Your strengths and skills also include your talents, such as your artistic abilities. Your ability to play an instrument, dance, sing or write, could be the strongest asset you can utilize to fulfill your mission.

### **First things first: Who am I and what is my mission in life?**

Some people find it useful to think of themselves as a brand. Each brand has unique attributes and characteristics, and a particular value attached to it. Think of yourself as a brand. Ask yourself: What are the attributes and characteristics people attach to me in their minds? What is unique about my brand? What is my value added?

Ask yourself continuously: Why am I here? What am I doing? Find time, every day or so, to sit alone and reflect. Some people do it best in silence; others keep a journal. Either way, it is an excellent opportunity to find trends and clues, make sense of things, etc.

### **Know your passion: Which issues drive you?**

Questions that can help you identify your 'issue' include:

- What do I really want to achieve? What gives meaning to my life?
- What am I really passionate about? What makes me happy and gives me a feeling of fulfillment?
- Which issues keep me up at night? What do I see on the street, read about in a newspaper or watch on TV that bothers me, gives me a 'rush' to do something about?

**Beware of fads and jargon:** You have to find your own passion, not just follow the herd! Before rushing to volunteer at an orphanage, ask yourself what your real passions and interests are. Also, the development arena is rife with fashionable terms and jargon, with many people repeating terms they don't really understand. In a strongly donor-driven culture and with so many foreign donors operating in the field, it can be a challenge not to get caught up in the fad.

**What if I have many talents and a variety of passions?** Maybe you're a cross-pollinator! Try to give everything your best. As your interests evolve, you will come to know what you need to focus on. Some people's mission is just that: to be cross-pollinators, working across several sectors. Although they might have the disadvantage of being unable to focus on one particular area or achieve as much as someone who is fully dedicated to a single cause, cross-pollinators are very important because they improve networking and the transfer of knowledge between different groups. If you are one of those, be aware that you have a major responsibility to try to do the needed cross-pollination and networking, as you are probably uniquely positioned in different sectors or places, allowing you to do just that.

## **Self-assessment:**

There are a number of important questions you will be able to answer once you've started doing the work, but it is good to keep them in mind from the outset for self-reflection. These include:

- Am I more of a leader or more of a team member/player?
- What if I have no innovative ideas? What's my role?
- What if I come up with innovative ideas, but I'm not much of a doer? How do I deal with that frustration?
- How do I motivate others?
- How do I keep going and maintain my motivation when I'm expected to be the "motivator and constant source of inspiration"? It is lonely up there!
- Where do I start if I have a big idea?
- How do I strike a balance between being an idealist and being pragmatic?

## **You as a model:**

Are you living your message and what you are preaching in your daily life? That's the single most powerful starting point, affording you the credibility to gather and mobilize people and other resources. You have to be committed to living the values you are promoting and "walking the talk"! No matter how much you preach about something, if you are not living it personally, eventually you will lose your credibility. If you try to live someone else's passion without real conviction, no matter how hard you try, it won't last forever!

## **Start working on yourself before it is too late!**

There's an old story about an elderly man who was on his death bed, surrounded by his loved ones. They asked him about his greatest regret. He responded that he'd wasted a lot of time trying to change things that weren't in his hands. He'd tried to change the world, but had found it too big. So he decided to focus on trying to change his country, then his village, then his family. It was already too late when he realized he should have mainly been working to improve himself and become a better person throughout it all!

## **Are you a social innovator/social entrepreneur?**

Once you've gained an understanding of your skills and passions, as well as the priorities and needs of your community or society, look around. Is the issue you are concerned with not being addressed? Is there no organization or program established to do so? If you see the gap and are willing to put in the time, effort and resources to fill it, then you just might be a social innovator/entrepreneur.

"The job of a social entrepreneur is to recognize when a part of society is stuck and to provide new ways to get it unstuck. He or she finds what is not working and solves the problem by changing the system, spreading the solution and persuading entire societies to take new leaps. Social entrepreneurs are not content just to give a fish or teach how to fish. They'll not rest until they have revolutionized the fishing industry"

- Ashoka website ([www.ashoka.org](http://www.ashoka.org))

## **I have a dream. Do I start straight away, or is it best to join an existing group?**

With few exceptions, the vast majority of social innovators/entrepreneurs have spent time working or volunteering with an existing large organization. There are several advantages, including:

- Picking up where others left off. Working in an established organization gives you the opportunity to learn from existing systems, to build on successes and avoid mistakes.
- If this is a paid opportunity, it provides a steady income that gives you the space to plan and build, rather than, for example, rushing into un-strategic partnerships.
- It is an excellent opportunity to contribute to the place you work in as well as benefit through developing your skills, building your network of contacts, etc.

## **How do I contribute to my country or community when I'm away?**

Some people are under the illusion that time away from your country or community is wasted time. In fact, if used wisely it can be some of the best time spent on building up your ideas. Use your time away to talk to new people, including people from your community, to hear and reflect on how other people see it and what they have to say about it. It is also an opportunity to volunteer with and learn from similar programs.

**Tip: As a social innovator, your mission might be to bring about change from within an existing organization.**

Maybe your mission or role is to innovate from within the organization. A social entrepreneur is someone who can demonstrate entrepreneurship by taking an existing organization in new directions or helping it become more effective, expanding its reach, etc. Sometimes referred to as 'intrapreneurs,' these individuals are equally important to social innovation and development.

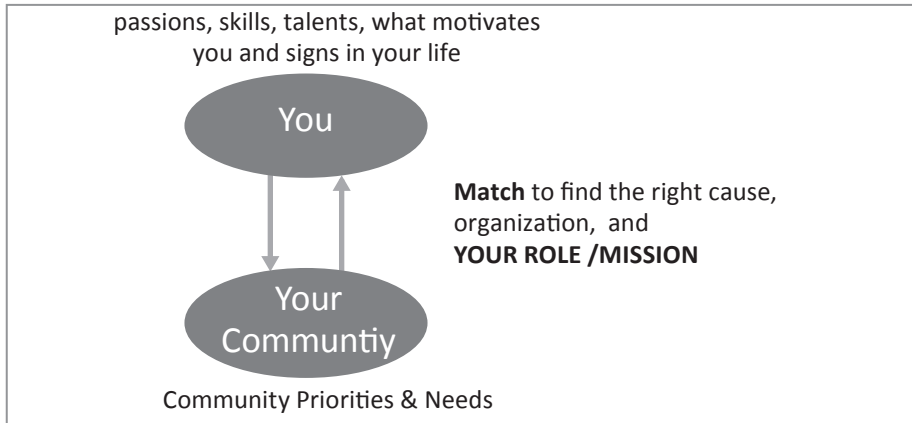
## **Where do I start?**

Start anywhere (just don't forget to work on yourself in parallel!). You can always modify things later, but you have to start somewhere! This advice does not rule out the scientific methods to do proper research and evaluation of the situation using methods like the "tree of problems". However, in parallel to that and through the process, follow your heart and start somewhere! While doing that keep an eye and the flexibility to always modify and improve along the way. Remain in touch with all your community, team members, stakeholders and listen to them, They will help you find your right track".

## **Starting the initiative where your passions and skills match:**

If you look at the work of social innovation, a lot of it is based around identifying a need or demand, finding or creating the supply for it, and establishing the connection. So you need to ask yourself: What is the demand or development need out there? Then you need to look at supply, taking into account:

- Your passion for the issue
- Community assets
- Available human resources
- Available financial resources
- Available innovation



## 1.2. Personal planning:

To be able to fulfill your personal mission statement, you need to plan on several levels, including an annual or biannual level, as well as on a daily or weekly basis.

### **Tips: Staying focused, centered and balanced!**

**1. Write out a personal Mission Statement:** Hang it up somewhere you can see it every day, to remind you why you are here, and why you are doing what you are doing. (A mission statement consists of 4-5 sentences in the present tense, describing what you are here to do).

**2. Remember the end:** It helps put things in perspective to keep ends in mind from the very beginning. This includes thinking of your life and its end as this makes you contemplate how you'd want to be remembered after you die, how meaningful what you are doing is, and what really matters. If you could choose a single sentence people would write on your tombstone or in your obituary, what would it be? [Your Name] lived a life of ..... and was able to ..... for the sake of ..... despite ..... (fill in the blanks).

**3. Know that hurdles and obstacles are part of the human experience:** Without them, life would be boring! Embrace them and learn from them.

**4. Be Yourself!** Excelling requires not only finding your strengths and passions, but also being yourself. This is vital in all aspects of your leadership and management style, and gains you credibility and respect. Being flexible and always trying to improve your style is a positive thing, but trying to be someone else is a waste of time and energy.

**5. Differentiate between your personal life and professional life:** It is very important if you are feeling down not to allow your negativity to spread to your colleagues, especially if you are in a leadership position. One idea would be to avoid too many interactions with people on those days. Alternatively, you could choose to be open and share your difficulties with your colleagues and ask for their understanding.

## **6. To-do lists:** Maintaining a to-do list is very important.

- **Checkboxes:** It is important to have checkboxes next to each item. Ticking a checkbox to indicate a completed task is one of the most satisfying feelings! Even if you just need to write an email, make a checkbox for it! It also helps you identify actionable items versus, for example, notes for future reference.
- **Keep a notebook.** It needs to be the right size for you. Keep it with you at all times. Use it to capture ideas, meeting notes, things to do. It serves as a reminder to us that we're life-long learners, always striving to capture what we learn in meetings with people, in lectures or events.

**7. 'To be' list:** It might sound clichéd, but in addition to having a list of things to do, it is important to maintain a list of things you want to “be.” This largely refers to your attitude and behavior. You can be a great achiever and finish a list of things to do, but how were you in achieving these? For instance:

- **Towards yourself:** Were you balanced in your daily life? Did you enjoy and grow with the experience?
- **Towards others:** Were you respectful? Did you uphold and respect the values that you want to maintain in dealing with others, be they respect, compassion, understanding, investment in their growth, etc?

**8. Writing your annual resolutions:** Choose a time that's special to you, whether it is New Year, your birthday, or any other day that's significant to you, and make it the occasion to revisit your mission, take stock of what you've achieved, plan ahead, and renew your commitment to your plans and mission.

**9. Am I in the right place?** Catch yourself before it is too late: Even social innovators/leaders can experience moments of doubt, wondering if they are doing the right thing or if they are in the right place. A simple question to ask yourself: Do you enjoy what you are doing? Do you feel you are growing? If yes, you are in the right place. If no, then you need to consider other things you might want to do, or you might want to look for ways to do what you are doing differently.

Signs that you are in the wrong place, or at least need a break:

- Too many personal conflicts
- Fatigue and lack of energy
- It takes you time to prepare yourself psychologically for the job, and the work doesn't come naturally
- It feels like a job you want to get over with and you are not enjoying it
- You get tired and bored telling people about it
- You've lost sight of what you are really doing there



## 10. Why you are doing what you are doing: Are you firm in your beliefs?

Being involved in the social development arena, you will likely receive a lot of admiration, encouragement and support. However, there will also be situations where your whole belief system will be shaken, leading to much soul-searching. Soul-searching can be very healthy, if you are undertaking it voluntarily. But to avoid any shocks, or waking up too late to realize you are in the wrong place working in social development, you need to have a firm understanding of the field and why you are doing what you are doing.

Early on, you need to educate yourself about the ‘bigger picture.’ This includes:

- **Local development picture:** The role of different sectors in development, including NGOs (and civil society at large), the government, international donors, the corporate sector, etc.
- **Historical role of youth in your country:** Educate yourself about the role of Egyptian youth throughout history, and the reasons behind the current increase in youth engagement with NGOs, as well as other alternatives for their civic engagement.
- **Role of youth in other countries:** Learn about the role they play, currently and historically.
- **Opposition to NGOs and the development sector:** Familiarize yourself with viewpoints opposed to NGOs and the wider “development sector/industry”. Read up on and listen to those arguments, some of which are opposed to the very existence of NGOs. Some critics view all socioeconomic development as the government’s job, and some see NGOs as tools of foreign intervention. Others view social entrepreneurship as an elitist approach to development that ‘singles out’ a role model and disempowers the masses. It is important to learn about this to help you understand and appreciate the bigger picture as well as hopefully, help you better define your role exactly and hence have a firmer foundation and belief in what you’re doing.

### **Tip: Keep your eye on the big picture**

Even if you are embarking on a very small-scale intervention, always keep an eye on the bigger picture. As someone who’s had the benefit of an education and opportunity, it is your responsibility to use your analytical skills to see the bigger picture, and dream bigger. This could include, for example, asking yourself whether you should grant small loans to people to help them survive hardship, even if it is not sustainable (due to the fact that their small selling operation is unlicensed and can be shut down at anytime by police or the municipality). Maybe the best solution would be for you to help them question that law that doesn’t allow the licensing of those small operations, and help figure out why this law is not pro-poor? Maybe the ideal scenario would be for you to start supporting them with small loans



while simultaneously keeping an eye out for opportunities to challenge that law by creating an alternative that works and has no serious downsides.

**Tip: Beware of public figures looking to use your initiative to boost their image!**

Make sure your work isn't being exploited by a public figure to show off or score points with the public.

### ***1.3. Dedicating Your Life to the Cause?***

#### **If you decide to dedicate your life to a cause, it won't be easy in the beginning!**

Doing voluntary work on the side as long as you are able to balance it out with your studies and work is one thing; deciding to dedicate your life to a cause and making it your full-time occupation is another. Oftentimes in the beginning, those who love you most will be the ones resisting it the hardest. But if you stick with it, give it your best, with time they'll be the ones supporting you most. It is understandable that in such a loosely defined sector with (in many cases) no clear career paths, it is challenging for people to understand what you are doing. Those who love you and want you to have a successful career might be inclined to think that your involvement should be limited to a hobby or a side job. But the question is: Would you rather be stuck in a job you don't like and that you won't excel at anyway, or do something that you love and that will eventually also help you forge a career?

#### **Beware of the illusion that there are no careers in development:**

While for some working in the development sector is a career, for some it is more of a cause and a way of life. For both of these groups, while it might not be as well-defined as in other sectors and whether it is a good or bad thing that some people make a living and a career out of it, the development sector does have careers and career paths. Although it is true that smaller NGOs don't necessarily have clear career paths and established human resources systems, many international NGOs, United Nations agencies, multilateral and bilateral donor agencies do. Additionally, there are growing numbers of jobs with companies that have established Corporate Social Responsibility programs, foundations, professional local NGOs, etc. To build a career in the development field with any of the above will require graduate studies and experience with relevant NGOs. As a social innovator/social entrepreneur, one has to learn from the corporate sector's human resources management systems to be able to attract and retain the best caliber recruits. It is important in setting-up your initiative to build a viable human resources system, offering competitive salary schemes and benefits to attract and retain the kind of candidates you aspire to have on your team.

## **Career shift: Leaving a secure job (say, in the corporate sector) to do what you are passionate about:**

If you are going to do it, do it early in your career, when it is less of a risk to take. Coming to development from the corporate world with even one or two years of experience is very beneficial. The corporate sector can teach you some excellent organizational and managerial skills and systems that you can then apply in the NGO and development fields. While staffed with well-meaning people, many, but of course not all, development organizations lack professionalism and management systems, and hence the efficiency and effectiveness that the corporate sector has. Also, it is important to be realistic about and be aware of the debates related to the development field and what it is able to achieve as well as the pros and cons of the whole sector.

### **Tip: Beware of the “Savior” complex**

Many people who leave the corporate sector to work in development naïvely feel that they’ve left the ‘evil’ world to help save the world on the side of ‘good.’ It is very important to have a balanced, sober assessment of what you were doing and what you are embarking on, as all sectors have positive and negative aspects. In fact there’s a lot for the development field to learn from the corporate sector, and if you are making that shift you have to bring much of those lessons learned, systems and techniques to the new field you are entering.

### **Be a good resource and a good networker:**

Being a good networker doesn’t just mean being good at outreach and finding opportunities for your initiative. It also means being useful and helpful to others. Some tips include:

- If you are asked to provide suggestions, references, recommendations or possible contacts for a topic or activity, do give it your attention. Give an appropriate amount of your time to responding to such requests.
- Don’t shy away from sharing information as long as it is not confidential.

The above is not only essential for maintaining and strengthening civil society, but you will be surprised how, over the months and years, your good deeds, voluntary support and information-sharing will benefit you and your initiative. It not only helps spread a positive, collegial spirit, it also helps you and your organization stand out and position yourselves as resourceful, helpful, and definitely good potential partners! In addition, don’t forget you are likely to be put in the same situation, when you will need these people’s help with contacts, ideas and suggestions.



## **1.4. Staying Motivated:**

### **How do I avoid burning out?**

One of the biggest challenges facing passionate and sincere youth leaders and social innovators is the burn-out factor! Some tips on maintaining your energy and serenity include:

**1. Don't obsess about results:** The journey is as important as the results. Just like the title of the Sheldon B. Kopp's book suggests, "If You Meet the Buddha on the Road, Kill Him!" It is really about the journey, even when it comes to something as important as spiritual attainment.

**2. Stay centered:** Focus on your mission in life, and why what you are doing is crucial. Some ways of doing that include:

- Meditation, whether it is through a particular religious practice that you perform, simple silence, or going out into nature. If you have the luxury of being able to go on a personal retreat every now and then, it is very useful for rejuvenating and reenergizing you, and renewing your commitment.
- Keeping a journal, and going back to it to identify trends, etc, in your life. It is a simple notebook with daily, weekly, or even monthly entries, but as long as you maintain some regularity, it is one of the most useful things you can do. It is important that you not only document facts and what you've done or achieved, but also your feelings, worries, fears, and aspirations.
- Writing a list of your blessings is always useful when you are feeling down!

### **3. Try to maintain a good work-life balance.**

Warning! If you ever catch yourself feeling bitter, or feeling that you've sacrificed too much, then you need to take some time off or make a serious decision. Don't allow that feeling to develop any further. It is dangerous and could turn you into a bitter and difficult person with an exaggerated sense of entitlement. Here are some ways to deal with this:

- You need to find personal happiness in what you do! If it ceases to give you happiness and satisfaction, it might very well be time to move on.
- Remind yourself that you are benefitting from what you are doing (make sure that you are!). At the very least, you must be developing, growing, learning, feeling satisfied, and bringing meaning to your life.
- Find a way to balance out the sacrifices you make and the benefits you gain with your involvement.

#### **4. Staying up-to-date with development:**

Like many professions or disciplines, development is a science. For your contribution to remain relevant and positive, you need to stay up-to-date with current research and debates, and the latest developments in the field. You can do that by:

- Attending relevant conferences, workshops, and courses, whether organized by NGOs, donor agencies or research/educational institutions.
- Reading (books obviously, but stay updated through the media, newspapers, etc, too).
- Subscribing to relevant newsletters, journals and podcasts on the Internet (many of which are free).

#### **5. Maintaining your motivation:**

Ask yourself: What motivates you, and what demotivates you? It is good to step outside yourself to try to identify and work on them.

<b>Examples of “demotivators”</b>	<b>Examples of how to overcome them</b>
Lack of patience, wanting to see results right now	Make your motivation something other than results, even if it is the ‘selfish’ desire for self-satisfaction
Interpersonal conflicts	Be detached. Remind yourself that it is not all in your hands. You can try to resolve conflicts between people, but that’s all you can do. It is then left to those (supposedly) mature people to work out their differences. You should be satisfied as long as you’ve tried your best. Don’t overburden yourself, and don’t let it get to you.
Getting bogged down in details	Remind yourself and others of the bigger picture, and of what you’ve achieved so far, even if small steps.

#### **6. Staying focused:**

In a society facing so many challenges and priorities that might be as, or even more, important than your issue, stay focused by:

- Revisiting your vision and older personal notes.
- Reminding yourself how your intervention links in with other related-but-different issues that arise and which you might be inclined to work on as well. Try to visualize how they link up, and consider working with other organizations trying to address that issue. But bear in mind that if you try to be everything to everyone, you will end up being nothing to anyone.



**Tip: Never underestimate your ability to achieve your dream!**

Any real achievement, invention or innovation in the world started with a simple vision and dream. With hard work, dedication and persistence you will get there! There are numerous examples in the social innovation and development fields. For instance, the Grameen Bank that was started by Nobel Prize laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus giving a few dollars to a woman, is now supporting millions of families in Bangladesh and inspiring millions around the world.

**7. The innovator's role: Vision, and mobilizing the resources to get there:**

If you allow yourself to be constrained by the resources you have, you will never get anywhere! You need a vision and you need to take risks! It should be about your vision and dream, and what resources you need to mobilize to achieve it, NOT what resources you have and how far they'll take you!

**Summary/conclusion:**

With the right mix of the personal vision/mission, attitude and keeping the tips shared in this section in mind and using what you think is relevant for you among them, you are ready to start looking outside of yourself to two of the key stakeholders you need to work. The next section focuses on working with volunteers/human resources at large and the community you set out to work with based on what you have identified for yourself through this section.

## **II. Working with Others**

### **About this section:**

Hopefully through the first section you have had some clarity on your real passions, motivations, mission in life as well as skills. Those combined should be able to help you identify the type of people you want to attract to your team to work with you and also the issue and community you are most passionate and suited to engage with and serve.

No matter how great an idea one has and no matter how much work they have done on themselves as suggested in the previous section, if he/she is not able to work with the community they set out to engage with or mobilize human resources, full-time or voluntary, with the necessary skills, qualifications and time, the dream remains just that: a dream! This section is dedicated to sharing some key lessons on how to attract, mobilize, engage and retain the necessary human resources for the success of your project as well as dealing with your community of choice. It is focused on two key stakeholders, namely volunteers/human resources and the community that you set out to serve or work with. It is divided into two main subsections. The first focuses on working with volunteers and human resources at large. The second subsection focuses on working with the community.

### **II.1. Working with Volunteers and Human resources:**

#### **Starting and building the team**

##### **Creating a vision and rallying around it:**

A vision is a dream you want to achieve. The clearer it is in your mind, the more you can visualize it when you close your eyes, feel it, smell it, the higher the probability it will come true. As discussed later in the Guide, while it is healthy for an organizational vision to be general in the beginning to ensure ownership by the founders, who will feel they've contributed to shaping and refining it, it is important to try to have some sort of vision for your personal life and role.

##### **Tip: Start by giving small tasks to volunteers**

Start your volunteers and interns off by giving them small tasks, and then, based on performance, start giving them a bit more to handle. This ensures that their involvement is a gradual process, and from your side it allows you to test their abilities

while not giving them an overly major responsibility that if not performed up to standard can have major repercussions and consequences.

### **Start with a small group**

- It is advisable to start with a small, core group. Between three and five is an ideal number. The main criteria are that there should be harmony and understanding, and that the different members have the ability to work as a team and, more importantly, the ability to accept differences in opinion and manage conflict.

#### **Tips: Building team spirit and overcoming possible initial tensions**

- Communicate the idea and vision clearly so as to attract those interested and avoid any misunderstandings.
- Usually when you start, you've got a general idea, and some questions, but not necessarily the exact answers. This is very healthy as long as you are flexible and willing to listen to others and build on their ideas and feedback.

### **Forming the right and diverse team**

**How to ensure the diversity and inclusiveness of your initiative:** We're at a stage in Egypt and our region where diversity is seriously threatened. A historically diverse part of the world, where people of different ethnic, religious and other backgrounds have long coexisted, we need to ensure that this diversity is maintained on the level of our development initiatives, and promoted beyond. Being diverse and tolerant is not only an obligation toward your country and community; having a diverse group brings a richness of talents, skills, and resources. So from a purely pragmatic point of view, a diverse group is a stronger, winning team. Although it might be tricky ensuring diversity in the beginning, as it requires additional work to bring people of different backgrounds together, in the medium- to long-term, the group's diversity makes it a success, as long as that diversity is well-managed and guided in a functional manner.

#### **Some tips:**

- Use neutral language that won't alienate anyone
- Maintain balance among your volunteers and staff, in terms of religious (or other) backgrounds
- Your public relations materials, publications and printed materials need to be inclusive in terms of the photos, as well as the language, if you are quoting from a religious source
- In terms of office space, it is best to avoid using religious symbols. If you do, be inclusive, using both a Quran and a Cross, for example.
- Remember: Image and reputation matter. The measure here is not what you think of yourself, but how you are viewed by the community. Many student clubs and NGOs say that they are open to people of all faiths and backgrounds, but because of the way their volunteers talk, or how their website depicts or focuses on certain images or people, they've been labeled as non-inclusive, or as being more inclined toward one group.
- Walk the talk: If you are talking about contributing to the community's development, you have to make sure your initiative has good representation from the different religious groups or socioeconomic classes you are serving. If the team itself doesn't have that kind of representation, create a committee that does.



## Maintaining the team

### General tips to maintain spirit and vision:

- Reflect on achievements
- Have 'Zaps and Saps' sessions for feedback, where everyone shares what motivates them ('zaps') and what demotivates them (saps)
- Have social outings for team members
- Set aside time for reflection and team building exercises

### Retaining the right volunteers/team members:

- Maintain an atmosphere of friendliness, transparency and creativity
- Have weekly meetings at least in the beginning few months!
- No positions/titles are to be given unless absolutely necessary
- Hold your meetings in modest places
- Communicate your vision clearly from the outset to attract those who believe in it and want to work towards it

### **Tip: Make sure no one burns out!**

As discussed in the first section, some tips were provided to help you maintain your balance and avoid burning out. Once you have done that for yourself, it is important to ensure those around you as well do not burn out! Usually the most sincere and most dedicated volunteers take on more and more responsibilities and tasks. We're all human and have limited abilities and energy. Naturally, the most effective, passionate and dedicated person, whether a leader or team member, gets more responsibilities and more tasks assigned to them, especially if they don't have the ability to say "no" or prioritize. If not well-managed early on, those individuals can end up being a danger to themselves and to the whole initiative through the following two scenarios:

1. They eventually burn out and leave the whole organization, in some cases after a big conflict, or
2. They turn into someone who has too much ownership of the initiative, and hence develop a sense of entitlement that could turn into an unhealthy obsession.

Neither of these two scenarios is favorable, and so the situation needs to be dealt with before it is too late.

### **What can you do to ensure no one burns out?**

- Keep an eye on their workload and intervene before they start complaining. If they start complaining, it is usually too late. Be proactive in reaching out to them, in observing and asking if they are overloaded or overburdened.



- Try to understand why that person is overloaded. It might be due to the fact that other volunteers are irresponsible, and the person prefers to take on their responsibilities to ensure they are executed properly, hence piling new burdens on to their plate. It might stem from their not having a personal or social life, or their attempting to escape problems in their personal lives by immersing themselves in work. It may also come from an inability to delegate.
- Based on the above, make sure to help those individuals understand where the real challenge is, and help them divide up tasks and responsibilities fairly to prevent them taking on too much work and burning out.
- Set the example yourself by learning to say no, delegating and prioritizing.
- Have clear job descriptions and task listings for volunteers and full-timers to ensure a balanced workload. Ask people you suspect are overloaded to write out a list of the tasks they are doing and have a discussion about what they can eliminate or delegate.
- A good place to start is to ask them to highlight the tasks/responsibilities they enjoy the most, and then separately list less-enjoyable tasks in descending order to the least enjoyable.

**Ensure initial commitment:** Things as simple as asking a potential member/volunteer who's interested in joining to drop you an email so you can send them more information are good initial indications of who's serious and who isn't. Asking them to make the first move or make a further expression of interest is a good way to weed out the uncommitted and to manage your time.

## Dealing with different types of volunteers:

It is important to look at all situations and all team members as great resources for learning and growth for all individuals involved as well as the project/institution itself.

### 1. The challengers

Challengers are people who always argue for argument's sake. Tips on how to deal with them:

- Ask them to provide some suggestions and come up with different scenarios
- Sometimes imposing a rule of 'no objections without providing options' helps, making the challengers understand that they can't just object or obstruct something for the sake of argument, and obliging them to come up with solutions

### 2. The idea producers

These people are there to come up with ideas. That's very important. But sometimes it is frustrating for an action-oriented person to deal with them, as oftentimes the person with the idea isn't necessarily the person implementing or executing it.

But idea producers can be an excellent asset, as long as:

1. It is understood that that is their role, and there are no further expectations of them.
2. Their ideas are adopted by others who can implement them.

In general also, to deal with such situations and help team members grow and overcome their weaknesses or unpleasant behaviors is to give them an opportunity to play roles opposite to their behavior. For example with “the challenger” we can give them the role of facilitating a discussion and for “the idea producers” you can urge them to go forward with their ideas.

### **Full-timers and volunteers:**

#### **Managing volunteers requires:**

- Clear terms of reference (TORs) and roles and responsibilities
- Continuous and regular updates
- ‘Zaps and saps’ sessions

### **Some organizations maintain their volunteers’ commitment by:**

- Regular social outings and gatherings for reflection, meditation and feedback
- Planning retreats. These are very important for team members to gather and reflect; they promote stronger ownership of the initiative and a clearer vision for the future
- Displaying the mission and vision statements prominently throughout the office
- Writing out core values and getting everyone to sign on. It is also advisable to sign a contract with the volunteers
- Developing a vow that can be read out
- In regular meetings, before or after finishing business, allowing someone to tell a story of the most recent experience they had in the project
- Starting meetings with questions like: “How have you changed?” Or maybe some visioning exercises.

### **Retaining the right volunteers/interns: You will need:**

- A clear analysis of tasks/responsibilities
- An awareness of the resources needed/available
- To develop clear TORs and job descriptions (including authority, responsibility, accountability, success indicators, etc)
- To ensure a contact focal point who can:
  - Show them the way
  - Ensure training and guidance are available
- Ensure they are being supervised
- To make sure their efforts are recognized (if possible with a financial stipend)



## Motivating volunteers and full-timers:

What are they passionate about? It is important to have a conversation with them and to monitor their performance to identify the areas of work they excel at and that motivate them most. Are they people persons? Or more of the organizational type?

**Tip: Managing conflict:** If it starts escalating, especially over an email exchange, avoid emails and stop the exchanges immediately!

## **Maintaining the right mix of friendliness and professionalism:**

What if people with the wrong (or different) vision join the organization and want to change it? How do you ensure the incoming volunteers' ownership of the initiative, while ensuring the vision or mission doesn't change with every new arrival?

Different strategies:

- **Have a clear mission and vision, articulated and agreed upon.** Vote on it or get consensus. If a person or a sub-group challenges it:
  - o Involve others in the discussion of the suggestion, or;
  - o Defer suggestions. Sometimes they are just the new person's strategy for proving themselves, or they are simply their attempt to 'contribute.' Suggest that you discuss it after the person's been involved with the group for a few months. This serves to filter the suggestions, by ensuring the person is more involved with, and has a better understanding of, the project and team. But if the suggestion then emerges again, it is important to discuss and try to address it, as there is then a high probability that it is a legitimate suggestion.
- **Self-introductions to reinforce and strengthen vision/mission:** At the beginning of every meeting, especially when there are newcomers present, make sure to have a round of self-introductions where volunteers or staff introduce themselves, what they do in the organization and why they joined. This is very important, and helps orient and influence newcomers through cues and signals. **Don't skip this.** It might sound trivial, but it is one of the simplest and most effective tools to motivate the team and align their vision.

## **Dealing with differing visions and interests among the group:**

Especially in the setting-up phase, there are a number of common challenges you will be dealing with, including the challenge of different types of people trying to work together. While these differing views and skills can be very useful, they can be destructive if not properly managed. Some important points to keep in mind:

- **Planning/mission-building, and testing the grounds through pilot activities.** It is not a linear process and it doesn't have to proceed in sequence. To be able to engage both types of people, planners and implementers, both organizational building and project implementation efforts need to proceed in parallel from day 1. I suggest you start both simultaneously. We're all different in nature; that's what strengthens a group. Some are more action-oriented, while some are more the organized, structured planning types.

You need both to work in parallel! Otherwise you will demotivate the action-oriented implementer-types or lose the planners out of frustration.

- **Our mission and vision only really take shape when we start working and implementing stuff. It is a continuous and evolutionary process.** Usually there's an initial vision, but it is healthy to have questions that will be answered with the others involved, in time. For instance with the Nahdet El Mahrousa NGO, the vision was to mobilize young professionals toward Egypt's development. But how? Through what? Which model? All these were questions that were only answered maybe a year or more into the organization's life cycle, through planning sessions, interaction and implementation, etc. Even in the beginning, there were no clear criteria for selecting projects to be incubated. The organization followed a "survival of the fittest" path, which indicated which types of projects were needed.
- **Regular meetings and interaction foster an organizational culture:** Especially in the beginning, email is not the best way to communicate. It is best to set up biweekly or monthly meetings to bring the whole group together, share updates, ideas, etc. Project groups also need to meet, as does the strategic planning team, etc.

## Dealing with mutinies!

The term might be shocking to some, especially those idealists who view the nonprofit development world as full of do-gooders. But that's not always the case. Always give people the benefit of the doubt, but never rule out the worst possibilities. Many people who join and work with you with the worst of intentions will change if you assume good faith on their part and treat them on that basis.

## II.2. Working with the Community

Whether your target group is university students or poor peasants in a rural village, your beneficiaries (better referred to as clients/partners) are the community that you are here to serve and work with.

### General tips:

### Key success factors for effective community-based organizations/initiatives:

- Physical presence in the community:
  - Even if it means you only have a small rented room in the community to use as your headquarters, this is very important to strengthen ties, overcome any feelings of suspicion, and maintain a physical presence in the community

- Local community support:
  - This comes with time once you've established a rapport with the community. This comes in different shapes and forms. Few of the examples include that some community members can help to spread the word in the community and open their homes for community meetings. There are also deeper means of engagement. The more you engage the community the better and more rooted the initiative becomes.
- Persistence, belief and flexibility
- Listening to the beneficiaries'/clients' needs and adapting to them. Organize the ideas so that you do not miss any important issue and do not get distracted with side talks and emotional reactions.
- In case you disagree with the speaker, make sure you express that decently and positively or may be choose not to till the ideas are more explored with other parties.
- Practicing effective communication techniques:
  1. Put yourself in the others' shoes and be ready to learn from them
  2. Talk positively and with respect.
- Flexible structure:
  - This ensures that you attract and retain the right people.
- Local funds/individual donations' flexibility:
  - Especially in the beginning, it is helpful to have funds of your own and from other believers, rather than institutions. It gives you the flexibility to experiment and doesn't come with reporting requirements that might be a burden early on. For instance with both Fat'het Kheir and Nahdet El Mahrousa, requesting some membership fees for volunteers or requesting donations from friends and family members helped secure the small initial resources, whether in-kind or financial, needed for start-up. No matter how much each is able to donate or provide, it also helps strengthen the feeling of belonging and ownership of everyone to the initiative especially in its early stages.
- Sense of ownership among all involved (volunteers & community)
- Assets available in the community (if applicable):
  - Start by looking at those, and encouraging the community to share what they have with you. In the case of Fat'het Kheir, if it were not for someone from the community allowing her house to be used to welcome and meet people from the community, the organization would not have been able to move forward. If you are partnering with a group, ask them to offer at least some in-kind support, or volunteer their time. It is a good way to ensure commitment, ownership, and establish a real partnership of equals while avoiding the typical dependency that is usually created through generous giving. Mapping out what the community can offer is in and of itself empowering, putting the community on a par with you. You can read more and find additional resources on the "Asset-Based Community Development" (ABCD) approach.

- Easy come, easy go:
  - With the community/beneficiaries: With Fat’het Kheir, we had to have at least three meetings with individuals before giving them a loan. This is similar to, for example, asking for a nominal fee in exchange for providing training, or obliging a person to do something for their community once they received the organization’s services. The beneficiary needs to feel he/she has “earned it” to value it and do their best to maintain it.

### **Some tips for dealing with the community:**

- Beware the “I-am-from–there-so-I’m-the-expert” syndrome:
  - Coming from a certain country or a certain community doesn’t automatically make you an expert on it! You are shaped by your own limited personal experience and your socioeconomic background and education, among many other factors. So don’t fall into that trap and think that you are speaking on behalf of that community or country. Make sure you do your homework and read up properly. Listen carefully to people’s views, needs, etc. It is damaging to you if you don’t have the humility and interest to listen and learn more. It could also be frustrating to those around you too.
- Working with a community that’s reluctant to help itself:
  - It is frustrating to try to help a community or a group or a person who aren’t willing to help themselves.

### **Example: The Fat’het Kheir Employment Office and why young people would not commit!**

The Fat’het Kheir NGO had a foundation-funded employment office that aimed to provide vocational training for young men from a poor neighborhood in Moqattam. But people wouldn’t show up for training, and those who did complete their training didn’t show up to scheduled job interviews, with a variety of excuses, including that the appointment was too early for them to attend. Of course, incidents like that might allow some to repeat the saying that “the poor deserve their poverty and have earned it with their lack of hard work.” But when one digs deeper, it turns out there are many other issues one needs to be aware of:

1. Remember that there are a lot of factors that shape the experiences of those disadvantaged communities, including their senses of self-respect, self-esteem and other self-image issues that are reinforced by major societal institutions, such as media that spread counterproductive messages on work ethics, and general societal values promoting short-term gain and lack of commitment, stark socioeconomic class gaps, etc.
2. Sometimes these issues are exacerbated by the condescending attitude of some NGOs or development initiatives that reinforce these negative traits. Some well-meaning initiatives, like offering training courses for free, are



actually harmful to the community, as it doesn't grant them a sense of ownership and reinforces the culture of hand-outs.

3. Some NGOs out of very good intentions create a harmful sense of dependency upon them in the community they're trying to serve and empower. Hence, sometime a person would actually be motivated to remain unemployed to ensure that they will continue to be eligible to receive this charity which might perceived by some as more stable than a job.
4. Lack of trust in others.
5. Lack of role models (in mass media, how movies depict manual labor, etc).

### **Learning from our mistakes:**

- Very rarely do development initiatives professionally evaluate their work. It is very important to have at least a focus group session with beneficiaries/clients.
- On that note, it is very important to have exit interviews with those who decide to leave the organization/group, whether volunteers or full-time staff members. In an exit interview, you need to be as open to criticism as possible.

### **Tip: Working with your Target Group: Questions to always ask yourself:**

- Do you really understand them, their needs, aspirations, etc?
- Are you involving them in the different levels of management and decision-making?
- Are they the number one reason you are doing what you are doing?
- Do you respect/love them or do you think they are a burden?
- Do you feel satisfied and happy when one of them excels in something because of the work you have been doing with them?

### **Tips:**

- Partnership and willingness to learn from the community and "listen to its needs" are vital
- Be humble
- They have dignity and pride too!
- Building trust and social capital is essential
  - Between the community and volunteers
  - In the community itself.
- Overcoming the lack of trust is the main challenge and obstacle
  - Among the poor: Oftentimes they have a fear of risk. For example, there was a huge reluctance among Fat'het Kheir's women beneficiaries to take project loans for breeding rabbits in the beginning until it proved successful.



## **Beware of:**

- Class gaps
- Avoid stereotypes
- Avoid unnecessary barriers to verbal communication like using:
  - foreign languages
  - sophisticated language
- Ensure that your non-verbal communication doesn't distract from your message. This includes:
  - Appropriate dress code. Don't expect someone who has some dignity and pride to sit with you and tell you how they are in dire need of EGP 100 loan while they can see you are wearing a watch that's worth EGP 1,000!
  - Appropriate body language.

## **How to ensure ownership of your local community:**

- Build them into your board, or create an advisory board they are represented on.
- Constant consultation and dialogue.

## **Gaining the respect and confidence of the community:**

- Dealing with conservative communities: It is important to respect the local community's values.
- Greetings: You need to know how to greet people appropriately, shaking hands or otherwise, secular versus more religious salutations, etc. All these give important signals.
- Dress-code: It is important to be dressed modestly, with no expensive jewelry, accessories (mobiles, bags, etc), simple and acceptable clothes to the community you are working in (especially for women), etc.
- Language: Use simple language, and if you can some of the common terms.
- Be a good listener.
- Be respectful if offered food or drink. If you don't want it, have a good excuse that won't offend.
- If you are working in very poor and disadvantaged communities, make sure your body language, facial expressions, words, etc., never give the impression you feel dismayed or troubled from the surroundings (be it waste, odor, poverty, etc). Even a simple word like "oh! poor you" might offend people and build barriers between you and them
- In everything you do, avoid the "you" and "us" between the NGO and the community. Constantly reinforce the message that you belong to their group and that we are all one big family and in this together.



### **How you are seen by others:**

- This is very important, whether on the organizational or the personal level. It is very important for you to know how you are viewed by others. It should inform your approach, and indicate whether you need to clarify anything in your messaging and communication. Are you seen as a threat/competitor by anyone?

### **Lessons learned from community-based projects:**

#### **Why rabbits worked:**

This was a joint collaboration between Fat'het Kheir and the rabbit husbandry unit at the Faculty of Agriculture at Cairo University, whereby Fat'het Kheir financed women to get battery cages for rabbits from the faculty, which also provided them with healthy rabbits and periodic visits by its students. The faculty also committed to market and sell all the rabbits raised through the faculty's outlets. The collaboration worked because:

- Many women already had the necessary skills
- Close partnership with the faculty of agriculture
- Clear marketing channels and the faculty's commitment to market the rabbits

#### **Why mushrooms didn't work as well:**

Collaboration with the ministry of agriculture to grow mushrooms didn't work as well due to:

- A lack of close follow-up
- Fat'het Kheir volunteers or employees were not properly trained so they could only provide limited support with no real scientific basis.
- A lack of technical know-how
- A lack of clear marketing channels

### **Summary/conclusion:**

Once you have developed a clear personal vision/mission and have developed a clear strategy based on the past two sections, you need to start based on those or in parallel working on your project idea. The next section which is the third is dedicated to a central piece which is working on your project idea.

# Working on Your Project Idea

## III. Working on Your Project Idea

### About this section:

As mentioned earlier in the Guide, working on your project idea starts from the very beginning and is interwoven with the two past sections. However, this section focuses on technical and practical insights and tips on working on your project idea. It is divided into 7 subsections each focusing on a specific functional area including researching, planning, partnership building, resource mobilization/funding, deciding on legal format and finally scaling up and replication at later stages.

### III.1. Researching:

#### **Tip: Beware of the one size fits all approach to development...**

That many people adopt. Each case and every community is different. We need to look at the model proposed and see how it would fit with the community in question.

In the case of Fat'het Kheir, the founders did not blindly adopt the Grameen Bank model, but instead looked at different options to emulate, like the Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA) and others. We then started talking to the community and adapting the model around issues like perceived cultural and religious restrictions on charging interest. After a while, we became familiar with what works with the target group and what doesn't.

#### **Tip: Don't look for 'the' solution because it doesn't exist:**

Look for solutions! Being simplistic in development is never useful. Some people choose to believe that a single intervention method is a cure for all human misery and world problems. For example, microloans have received much attention since Dr. Muhammad Yunus received the Noble prize. But without supplementary activities, such as educating the women, promoting awareness on nutrition, etc, microloans could actually be harmful. So there needs to be a proper balance and the right expectations. There also needs to be the right amount of flexibility to allow you to continuously review and refine your model.

#### **Learning what's out there: Mapping/secondary research:**

A very important starting point is to pick up where others left off, build on their successes and avoid their failures and mistakes. That's why it is crucial in the initial

stages of the project's inception to invest time and effort asking questions and listening.

**Note:** The internet is an increasingly important research tool, especially when it comes to rapid access to recent and updated information. There are multiple guides on how to effectively search the internet. Make sure to educate yourself on how best to use search engines such as Google, Yahoo, etc.

### **Research tools:**

There is some excellent research available from research institutions and think tanks, and more often than not, social entrepreneurs don't read the literature they produce. You need to do that; also as a practitioner, you have an important role in not just using the research, but also being critical of it, and communicating your feedback if you think some of the findings don't make sense based on your personal, practical experience. Researchers are always interested in hearing more from the field and appreciate reality checks.

### **General background:**

Learn more about the issue you are addressing through reading and going through general publications, etc. Some good places to start include:

- UNDP's Arab Human Development Report
- UNDP's Egypt Human Development Report
- Multi-lateral agencies: e.g. World Bank
- UN agencies: UNESCO, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, etc.
- Youth-related issues: National Youth Council, Population Council, The Middle East Youth Initiative

### **Useful questions to ask yourself in your secondary research phase:**

You can build on so that you do not re-invent the wheel. Some models need some adjustment while others may need a whole fresh approach. Get a closer look at them from both the leaders' and beneficiaries' perspectives, so that you are able to learn from their experiences on the ground.

- What is my target audience exactly?
- What other models are there already, in Egypt and abroad?

### **Primary research:**

- Ask your target group/beneficiaries/clients directly. For instance, Fat'het Kheir asked a gathering of women in one neighborhood how the organization could be of help to them. From that meeting was born the idea of providing the women with capital to start their own micro-projects.
- Organize focus groups with your potential beneficiaries/clients: Consult with marketing research companies, many of which can provide pro-bono support. Alternatives include academics and researchers who are familiar with various research tools.

### **Other methods:**

- Read newspapers (both state-owned and opposition)
- Watch TV for coverage of the issues

### **III.2. Planning:**

If a vision is ‘what’ you want to achieve, a mission is mostly the ‘how’ you will achieve it. You need to start by drafting a mission statement of how you want to achieve your vision. Please see annex II for detailed planning cycle.

### **Components of a good mission statement:**

- Who are we?
- What do we do?
- How do we do it?
- What are our core values?
- A mission statement clarifies the organization’s present strategies by defining:
  - What business it is in
  - What the boundaries of the business are
  - Who its customers are
  - How departments and individuals work together
  - What needs to be accomplished
  - How success is to be measured

### **General tips:**

- Have the vision and mission statements hung up in your office
- Involve your members and volunteers continuously. They are your most valuable assets
- Document as much as you can. It is a big challenge for small initiatives to spare valuable resources on that, but at least keep email folders on relevant issues, and some paper files.

### **Evaluating your mission statement**

#### **A good mission statement should answer a number of questions:**

- Who are we? (Your distinct, central, and enduring qualities; what you are versus what you do)
- What needs do we fill? (Justification, niche)
- How do we recognize, anticipate, and respond to these needs? (Connections with the community)
- How should we respond to stakeholders? (Their role)
- What are our values or operating philosophies?
- What makes us unique?



**Tip:** Once you've set your organizational values, they need to be continuously communicated and brought to life in all your interactions and work. Remember: It is one of the most effective ways to ensure that you are spreading the right values and creating a movement beyond the 'core group,' or full-time staff, or project leader. That's how you reach a critical mass that can effect sustainable development and positive social change.

### **Carving your niche and specializing: What's unique about your initiative, and what is its value-added?**

With the increasing number of youth-led and youth-serving NGOs, student clubs and associations, all competing for volunteers, funds, and other resources, it is important to differentiate yourself. This can be done through several ways:

- It could be the service/product you offer;
- It could be the mechanism you use for delivering your service/product;
- It could be a combination of all of the above.

#### **Examples:**

1. **Fat'het Kheir:** The first micro-lending program based on volunteers and 100% Egyptian funding. The combination of all those components made it unique.
2. **Nahdet El Mahrousa:** The first incubator of innovative social enterprises in Egypt and the region.
3. **The Federation of Egyptian Youth NGOs:** The only official umbrella organization for Egyptian youth NGOs.
  - This usually changes; it is an on-going process of discovering and refining what it is that makes your organization unique, and what value-added it brings to civil society. It is crucial for specialization, and also for easy identification by partners and others.
  - That differentiation needs to be captured in writing for use in your different communication tools.

### **Self-evaluation questions for your initiative:**

- How diverse is the project team?
- How does the project bring in policy as a component?
- What has been successful? What works? What doesn't work?
- Is the project reaching its targets?

## General questions for evaluation:

- Are we doing enough in our projects?
- Are we being as effective and efficient as we can be?
- Are we thinking BIG enough, or are we stuck inside the box?
- Are we thinking how to change relevant policies, to generate a sustainable impact through our projects and dreams?
- Are we giving enough thought to financial sustainability?
- Are we empowering our beneficiaries and team members?
- Are we being true to our mission and mobilizing and engaging more young Egyptians?
- Are we asking our beneficiaries to also give back to their communities, to widen the circle of positive influence?
- Are we creating diverse groups, whether within our teams or beneficiaries, men and women, Muslims and Christians, poor and rich, to counter the growing polarization of our society?
- Are we spreading a message of hope, tolerance, diversity and all what we believe in, or do we need to be more vocal and proactive?
- Are we being proactive enough in reaching out to potential partners or are we just working with those who approach us?
- How transparent is our decision-making? How involved are our beneficiaries in making decisions on the project's vision and activities? How involved are other members? Does the team have a board?
- How have you changed?
- Are you reading the newspapers, following trends in government and civil society and seeing opportunities?

## Lessons learned: aiming to replicate Nahdet El Mahrousa with young Egyptian professionals:

- Parachuting a concept on a community or a group of volunteers with no real ownership does not work.
- Nahdet El Mahrousa tried to push for a group of young Egyptian professionals to start a group based on a 3-hour presentation and the group's initial interest and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, it went nowhere for several reasons:
  1. The group was too big, with no real core (2-3 people) who had a clear vision
  2. Inability to work in parallel. Each group wanted to impose their views and priorities, whether it was the action-oriented types who wanted to start immediately, or the others who wanted to take it more slowly and develop a clear vision, mission and structure before taking any programmatic steps

3. Different visions and personal agendas or interests
4. The Nahdet El Mahrousa model was not mature enough to be replicated, as there were still many unanswered questions and a lack of clarity of the concept and its details.

### ***III.3. Partnership Building:***

**You have to remember that you are not in this alone. Some things we usually forget:**

- It is not your role alone. Real development will only happen if there's serious collaboration and public-private partnerships built across sectors. You need to work with the corporate sector, the government, other NGOs, the media, etc.
- Civil society isn't just NGOs; it includes media, institutions of higher education, unions, etc.
- There are good people in every sector. It is your job to find those like-minded potential partners.

#### **Mapping your potential partnerships:**

To help organize your thoughts around partnership-building, it is good to start with an initial group to which you want to reach out. A lot of times, one approaches a potential partner not knowing exactly which category their organization fits in, or what type of support it would be able to provide. That's fine. But it is important to have a diagram like the one in the following page in mind. It is also very important not to just look at partnerships as sources of funding. A lot of other types of support, whether technical, in-kind, etc, are as (or more) valuable than financial support. It is also important to assess potential partners, supporters and opponents. and their power, whether on the community level or otherwise.



## Matrix for potential partnerships <sup>1</sup>:

	Social Venture Capitalists/ Social Investors	Philanthropic foundations	Donors (bilateral, multilateral)	Private sector (including CSR programs and corporate foundations)	NGOs	Research/ Academic Education Institutes	Media (including traditional and non-traditional such as internet, web-based radio)	Government body (different ministries)	Other:
Funding (for organization, or for project/activity or for person through fellowships, etc). Loan (you would be eligible as a company) or grant									
<b>In-kind support</b> (products, meeting space, slots in organization's training courses, employees' time, etc)									
Research/publications									
Linkages/contact									
Others:									

<sup>1</sup> This should not replace detailed minutes of meetings or the electronic database that you should be keeping for all your meetings and external contacts, and to which you can regularly refer and update.

## **Tips on effective Partnership Building:**

- Clear, complete and frequent communication is crucial in nourishing and building a partnership
- Transparency: Maintaining a high degree of transparency is also very important. For example, even if you are facing internal problems or issues that you are trying to figure out and which might affect a program's performance, it is sometimes advisable to share these concerns early on with the partner. You will be surprised how this strengthens the relationship and prevents any further potential deterioration of the situation. In most cases it works well and adds to the depth of the relationship.
- Information on the expenditure of public funds needs to be publicly available: It is important to share your audited budget publicly. While by NGO law you are required to share it with your general assembly, you should also voluntarily have it on your website and send it to your partners. To avoid sensitivities about people's salaries, you can write up a budget with lump sums in the relevant categories. So instead of detailing everyone's salaries, you can just list the total amount under salaries. Partners usually want to see salaries and overheads as a percentage of the total budget anyway.

## **What are you bringing to the table?**

Before looking for support, be it financial support, or just the support of volunteers, ask yourself: How much are you investing in the initiative?

The best way to build credibility is to start somewhere with the limited resources you have. Look around you and see what you can put to use. It is an excellent way to get more ownership from the different team members or co-founders. It demonstrates who's serious and committed to making an effort to contribute, whether the contribution is financial, in-kind, or time and effort. No contribution is too small, so make sure to celebrate any contribution, and to capture it when presenting your initiative to potential partners.

## **Choosing your partners:**

Although early on you might think that you don't have the luxury of choosing among potential partners, it is crucial to give it some thought. Some relevant tips:

Partnerships are very tricky. It is not always what it seems. Some partnerships seem perfect in every respect, while others seem irrelevant. The least you can do is:

1. Remember your mission:
  - i. Does the partnership fit with your mission, objectives, and target group?
  - ii. Does it fit with your operational strategy and mechanisms?
2. Does it fit with your values?
3. Listen to all points of view: As a social innovator/social entrepreneur, you can get carried away. Many social entrepreneurs have the charisma that convinces others that the entrepreneur must be right. But you have to encourage feedback from people and ask questions, especially if you know this to be true of yourself.

4. Do your research and ask around!
5. Make sure you understand the details. Being a leader or social innovator likely means you are a visionary who sees the bigger picture but you also have to consider the details. Even if you are not the one doing it, which is usually the case, someone on your team has to be able and willing to pay attention to the details.

### **III.4. Resource mobilization/Funding:**

#### **Dealing with external donors:**

Many of them feel very strongly about internal decisions, such as human resources decisions, not just about issues like changing budget allocations, which are clearly within their rights. Make sure that any possible change in leadership is clearly and transparently communicated in advance to the donor partner.

#### **Collect the necessary information:**

- Make sure to check on deadlines and cycles
- Make sure to visit their website and review their brochures and publications
- In public events like receptions and conferences, keep an eye on the comments made and questions asked that could give you more ideas and insights
- Look into their other projects and past recipients

#### **Tips on business people:**

- If they provide you with financial or in-kind support, make sure to acknowledge and recognize it, even if they don't really want it. It is good because it encourages others and sets a good example. They'll appreciate it, even if they don't really want it. It is always good public relations and publicity for them
- Be proactive sharing reports with local partners. While they might not be as demanding as foreign donors, who have clear requirements for reporting and evaluation, you still need to be proactive with Egyptian donors or less demanding donors.

Tip: If it is a person donating, check whether they want to be recognized personally or if they'd prefer a certain entity or company be named. Philanthropists usually have several affiliations with companies or organizations.



## **Some tips:**

- Develop your own 30-second ‘elevator speech.’
- Key approach: Grab the attention of the person listening and establish at the outset that this is based on a need: “Based on the need/the problem/the fact that..., we decided to contribute to solving this issue through.....” If you can, make sure to highlight how this is innovative and why it is important. “It is a unique initiative because...”, or “This is the first time that....”

## **Guide for minutes-of-meeting form:**

Minutes-of-meeting forms are some of the best and simplest ways to document your relationship and work with external partners. Ensure that you give a full overview of the background and refer to any additional handouts provided for further reference. This is especially crucial for the first meeting. Then list the main points of discussion and detailed next steps, along with the person responsible and the agreed deadlines.

## **Tips on corporate funding and dealing with the corporate sector:**

From experience dealing with Egyptian and multinational corporations, there are several methods through which they give, including the following three main ones:

### **1: PR/Marketing budget item:**

- Out of the public relations budget line

### **2: In-house programs:**

- Special corporate “giving” programs:
  - Support to NGOs and charitable activities
- Company-managed development programs:
  - scholarships and business plan competitions
- Employees’ engagement:
  - Including corporate volunteerism, matching employee donations, etc

### **3: Corporate Foundations:**

- This is an increasing trend, with several companies setting up separate corporate foundations carrying the company name.

## **Challenges/obstacles in dealing with the corporate sector:**

While there have been a lot of positive developments, there’s still a lot to be done in the field of CSR in Egypt, and one needs to be aware of the potential challenges, including:

<b>Issue/potential challenge:</b>	<b>What it means for you/possible action</b>
The lack of an organic relationship and open communication with the company before setting funding priorities, especially with multinational corporations, where it is usually done at headquarters and then adopted by local branches.	Be proactive. Maybe gather a group of NGOs and hold a brainstorming and agenda-sharing session with the company at the outset of programming.
Many CSR programs don't clearly communicate the necessary processes to NGOs, including issues like:  Clearer focus and target groups Cycles or deadlines Required proposal formats Designated department/ person/focal point	Do your research and ask around as much as possible. Good places to start would be to check their website, annual reports, and talk to past recipients.
Supporting NGO capacity building as well as supporting an activity/project, allowing funds to be dedicated to building capacity of NGOs, administrative costs expenses, etc (with a clear ceiling)	Plan accordingly on how best to incorporate it, and work to convince the partner of its importance and relevance to the activity/project at hand, as well as to the longer-term vision.

Difficulties of dealing with some international donors (fill in based on your experiences):

<b>Issue/potential challenge:</b>	<b>What it means for you /possible action</b>
Language?	
Cultural context?	
Capacity building and overheads	
Not understanding of delays and slow pacing that are sometimes out of your hands	
Reporting/financial requirements	Need to plan ahead and read the contract very closely, etc.

## **Lessons learned in dealing with funding partners:**

- Make it easy for them to be involved. Be clear on the idea and on the means. For example the Nahdet El Mahrousa-incubated “Young Innovators Awards” program has been very successful due to the simplicity of the “unit” model, where a potential partner knows that supporting one graduation project costs EGP 5,000; EGP 4,000 that goes to the graduation project directly, and EGP 1,000 for program implementation/management & administrative fees.
- Visit their websites
- Multilateral agencies are usually focused on governments, but this is changing. See if they have a small grants program. Some donors have a funding program through their local embassy.

## **Reporting: Keep them constantly in the loop through:**

- Adding them to an email list/newsletter where they can get frequent updates
- Formal reports (financial and narrative)

## **Don't burn bridges!**

As you continue working in the development field and expanding your vision and engagement, you will be surprised how small the sector (and the world in general) is! A small favor for someone a few years ago will come back in one way or another as an opportunity or something positive! Try as much as possible to maintain good relationships with people and organizations. Try not to lose connections or touch with people. Even in times of conflict, where ending a relationship with a person or an organization seems inevitable, always leave room for possible improvements. Also, if you have to end a relationship, make sure to end it in a civilized manner, and don't let it get personal.

## **How to deal with a nagging or demanding donor:**

- When there's no progress for any reason, to avoid frustration, maintain continuous semi-regular communication
- At the outset, make sure to have a clear reporting system
- The memorandum of understanding has to include a section on reporting expectations that you should abide by
- Create a means to keep the donor updated continuously, whether through an e-list for donors, or brief updates, even if they are not required, or scheduling regular meetings or phone calls to discuss progress
- Also important to consider is the other side of the story: how much to share with potential partners. In meetings and documents, you have to be careful. Write a brief concept note and then develop it into a full-fledged proposal once there's initial agreement on the concept note.

### **Tips: Simple ways to protect your rights**

- Convert files to PDF before sending them to partners
- Include a footnote detailing your document's protected status. An example would be "This document is protected under copyright law as the exclusive property of ABC (date). No part of this document may be used or quoted without the express permission of ABC."
- Don't share all the keys for implementation with your partner. Otherwise they could take them and implement them themselves.

### **Questions on whether donations can be considered zakat or sadaqqa or `ushur:**

Zakat and waqf are among many excellent traditional sources of financing development. Make sure to educate yourself on those so that when you are asked, which you will find is often the case, you can give an accurate answer.

### **General tips:**

1. Donors are always interested to see how their money impacts lives. It would be very useful if you can demonstrate in the budget how their funding or contribution will contribute to unit change. For example, if the required amount of funding is EGP 100,000, and the project creates 200 jobs, then it would be useful to mention that each job created would cost EGP 500.
2. In the case of the corporate sector and some donors, publicity is very important.

### **Highlighting your contribution:**

- It is always useful if you can add a column with what you or other donors/partners are contributing, whether in-kind or financial.
- Many contributions that you might have needed to be highlighted often go unnoticed and un-quantified. These include volunteer man-hours (these can easily be worked out by calculating the volunteer's hourly rate in his/her day job).

### **How to present your budget and items:**

#### **Tip: it is better to overestimate your budget than to underestimate it!**

- It is fine if you overestimate your budget, especially if it is the first time you embark on an activity/project or work with a certain partner, because in any case you will be required to present official invoices, and then you can discuss with the partner how to deal with the savings. However, in the case of underestimating your budget, it will be very difficult for your partner to commit



additional funds, and you will probably have to raise the remaining amount from other sources, whether from your own organizational budget or from other partners.

- However, overestimating your budget should not become a trend! You should learn from your early projects and start forecasting your budgets as accurately as possible.

### **Examples of income-generating items that we can forecast:**

- In-kind support and volunteer time
- Fees paid by NGOs for training
- Price paid for manual by donors, NGOs, etc
- Fees for innovation workshops to corporations and donors, etc
- Technical assistance fees from NGOs for replicating the model/manual royalties

### **General tips for the budget:**

- From the very beginning, it is important to have:
  - o A good finance person to manage the financial forecasts
  - o An accountant to help you maintain the necessary paperwork and invoices needed for the financial reports
- It is important to quantify your contributions, whether voluntary, in-kind or financial. Add a column for your contributions (to include volunteer time, space rental, DSL, etc)
- Add a column for contributions from other sources
- Include a column for pro-bono/in-kind contributions from other partners
- Cost of detailed implementation process should be listed carefully so as to avoid missing items that cannot be covered by other items in the future.
- Check the regulations of funding of donors at an early stage so as not to assume their approval of certain expenses while they do not.
- Check the budget format and structure suitable for each donor.



**Illustration:**

The illustration below shows the need to highlight the column “Your Contributions/Cost-share”. The example provided is one where a group is applying for funding to produce a guide/manual documenting a project and disseminating it publicly.

Item	Cost/Unit	Qty	Duration	Your contributions/Cost-share	Total
<b>Management</b>					
Outreach Manager					
Consultants					
<b>Total Staff (add percentage %)</b>					
<b>Outreach &amp; Marketing Activities</b>					
Presenting the program					
Attract more donors, project sponsors and strategic partners and allies					
<b>Total Outreach &amp; Marketing Activities</b>					
<b>Model Manual Production, Dissemination &amp; Application</b>					
Manual editing & revision					
Manual printing					
Manual dissemination					
Manual promotion & marketing					
Training a core team as trainers for applying the model in other organizations					
<b>Total Model Manual Production &amp; Dissemination</b>					
<b>Management Overhead</b>					
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>					

### Looking at non-typical measures of success:

In addition to creating indicators and the quantifiable means of evaluating your work, it is also important to look at other, non-tangible, results that might initially escape attention. For instance, Fat'het Kheir's impact in terms of numbers of beneficiaries was limited, but looking at the volunteers who were involved with the organization throughout its life cycle, the impact can be evaluated in a different light. In addition to those who continue to serve directly, the network includes several individuals who have gone on to start some of the country's leading youth-led NGOs, pursue academic careers, or commit to long-term careers in development.

### III.5. Deciding on your legal structure:

#### Why social enterprises/self-financing:

There are many reasons why you should strive to achieve financial self-sufficiency:

1. Efficiency and effectiveness. When you are not relying on grants and your revenues correlate to and are dependent on your activities, you will be more efficient in your spending and in managing your costs.
2. Decreasing funding from international donors in Egypt and the region
3. Shift in the corporate sector and among other types of donors to support self-sustaining groups that won't keep coming back for help!
4. Many donors only provide short-term or project/activity-based funding. Only rarely will donors or philanthropic foundations be willing to cover overheads or key staff, so you need to strengthen your financial base and model to be able to cover those expenses, which are crucial for the sustainability and growth of your initiative.

**Note:** In some cases, it might be easier to be part of an umbrella organization, but this has its pros and cons and needs to be considered carefully.

#### **Tip: Consult a good lawyer**

There's an increased trend of specialized NGO legal support organizations, as well as private law firms offering pro-bono legal advice. Make sure the person you are consulting with is familiar with the laws you are operating under. If you are still in the early stages of deciding which legal status to operate under, make sure to consult more than one lawyer. Lawyers tend to be specialized. so if you choose to operate as a company, make sure to find a corporate lawyer, while for the NGO/foundation option, find someone specialized in that area, whether a lawyer or senior official at the Ministry of Social Solidarity. You can find them easily by consulting existing NGOs.

Make sure to discuss all potential forms, including uncommon ones like cooperatives, to get the full picture that allows you to make an informed decision on which is the best option for you.

## Legal status: Key factors to consider:

It is important to decide what legal form is best for you, whether a foundation, NGO, company, a hybrid model, or otherwise. Based on your envisioned organization, its mission and planned activities, some of the factors that will inform the decision are:

- **Access to finance:** Many international donors prefer to fund NGOs, not companies. On the other hand, private equity funds will invest in companies, not NGOs, whether through debt or equity, since they'll then be able to manage loans or distribute dividends.
- **Access to corporate social responsibility funding:** The corporate sector might prefer to work with an NGO to get the associated tax breaks.

**Tip:** In many cases corporations, especially smaller companies, are not aware of the tax breaks they can get by donating to NGOs. So if you are an NGO, it is very important that you be well-versed in the issue, so that you can explain it to the corporate people you meet. Oftentimes what starts off as a small commitment from a company, wanting to give due to religious or patriotic motivations or belief in your cause, will grow rapidly once the company learns about the tax incentives involved.

- **Income-generating activities:** You can only initiate profit-making activities that will provide dividends to shareholders if you are a registered as a company.
- **Access to human resources:** Volunteers are usually more interested in working with an NGO. So if your model depends more on volunteers than full-time staff, you might want to register as an NGO.
- **Access to personal donations:** People are often more willing to make personal donations to NGOs, even if your 'company' has a purely developmental mandate.
- **Tax holidays:** Legally, NGOs receive incentives and breaks on running costs (such as rent, utility costs, etc) and for importing equipment.
- **Decision-making:** How inclusive your decision-making can be dependent on your legal status. For instance, NGOs are required to have a general assembly to which they are accountable, while with foundations, the board or founders are the main decision-makers.
- **Your own criteria and other deciding factors:** Make sure to consider other issues that are important in your specific case, bearing in mind your envisioned organization's mandate, vision, plans for expansion, etc.
- **Public image:** Especially now, with the lack of a not-for-profit company option in Egypt, the widely held view is that companies are only there to make profits. So in terms of mobilizing partners or support, it might be more difficult as a company, while NGOs are seen as more philanthropic. On the other hand, in some countries in the region, while cooperatives might be the best legal option, many choose to avoid them, as they have been highly politicized or are viewed as easily corruptible.
- **Within corporate law:** If you are settling for the corporate option, you need to decide which corporate form is best for your purpose, factoring in issues such as minimum start-up capital, etc.



Based on practical experience, these are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the different legal formats:

	<b>NGO</b>	<b>Company</b>
<b>Flexibility in undertaking trade and commercial activities</b>	Has to have price offers and agreement processes, which can be difficult if an enterprise wants to be flexible and responsive to its market demands, etc	Much easier for buying and selling
<b>Access to funding</b>	Not easy to access private funding, whether equity or debt  Has access to grants	Access to private equity funds and angel investors, etc (growing trend)  Not easy to access grants
<b>Taxation</b>	Usually tax-exempt, reduced running costs, etc.	Taxed. Sometimes difficult for social enterprises to survive them

**Note on hybrid models:** In some cases it may be advisable to set up both an NGO/foundation and a company. While a not-for-profit format might be best-suited for a social enterprise, it is not currently available.

### III.6. Scaling up/Replication:

It is important to start thinking about it from day one, especially with social enterprises, but for practical reasons, this usually comes at a later stage.

This includes the project’s financial sustainability, as well as the sustainability of its systems beyond the involvement of specific individuals. Sustainability is divided into two main parts: institutional sustainability and impact sustainability.

#### Institutional/Financial sustainability

is how to ensure that your social enterprise has the necessary resources to cover its management costs and overheads beyond and independent of donors, etc.

#### Dilemmas:

As a social enterprise you will be dealing with several dilemmas and it is healthy to keep them in mind. They include:

- The tough balancing act between caring about revenue, but also about social impact.
- How to manage possible mission drift.

### Some options:

- Creating an endowment
- Income-generation and charging service fees
- Creating a foundation

## 2. Impact sustainability:

Ensuring that your social enterprise's 'impact' is structurally sustainable includes influencing policies/regulations that further its cause, even beyond the project's or organization's lifecycle.

- This includes how to deal with the media and how to stay in touch with your partners, and;
- How to spread certain values through different operations and through an organizational culture.

### Affecting policy:

- How can your project's impact be made sustainable through affecting policy?
- Many socioeconomic development efforts remain limited in their impact because they are not aimed at affecting and engaging policy makers and governmental institutions, although that could be an easy task and a strategic intervention that could bring about sustainable change.

### **Tip: Educate yourself about the legal framework and policies!**

- The first step would be to educate yourself on which policies affect your work. There are usually two types of policies that you need to think about:

**1. Legal structure policies:** including your own legal structure, as well as, for example, incentives to the corporate sector to donate to NGOs.

**2. Sector-related policies:** if you are working on environmental issues or micro-finance for example, you should try to find out more about relevant policies.

### How to start engaging policy makers

- Invite them to join your board of advisors
- Research which governmental institutions are responsible for your kind of work (the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Higher Education, etc)
- Familiarize yourself with the policies currently shaping or affecting your sector.
- Follow the news closely to stay up-to-date with which laws are changing, what windows of opportunity are opening, what advocacy groups are tackling the issue, etc.



### **Example:**

At Nahdet El Mahrousa Career Development & Entrepreneurship Office, the board of advisors includes a former minister of higher education. There are discussions of how to incorporate it into higher education law. This could include, for example, the tax authorities giving incentives to the private sector to invest in Egyptian public universities.

### **Questions you might want to ask yourself before this step:**

1. Do I have enough systems and documented procedures and regulations in place?
2. Are these already implemented and effective?
3. Do I have a proof of concept?

### **Replicating Fat'het Kheir**

#### **Why it worked in Rawdet Abu Ghaleb:**

Fat'het Kheir was requested to help replicate its volunteer-based microcredit program in another area outside of Cairo. The NGO had no volunteers, and the area it served was rural, as opposed to the poor urban setting where Fat'het Kheir was founded. The model was successfully replicated through extensive visits by Fat'het Kheir volunteers to the area to train employees on the model. Here are some key lessons learned on why it worked:

1. Flexibility (depended on employees, as opposed to the other model)
2. The same vision, values and beliefs of the host NGO
3. Involvement of several volunteers on a weekly basis for a couple of months
4. Flexibility in applying the loans system based on local community needs. For example, for a rural area, you needed larger sums and longer repayment periods until the project could start to become productive (i.e. a goat that will give birth, etc).

## IV. Communication

### About This section

Communication is surely a cross-cutting theme throughout this Guide. However, due to its importance and the belief that good communication is extremely important since the inception of an idea through the growth and maturity of an initiative (as is clearly highlighted in Annex I: Adapting to the needs of your initiative's life cycle), this section is dedicated to detailed insights and tips on how to make your communication most effective to convey the right message, mobilize the right resources and reach your vision in the best way. It is divided into several subsections dealing with holding effective internal meetings, external meetings, dealing with the media, effective presentations and public speaking, effective participation in conferences and workshops. The section then finishes with the subsection on effective written communication, including some important insights that any successful social innovator needs to be aware of.

#### General tips/approaches to communication:

- Be clear, and don't assume the person you are talking to or emailing is familiar with the background. Assume people will not simply assume what you want to communicate!
- Put yourself in the other person's shoes:
  - What information do they have, and what information do they need?
  - What's their availability in terms of time like?
  - What issues or negative perceptions might they have that you need to address?
  - What would motivate them to listen to you or read your document?
- Seek first to understand:
  - Yourself and your motivation, your strengths and weaknesses
  - Your team and capabilities
  - Your objectives and vision
  - Your target group
  - What other groups and organizations are doing

## Branding your initiative:

As important as it might be to look at yourself and consider how you are positioned and viewed by others, it is equally important to brand your work/initiative/organization.

- Naming your initiative: A name says part of it, so choose a catchy name that helps express what you do
- Choose a catchy, expressive slogan or acronym
- Especially for community-based efforts, avoid foreign names. Local names give a sense of authenticity and originality
- Make sure not to rush into choosing a name that you are not sure about. Take your time; it is worth it.

### **Tip: Gathering feedback and rallying momentum around your idea or dream (some people might think you are a broken record!)**

- Keep talking about your idea and nourish it, especially in the conception stage. It is one of the best ways to stimulate interest and solicit feedback... as long as you talk, then listen patiently to the feedback.
- Keep discussing your idea and listening for reactions and suggestions. This helps you to:
  - Gather impressions and feedback about it. Do they think it is a new idea? Is anyone else they know doing similar work?
  - Sharpen your message and practice it.
  - Mobilize potential resources; whether human or financial

### **Tip: Self-promotion and talking about your ideas vs. egocentrism**

- The above doesn't mean that you should become a self-obsessed egomaniac! Humility is one of the most important traits of a good leader. Let others provide the recognition, not you.
- You may need to promote yourself, especially in the beginning when you are still establishing yourself. But do it in a subtle way. Focus on the organization and the idea, not on yourself and your role. Use 'We' instead of 'I'. Use 'co-founder' as a title, rather than 'founder.'



## ***IV.1. Effective Internal Meetings:***

### **Preparing for the meeting:**

- If applicable, send the documents/agenda beforehand
- Send the invitation well ahead of time
- Include clear directions and a phone number in case anyone can't find the way
- Send a reminder a day or two before the meeting
- List confirmed attendees to encourage others to attend and to establish a sense of the meeting's importance.

### **During the meeting:**

- Have some printed copies of the documents you sent at hand in case they didn't have a chance to read them.
- Bring food and drink: Wherever appropriate, have some food/fresh fruits or soft drinks available. This always helps break the ice and create a collegial atmosphere, which is most important when you are working with a group that needs more bonding. It also works in meetings where heated discussions or contentious issues are expected, as it helps diffuse some of the tension and allows the focus to shift to something else. Food and drink allows attendees to share a common experience of something positive and very basically human.
- Facilitator/chair: Make sure that the facilitator/chair of the meeting introduces the objectives and why everyone is here. Make sure they ask if anyone has any last minute comments on certain topics, or if they want to change a time allocation, etc.
- From the very beginning, be clear on agenda flow and breaks, meeting rules, etc.
- To avoid having attendance dwindle or people slipping out of the meeting, make sure to set the exact time that the meeting ends so everyone commits to it. Ask explicitly if anyone needs to leave early so it doesn't come as a surprise if they do.
- Documenting the meeting: If it hasn't already been agreed before the meeting, make sure to ask for a volunteer or assign someone to document the proceedings and send out copies after the meeting. Two important criteria: 1) He/she has to be good at taking notes; 2) He/she has to be able to send the notes out soon after the meeting—not two weeks later.
- Clear list of next steps: Have a clear list of next steps and explicitly reiterate them so everyone agrees and knows their role.
- Sometimes with a big group, it is much easier to set a date for the next follow-up meeting during the current meeting, since coordinating via phone calls or emails with a big group can prove difficult.



- Circulate an attendance sheet, especially if there are newcomers whose contact information you will need.

### **After the meeting:**

- Send the minutes of the meeting to all participants a maximum of 48 hours after your meeting. You don't want people to forget or lose the interest and momentum that you helped build during the meeting.
- For the minutes of the meeting, it is advisable to have a table broken down into four sections: Discussions, actionable items, the person responsible for those items, and the deadline by which they need to be delivered.

## **IV.2. Effective External Meetings:**

### **Before the meeting:**

- Check the organization's website
- Make sure to dress appropriately(usually formal)
- Take business cards with you
- If other colleagues will be accompanying you to the meeting, make sure you all meet at least 30 minutes early at the designated address so you can all enter together
- Bring a notebook and pen to take notes
- Bring your calendar or organizer in case you need to agree on future meetings

### **During the meeting:**

- Put your mobile phone away
- Pay attention and try to look at the person speaking
- Try to avoid any distracting habits like nodding or saying "yes" repeatedly
- No gum!
- Bring your organizational profile and media clippings file

### **After the meeting:**

- Volunteer your side to write the minutes of the meeting, as it ensures you capture the commitments both sides made and gives you the advantage of wording them. It is always to your advantage to send the minutes of the meeting or draft the concept notes that you agreed upon
- Send a thank you email with the agreed upon next steps. It is preferable to follow up with external partners as soon as you return to the office.
- Write up the minutes of the meeting or let someone else from your team do so.

**Tip: Maintaining Momentum with External Partners: Documenting and writing:**

- Ensure documenting and writing up minutes of meetings
- Even with phone calls, it is very important to send a follow-up email documenting what was agreed upon and next steps

### ***IV.3. Dealing with the Media:***

**Tips:**

- Learn about the target audience. Watch or listen to an episode to get a feel for the program
- Ask what people think of it and who mainly watches it, to learn what to focus on in your message (i.e. recruiting volunteers, soliciting support, etc)
- No media exposure is too little, especially in the beginning
- Be aware of the type of media and how you will likely be perceived

**For print media:**

Some common mistakes:

- Most newspapers won't allow you to see the article before it is published, but you have the right to ask them to correct factual errors
- To avoid additional mistakes, make sure to send them a detailed press release

**Tip:** These days most journalists, whether in state-run or independent newspapers and magazines, list an email address at the end of their articles. The response rate is not very high, but you can start by writing them, and following the work of those promoting certain ideas and who could be possible allies or partners, whether in publicizing your work, or as opinion leaders on your side.

**For TV interviews:**

**What if you've never heard of the TV program or channel that contacted you?**

- Make sure to ask around and check how they are perceived.
- Make sure to watch at least one episode of the program.

**Preparing for the interview:**

- Colors and backgrounds: ask the interviewer if it would be better to wear a certain color or observe a certain dress code. Try to wear simple, basic colors to avoid distracting the audience
- Time at the studio: make sure to be there early enough to get a feel of the place and set-up



- If they can show banners or other materials, make sure to bring some with you
- Check if you can mention the name of the organization. Sometimes, especially with state-owned channels, there are rules prohibiting NGOs mentioning their names. It could be bad for the interviewer, so make sure to ask them first
- A lot of times the interviewer is not the person preparing the materials for the interview, and sometimes they don't read the preparatory notes. So don't assume the presenter knows. Make sure to brief them if you can before the interview
- Make sure they have your name written correctly on the screen
- Check if you can mention your email or website or phone number on air

### **During the interview:**

- Make sure to have your prepared lines with the points you want to make ready, and try to work them into the interview several times
- Ask if they can also put the website or contact number up on screen, for example

### **After the interview:**

- Ask if you can have a recorded copy of the interview. Most private or independent TV channels will give you a DVD or CD at the end of the show, but for most public broadcasters, that's not possible
- Watch yourself to see how you did, and ask for opinions and honest feedback from others

### **What can go wrong on a TV interview?**

The presenter may have not read anything about your organization and might seem to be talking about a different organization. Maintain your smile, and say something along the lines of "Thanks for bringing that up. There's actually a common misconception about our organization that...", or "Actually, our organization is..."

### **Tip: Beware! The interview is never as long as they say it will be!**

- With settling in, breaks, and maybe long phone interjections from viewers, the time you end up with can be much shorter than what they promised you.
- Plan accordingly. If they tell you the interview will last 20 minutes, plan to get the whole message across in 10. For example, don't wait to mention your website at the end, as the interview might end abruptly. Make sure to highlight your key message several times during the interview.
- Ensure maximum exposure for your initiative. Repeat your organization's name in your responses, e.g. "In Nahdet El Mahrousa, we believe..." Assume with every question that new viewers have just tuned in and have no idea who you are or which organization you are talking about.

## IV.4. Effective Presentations and Public Speaking:

### Speaking tips:

- Know the audience and the setting
- Prepare the script
- Prepare the graphics
- Keep your script brief; an outline will do
- Practice out loud
- Don't read from it!
- Arrange for audiovisual equipment and confirm it is ready
- Suggest a proper introduction
- Check the total time allotted
- Check if you will be permitted to entertain questions
- Deliver the speech
- Prompt a post-speech question-and-answer session
- Take extra care with international audiences

### Introduction

(10 percent of your time)

- Grab the attention of your audience – Start with a bang!
- Main benefit statement - Tell them what's in it for them
- Outline the range of the presentation - Tell them what you are going to tell them
- Set ground rules e.g. when you are willing to take questions

### Body

(80 percent of your time)

- Remember the rule of three – three main points, no more than three sub-points to support each main point
- Give examples of what you mean – make the examples as relevant as possible to your audience
- Use visual aids to support your presentation
- Link one point to the next by signposting as you go along.



## **Conclusion**

(10 percent of your time)

- Summary – should contain no new material - tell them what you've told them
- Finish with a flourish!
- Thank the audience for their attention
- Invite questions

## **Story Board Approach**

- Have clear, informative titles
- Create a link and a story-line
- Provide a clear outline
- Recap every 2 or 3 slides and remind people of the flow of the story line – “we have now spoken about ... and now I will tell you about...,” etc
- Each slide should tell a story and have a message that then links to the greater picture or overall message you want to deliver.
- Not more than 3 main points/bullets per slide
- Insert the outline slide in between sections to show which section this is and its place in the sequence of the presentation. It keeps people engaged and gives them a sense of
- Break the ice!
  - Make a joke: a bad joke might be risky
  - Ask questions, including asking people to introduce themselves or each other
  - Telling a relevant story always captures attention!
  - Ask for their expectations of the presentation/training
- Pay attention to your posture
- Pay attention to your tone (don't be monotonous)
- Keep to the allotted time (it is better to use less than the time allocated to you, rather than exceed it or use it exactly)
- Make eye contact
- Don't spend time looking at your images
- For increased impact, learn to breathe from your diaphragm in order to project your voice.

## Questions to ask yourself after your presentation:

- Delivery (attire, vocal and body language):
  - Did you maintain eye contact with the audience?
  - Did you maintain an interesting and comfortable tone?
  - Did you maintain a varied pitch/volume of voice?
  - Did your pace/speed vary (but wasn't too fast for the audience to follow)?
  - Did you maintain good body language (gestures, avoiding distracting/irritating moves, etc)?
  - Were you well-groomed and properly dressed for the occasion?
- Flow of presentation
  - Did you introduce a clear outline at the beginning?
  - Did you have an introduction, body and conclusion?
  - Did you keep your audience informed as to where you were taking them?
  - Did your presentation flow logically?
  - Did you attempt to break the ice?
  - Did you attempt to engage your audience and keep them interested?
- Visual aids:
  - Did you use visual aids (PowerPoint, flip chart, demo, photos, etc)?
  - Were the visual aids and demos used relevant, adding to the content?
- Logistics:
  - Did you have a script outline to aid you, or did you depend solely on memory?
  - Did you seem well-prepared with the information and material?
  - Did you respect your time limit?
- Handouts:
  - How well-prepared were your handouts?
  - Did you choose a good time to pass them around?

### **Tips:**

- Make sure you go early, find the technician and test the equipment
- Thank the organizers (if you've got an extra couple of minutes)
- Have a piece of paper at hand with the main points
- If you are on a stage or seated on a panel, make sure you have a pen to write down the questions
- If you are at a high-level panel, make sure to observe protocol in addressing those present. Address the panel members in the correct order of seniority and with their formal titles. Check with an expert before going on stage to ensure you will do it right

### **In a presentation, as part of a course or a multi-session conference:**

- Make sure to review the agenda before going
- Make sure to get there early to get a feel of the place and the audience
- To avoid redundancy and ensure sure you are building on the other sessions, make sure to ask the organizers or some of the participants what the other sessions are about, especially the ones that have already concluded

### **Receiving feedback and criticism:**

- Listen closely and don't interrupt. Try to understand and look for constructive suggestions in the advice, even if it is hidden in harsh or aggressive language
- If you are asked to respond: thank the person and acknowledge the feedback. Start with what you agree with in what was said, and then possibly what you disagree with
- Don't take it personally! Many people take criticism of their organization or country personally. One of the worst things you can do for your image, your organization or your country is to defend them blindly. Nothing is perfect, so be willing to acknowledge the criticism or feedback. Don't forget that you created your initiative/organization to address some issues and challenges. It is always met with respect and admiration when you acknowledge that there are things that need improvement and highlight efforts to do so. Another positive way of handling it is to ask for the critic's help or specific suggestions
- In your communications, when you are answering someone's feedback or criticism, avoid putting them on the defensive. For example:
  - o Avoid using words like 'but'
  - o Use engaging language (e.g. "we're saying the same thing," or "I agree and let me explain my point of view...," or "thanks for your point and please allow me to elaborate and clarify..." etc.)



## **IV.5. Effective participation in conferences and workshops:**

- Prepare your own agenda and objectives that you want to achieve during the event. These could include making contact with X, setting up a meeting with Y, etc. This helps you stay focused and prevents you being overwhelmed, especially at big events that have multiple workshops or sessions in parallel
- Ask beforehand if there are display tables or booths for participating entities
- Approach those you are interested in meeting and schedule a coffee break or lunch chat
- Ask if you can give a presentation in any of the sessions
- To maximize exposure and potential for networking, make sure you introduce yourself properly before asking a question or making a comment
- Listen carefully to interventions and introductions to identify who you want to link up with
- Go through the list of participants and their affiliations beforehand to help identify who you'd like to meet
- Bring business cards. Or you might want to bring a small piece of paper explaining your initiative, with your contact information included
- Stay in close contact with the organizing committee, and be understanding of possible problems, whether organizationally or logistically. Provide positive feedback and constructive suggestions on how things could be improved, if organizers are willing to listen

### **After the event:**

- Write down on the back of a business card what you promised to send the people you met, or what you said you'd follow-up on, and make sure you do so.

### **International conferences/events:**

In an international context, no matter what you do, you will be viewed as a representative of your country. In fact, you might be the only person from your country that some people will ever meet! Some tips:

- Be prepared to address current affairs in your country
- A quick review of commonalities between Egypt and other countries of the world is always a good way of taking a conversation beyond the weather. Knowing a few words of greeting in different languages is always a great way to start a conversation and break the ice!
- Be aware of cultural sensitivities on how to greet people (i.e. whether physical contact is appropriate or not)
- Be sensitive to others' history and religion



- Don't shy away from explaining your beliefs
- Be modest. In the end you are just representing yourself. Make sure to preface your remarks with "I personally think...." And if it is different from other points of view in your country, make sure to be honest and say that others believe otherwise.

## ***IV.6. Effective written communication:***

- Spell-check your emails/letters before sending them out
- Review correspondence to make sure it is friendly and complete. It wouldn't hurt to spend a few seconds adding a nice greeting or starting your email with a "hi" or end it with a "thank you" or a "best regards"
- Refrain from using exclamation marks. In exceptional cases use one exclamation mark. More than one is interpreted as unprofessional and is viewed by many as offensive
- Be sure to be concise and precise.
- Don't use CAPS, except possibly when writing acronyms. These are interpreted as 'shouting' on email!
- Using red color is also interpreted by some as shouting. If you need to use color other than black to highlight your responses for instance, it is better to use colors such as blue or green.
- Don't assume the person you are writing to is familiar with the issue. Put yourself in their shoes and provide all necessary information, trying to anticipate questions the person would likely want to ask
- For clarity, add subtitles, bullet points and enumeration if needed
- Font and size: Verdana 10 is very comfortable to read. Times New Roman 11 is good too! Choose a clear font, and if you are using italics, make sure they are clear. Some fonts, like Garamond, produce hard-to-read Italics
- One very important starting point is to know how to address the person in terms of:
  - Title: Is it Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr./His Excellency Ambassador or Minister, etc
  - Name: You should ask how they like to be addressed. A good clue would be to see how they sign off their emails. If, when they respond to your email, they are formal, maybe it is prudent for you to be formal too. If they choose to be informal, you might want to start addressing the person by their first name. But it is always safer to be formal in the beginning at least, especially with Egyptian and Arab culture, where people find it important to maintain formalities dictated by age and gender differences. You might also want to ask others who know the person how they think a person contacting them for the first time should address them.

**People are bombarded with tens of emails every day. How do you make your email stand out and get noticed?**

Possible question in recipient’s mind	What you need to consider
<b>Why should I open this email?</b>	<p>To make sure your email is given the attention it is due, make sure to have a meaningful title that clearly indicates the subject matter. You could also add a word to describe the email, along the lines of “urgent/important/reminder/for review.”</p> <p>If the email is directed to a certain person, it is sometimes useful to write “attn. [name of person]” to avoid any delays caused by the person not realizing it is meant for them personally. This is especially useful when sending email to generic email accounts that are checked by several people in the same organization (e.g.: <b>info@xyz.org</b>)</p>
<b>Who is this person writing me?</b>	<p>You might need to remind the person who you are or where you met. Make sure you have a clear e-signature indicating your position, affiliation, etc.</p>
<b>I wear many hats; in which capacity does this person want my support or response?</b>	<p>Include the name, title, and organization of the person you are writing to. This is very important for those copied on the email as well.</p>
<b>What is this attachment?</b>	<p>Write one or two sentences explaining what the attachment is about, why you are sharing it, and why it is important that they open it. You might want to bold or underline the sentence (e.g. “<b>Please find attached a document outlining....</b>”)</p> <p>If there’s something in particular you want to highlight in the document, like a paragraph or table, it might be a good idea to copy and paste it into the body of the email to draw the recipient’s attention to it.</p>
<b>Does it need my action?</b>	<p>Make sure to indicate whether this email is for review or just for the information of the person receiving it, or whether it requires their follow-up or action.</p> <p>If it is an event or needs confirmation, motivate the recipient by listing (bold and underlined) the names of those who’ve already responded. Thank those individuals and remind the rest that you are awaiting their confirmations.</p>
<b>Who else is copied on this email?</b>	<p>Write out clearly in the body of the email the names and titles of all those you’ve copied on to it.</p>
<b>How urgent is this?</b>	<p>Provide a clear deadline in bold text.</p>
<b>I don’t have time to read long emails, I’ll read it later</b>	<p>For long emails, provide a three-sentence summary at the beginning of the email.</p>
<b>What document is the person referring to, or what template are you suggesting I follow?</b>	<p>To save time, attach the suggested template or document you are writing about. Even if you’ve sent it before, don’t assume the person has it, or has the latest version, etc.</p>
<b>What information is being requested from me?</b>	<p>If you are requesting information, write out the items you need (for instance if you need contacts, spell out that you need the name, mobile number, email, etc) or provide an empty table for them to fill out.</p>

# ANNEXES

## Annex I: Adapting to the needs of your initiative’s life cycle:

### Lessons Learned: Reflections on institutional life cycle & crucial factors for success - Egyptian context



As the diagram above suggests, there are certain criteria required for the healthy growth of an initiative and which are crucial for the evolution from one stage to the next in an initiative’s life cycle. Below is some elaboration on each:

### Start-up phase

#### **Social capital & trust:**

As a leader, you need to have credibility to be able to gather people around you. This could come from a track record of earlier success, or if you are starting from scratch—which, at one point any leader or social innovator has to—from your sincerity, passion, hard work and dedication to your idea or vision. In the beginning, people, whether internal or external partners, will always keep an eye on you to see if you are remaining true to your vision, if you are committed to the public cause, if there’s any hint of a personal agenda, etc. So, be wary of giving false impressions at this stage. Be as transparent as possible.

#### **Attracting the right people with no “other” agendas:**

You can’t do it alone! Even if you could, always remember that any real development initiative is a learning and development process for those working on and leading it. So part of your responsibility is attracting others to work with you on the initiative. Having the right people with the right complementary set of skills and, more importantly, the right passion, belief and dedication, is key to the initiation stage. It is also crucial that they be the right people with the necessary skills to supplement your weaknesses and build on your strengths.

### Recruitment message:

- **Retaining them:** To retain your people, make sure to continuously communicate with them, update them, send them reminders of the vision, and link achievements with how much closer you are all getting to the vision that you set out to achieve together.
- **Overcoming conflicts/misunderstandings:** It is very important to deal with these wisely, and to be seen as a fair and objective leader. It is important that you listen to all sides carefully before taking any steps. Try to always focus on the main source of the conflict. A lot of times what appears on the surface is just the tip of the iceberg, or only a symptom of the real root cause. Always ask yourself: “What is this really about?”

### Good leadership (crucial factor) by:

- **Inclusion:** In opportunities as well as responsibilities. You don't want to only include your team when there's a need or a crisis! Simple things like asking members of your team to join you in important meetings and activities or to present the initiative to others could be motivating, and will strengthen their sense of ownership and team spirit.
- **Leading by example:** The most effective way to lead is by example. As the leader, you should be the one who works the hardest. In a voluntary setting where there are no financial incentives to get your team to work harder or deliver more, your work, passion and dedication are the most important motivators.

### Belief, persistence, flexibility:

These are all crucial qualities to maintain, both as a leader and as part of your organizational culture.

- **Belief and Persistence:** You have to be one of the strongest, if not the strongest, believer in your organization's mission and its vision; otherwise, you are in the wrong place! This also includes confidence and belief in yourself, your colleagues, and other organizations and partners. This is seriously lacking in our civil society, both within organizations as well as among sectors. Without that belief and trust, we won't be able to build strong partnerships that can contribute to solving some of our country's massive development challenges.
- **Flexibility:** Although you have a vision, you need to continue listening for feedback and adapting your vision and mission accordingly. As mentioned above, even in terms of positioning or what makes your organization unique, those things will change repeatedly as you interact with external partners and others, and continue to reshape and learn about yourself, your organization and its niche. Although this is important throughout, it is crucial in the early stages.



## Well thought out communication (for all stakeholders):

- Celebrating the smallest of achievements and linking them to the organization's vision is always important.
- Ensure message clarity in communicating with different stakeholders.

## For external partners: The need to establish credibility and quick successes

- Proof of concept is very important in the beginning, as it helps mobilize the resources, human, financial or otherwise, that are needed to take you to the next phase.
- Achieving early results and communicating them are both equally important.

### **Growth phase**

- **Clarity/proof of concept:**

- **Good leadership:**

- To ensure that you are growing in the right direction and to avoid mission drift, you need to continuously ensure alignment with the vision.

- **Belief, persistence, flexibility and the ability to deal with difficulties**

- **Positioning (crucial factor):**

- For healthy growth and maturity, the organization needs to be clearly positioned. This is the time for the organization to have an objective review, ideally an external one, on what it has achieved, what it is good at, what makes it unique, and the way forward.

- **Human Resources: Full-time staff plus volunteers**

- For any serious growth, there have to be some full-time staff

- **Synergistic approach**

- **Partnership-building and ability to see means of cooperation**

### **Maturity**

- **Systems beyond “charismatic leader”**

A good, charismatic leader can be a blessing—or a curse. Right at the outset, there needs to be awareness and work put into building systems that go beyond one person, or one group of people.

- **Belief, persistence, flexibility**

## Annex II: Planning cycle:

- Industry analysis
- SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) analysis
- Vision/Aim
  - Overall direction and aim
- Setting Goals
  - More specific level general directions and aims
- Setting Objectives (SMART)
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Attainable
  - Realistic
  - Time-bound
- Activities
  - Clear deadlines and timeline
  - Clear responsibilities and division of labor
- Evaluation
  - milestones, indicators

### SWOT analysis:

- **Strength:**
  - An area of demonstrated competency and proven performance or slack resources (excess capacity) with potential for mobilization or reallocation.
- **Weakness:**
  - An area of demonstrated incompetence, mediocrity, or lack of distinctive achievement, or limits on resources that prevent them from being mobilized

### Environmental analysis & mapping

What are the key economic characteristics of our strategic environment?

How intense is the competition in our strategic environment?

1. What kind of competition could there be?
2. Is it over financial resources? Human resources?

## What forces drive change in our strategic environment?

1. Demographic forces (why are currently there so many youth-led NGOs in Egypt?)
2. Societal attitudes and values (of beneficiaries, donors, volunteers, staff – e.g. charity vs. development?)
3. Consumer experience and knowledge
4. Economic forces
5. Technology and product innovation
6. Public policy and regulatory influences
7. International forces

## What are the prospects for our portfolio of programs and services?

- **Threats and Opportunities**
- **Mandate**
- **Purpose of a mission statement**
  - Focus attention
  - Set direction
  - Measure success
  - Guide daily decision making
  - Allocation of resources towards priority project
  - Accountability to the public

### Four components of a mission statement:

- Core purpose
- Needs filled
- Values/operating philosophies
- Aspirations for the future

### **For student activities<sup>2</sup> :**

**Prepared by: Egyptian Trainers' Team, AIESEC Egypt**

**Let's get our projects funded and supported!**

**This manual includes 3 main sections: I. what is fundraising? II. Benefits of fundraising, and, III. Steps for fundraising (includes: Setting project objectives, survey of organizations and approval, preparing proposals, contacting organizations, visits, company report and follow up).**

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<sup>2</sup> These are guides that the author had prepared during his university years as president of AIESEC Egypt, 1995/96.



## I. WHAT IS FUNDRAISING?

Fundraising is partnering with other organizations (including companies, governmental organizations, and NGOs) to finance your project and support it. This stems mainly from the fact that X is a not-for-profit organization and hence needs to partner with externals for mutual benefits and to support its projects.

## II. BENEFITS OF FUNDRAISING

**For X:** Being able to carry out large, impactful programs and projects that are financially sound. Being able to make surpluses out of a project to support your organization as a whole.

### **For YOU:**

- Communication skills development
- Self confidence development
- Negotiation skills development
- A feel of day-to-day business life
- Future contacts

You will find more benefits as you go on more and more fundraising visits.

## III. STEPS FOR FUNDRAISING

### 1. Set Clear Objectives, Plans and Details for your project (including exact target group, duration and events).

### 2. Survey Organizations and Approval:

**a. Survey organizations** (Which companies might be interested in the specific project that you are running or in X as an organization.) and

**b. Prepare a list** You can start from here:

- Personal contacts
- Past sponsors/partners (from company reports and marketing materials of past events)
- Look through the Yellow Pages, American Chamber of Commerce website. and other guides
- Watch media and outdoor advertising to identify companies advertising heavily, monitor new products with similar target groups and organizations with similar objectives
- Competitors of the companies doing the advertising and sponsoring a lot of events will also be interested to start raising their profile



Note: Be aware of the time when most companies draft their budgets and decide how much will be allocated to sponsorships or promotions. Don't turn up too late when the budget's already been set.

### **3. Prepare proposal**

The proposal has to include the following items:

- Cover page with “proposal for cooperation between \_\_\_\_ & [name of organization]”
- Executive summary on your organization
- Project benefit package
- Budget of project
- Marketing material from past X projects
- Endorsement letters (choose appropriate ones based on organization you are approaching)

Remember: The X logo has to be present on all pages of the proposal

Note: Some NGOs require specific formats for proposals, so check before the visit

### **4. Contact Organization**

- Send the standard fax requesting an appointment
- Follow up with a phone call 1-3 days later and take an appointment

Remember: The only aim of the fax and phone call is to take an appointment, not to sell your proposal.

- **Who to ask for**

Usually the person of interest to X, if there's no specific target in the organization, is the managing director or the marketing manager, because these are decision makers on issues of sponsorships or promotions for their organization's products or services. You should know their names, not just their titles.

You can usually find their names from the printed directories, but what if you don't find it?

Simply have a colleague (a different voice) call up to ask for the name of the person in that position.

- **What to say on the phone call**

- Before calling the organization, make sure it is quiet around you in the office.

Remember: one of the major responsibilities of the secretary is to block unimportant phone calls from reaching her boss. So make yours sound unimportant. How?

- **Expected Scenario**

The secretary will ask you: “Which organization did you say you are calling from?”

Here it is advisable to say the acronym in English. It gives a good impression.

*“Why do you want to talk to him/her?”*

Because I want to make an appointment

*“Concerning what?”*

That is why I want to make an appointment, to go into details on the subject.

*“Can’t you just tell me?”*

I’m sorry, but I wanted to talk to him/her specifically.

*“Concerning what?”*

Concerning cooperation of mutual benefit. I want an appointment to discuss it more clearly with him/her (don’t give any more details).

This circular conversation takes some time, and then the secretary connects you to his/her boss or tells you to call at a specific time. The same scenario can be expected with the manager. So be patient!

**Never mention** the words “sponsorship” or “financing a project” on the phone. It frightens them!

Never mention more than the acronym of X and that you want to discuss mutual benefit or a cooperation plan. Don’t talk about your project. You want to avoid any misunderstandings on the phone.

Try to get to know the secretary’s name to make the contact more personal. This can give you a lot of support.

## **5. Visit (the long awaited chance!)**

- **What to take along with you (What is a salesman without a product?)**

- Take the contact details of the organization you are visiting so you can call them if you get lost or delayed
- Three copies of the proposal (usually you go with a colleague, so one for you, one for your colleague, and one for the manager. There may also be an assistant in attendance, so it is good to have an extra copy. Put them in separate, transparent files
- Business cards
- If needed: An outline of your presentation (to refer to when needed)

- **How to prepare**

- **KNOW YOUR PROPOSAL** (including the executive summary). It is the product you are trying to sell



- Don't ever sound as if you are reciting your presentation. They get bored. Pique their interest by asking, "Have you heard about X?" This also helps you figuring out where to start from. Challenge yourself to make an interesting presentation
- Survey the organization's interests, concerns and needs
- Don't just think of the benefit to X; think of how this would potentially benefit the organization that's funding you, and how the arrangement is mutually beneficial
- Know what makes X unique from all other youth NGOs operating in Egypt so that you can concentrate on why the organization should be partnering with you, and no one else
- Prepare yourself both mentally and physically for the visit; get a good night's sleep the night before
- Don't have a heavy meal before the visit. You might find difficulty speaking or concentrating
- On the day of the visit, make sure that both you and your colleague have copies of the proposal, in case of emergencies that prevent you or your colleague from attending
- **First Impressions** (Nothing can make up for a first impression)
  - Be there no less than 10 minutes, no more than 20 minutes before your appointment. Plan for delays, traffic or getting lost
  - What if you are there on time but the manager isn't? It is not advisable to wait more than 20 minutes beyond the appointed time, unless they call and or leave a message that they are on their way
  - Be Realistic! Don't oversell X, and don't undersell it
  - If you feel the manager is getting bored, move on to the next topic on your agenda
  - Be open to possibilities; maybe this organization can give you in-kind support with its products, or trainings through its staff... never refuse!
  - Maintain eye contact; it shows you are honest and confident
  - Don't move your hands too much. Keep it under control
  - Don't speak in a monotone, or they'll lose interest. No cigarettes, no gum
  - Don't interrupt
  - Dress formally
  - Sit appropriately. Sitting back when you are talking reflects confidence. Leaning forward when listening shows interest and concern
  - If you are offered something to drink, don't hesitate to ask for something, especially if it takes time to prepare, as that will give you more time to present and discuss
  - Express interest in whatever they are saying
  - Absorb criticism, and listen to the very end. Focus on learning from it and improving yourself, not just on answering back

- Be confident, but not aggressive
- If you are asked a question on X you don't know the answer for, say that you don't know, but that you will check when you get back to the office and call them back with the answer
- **How should the visit go?**
  - Shake hands firmly (not too firmly!) with the manager
  - Smile and introduce yourself as you shake hands
  - Hand over your business card
  - Break the ice (simply be friendly)
  - Introduce X (in the sequence mentioned below)
  - Hand over the proposal when you start talking about the benefits of the specific project you are fundraising for. If you hand it over earlier, the manager will start going through it and won't be listening to what you are saying
  - When the meeting is over, insist on knowing when you should call back. because the manager will usually be too busy to call you.
- **What to say**

The following sequence for presenting X is recommended: **NPPPP**

Name

Presence (numbers)

Purpose

Programs

Projects (examples of projects under these Programs)

**Then mention the project you came for.**

DON'T	DO
Describe it as "non-religious" Refer to it as a branch/subsidiary Mention your core competencies to externals Go into details of your philosophy unless asked. It is boring and irrelevant to them	Say it doesn't discriminate on the basis of religion Say it is a member of the international association of...

**Never say:** “We won’t be able to cooperate,” because:

1. There usually will be a way you can cooperate.
2. You should never burn a bridge you don’t need to.

• **Concentrate on:**

- X aims to bridge the gap between the business and student worlds to develop future business leaders
- Our aim is to benefit Egyptian society and Egyptian youth
- Largest student-run organization in the whole world
- Moving towards full programs, not just conferences and small projects
- Corporate social responsibility
- Names of advisors
- Names of large organizations supporting X (also emphasize the names of the company’s competitors, if any, that are supporting X )
- X international’s registration at the UN
- Cross cultural understanding (seeking as a priority to present our culture properly to others)
- Developing leadership skills in youth
- We like to partner with companies and NGOs
- Representing Egyptian Youth in international conferences (e.g. WSSD - Copenhagen, ICPD - Cairo, Earth Summit - Rio and more) in addition to X International conferences.

## **6. Preparing the content**

Go back to your office and type up a report.

Don’t forget to call up the organization to find out if they made the right choice and decided to cooperate with us!

## **How to Deliver a Successful Training Session/Presentation:**

### **Outline:**

1. Language (Public Speaking)
2. Movement and Body Language
3. Techniques
4. Visual Aids
5. Recommended Flow
6. Preparing the content

## 1. Language (Public Speaking)

- Articulation: Make sure your pronunciation is clear.
- Tone: Don't be monotonous
- Speed: Don't be too fast or too slow!
- Pausing: Do pause occasionally. It helps improve the audience's concentration.

## 2. Movement and Body Language

- Don't move too much
- Don't hold still for too long
- Hand movements: Your hands' movement should be within a frame around your chest, i.e. don't move your hands too far away from your body
- Use your hands to clearly enumerate something. Example: "There are four steps." As you say this, gesture with four fingers
- Keep good eye contact with your audience, i.e. look at all the members of your audience. If there are a lot of people, look at the back row; it gives the impression that you are looking at them all
- Don't play with objects like pens or key chains in the training. They distract people
- Don't lean on a chair or table
- Point clearly to your slide or flip chart when you are talking about something written there

## 3. Techniques

- Handout timing: Keep it to the end of the session
- Raise questions to be answered by the audience throughout the session, to arouse interest
- Be ready for expected questions from the audience
- Facing questions that you don't know the answer for, you can:
  - Say "I don't know, but I'll check and get back to you."
  - Keep the question to the end of the session
  - Turn the question around by asking the person "What do YOU think?"
- Quote famous people to convey the message
- Don't try to put too much into the training. Set a reasonable outline. Three objectives are optimal
- Wear something comfortable and simple. Don't wear flashy colors!
- Wrap up after each major point
- Conclude clearly at the end of the session, and review the objectives
- Rehearse timing and speaking in front of a mirror
- Absorb criticism
- Ensure broad participation from your audience. Don't let one member of the audience dominate the session



- Get to know your audience. Try to remember as many of their names as possible
- Be there at least 20 minutes earlier. It helps you get to know the people, as well as familiarize yourself with the atmosphere

#### **4. Visual aids**

- Don't try to put too much into your slides or flip charts; subtitles are enough. Leave something for you to say
- Be careful not to get in the way between any visual aid and your audience (sometimes they are too polite to tell you)

#### **5. Recommended flow**

- Introduce yourself and why you are here
- Break the ice. Use a good joke, or an anecdote related to the topic. If the group is small, do some games. Check that the audience at the back can hear you, and that they can see you. Check if the audience has difficulty with a specific language
- Set objectives and expectations of the session with your audience
- Body or main points
- Conclusion
- Review objectives, whether achieved or not
- Deliver the handouts, if any

#### **6. Preparing the content**

- Identify and analyze the needs of your audience
- Set the objectives of the training

Research the topic, and research previous trainings on the same or similar topics

- Design the training
- Hint: The concentration curve is at its highest during the introduction and conclusion. You can put important stuff there, as well as try to add more atmosphere and interaction in the body of the training.
- Remember: The training is only a means to achieve action to serve our purpose; to contribute to the development of our countries with an overriding commitment to international understanding and cooperation.

### **How to prepare a training seminar**

- Set objectives for event
- Identify attendee profiles
- Sequence and flow has to make sense
- Make sure enough time is given to explain the agenda fully
- Make sure enough time is allocated for evaluation
- Involve as many externals as possible, especially if your organization doesn't have a competency in their area. This adds value to the content and attracts delegates
- Design the individual sessions within the event



# Check-list for the successful fund-raiser

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

***Make sure your proposal includes:***

Cover page	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executive Summary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benefit Package	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project Benefit Package	<input type="checkbox"/>
Budget	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing material for past projects and programs (including media coverage)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Endorsement letters	<input type="checkbox"/>
Logos on all pages	<input type="checkbox"/>

***Before going to the organization, check that you have:***

Contact name, address and telephone number of organization	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 copies of the proposal in clear folders	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business cards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outline of presentation (for your use)	<input type="checkbox"/>

***After the meeting***

Contact name, address and telephone number of organization	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 copies of the proposal in clear folders	<input type="checkbox"/>

***After the meeting***

-----	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## Checklist for External Meetings

Before contacting external partners, have you checked the electronic database or incubator manager on past collaboration or tips?

Before any meetings are scheduled, at least one of the team members should have attended the training on “**Presenting your organization and External Communications.**”

### Preparations/Prior to meeting:

Documents:

- Project document
- Your organizational profile
- Newspaper clippings
- Business card
- Have you re-confirmed the meeting with the partner at least 24 hours prior to the appointment?
- Have you sufficiently prepared and familiarized yourself with your presentation?

### **During the meeting:**

- Introduction of team members

### **After the meeting:**

- Thank you note (see standard format) sent no more than 48 hours afterwards
- Sent to relevant parties
- Necessary introductions of partner to other projects/groups they are interested in?

### **General Tips:**

- If asked for details about other projects that you are not familiar with, respond by saying that you will connect them with the relevant person, or that you will get the information and get back to them.
- If you have a colleague with you at the meeting, never interrupt or contradict each other in front of the partner.

## General Trends: Opportunities and Challenges in Civil Society in Egypt and the Region

### **Opportunities and positive trends in sectors like youth development**

- Increased interest among youth
- Increased interest among governments
  - To formulate youth policies/strategies
  - To create National Youth Ministries or Councils
- Increased interest and support from regional and international organizations, including:
  - UN and its different organizations
  - Bibliotheca Alexandrina

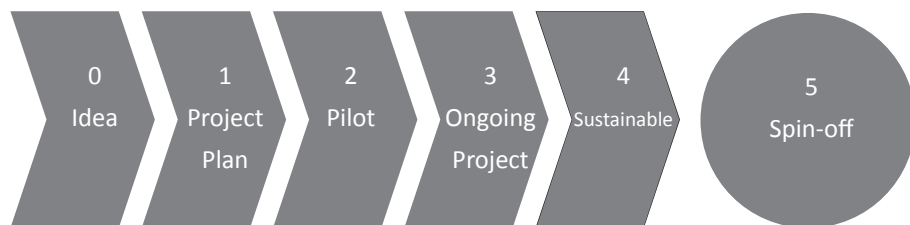
- Save the Children/Ford Foundation/Naseej and Safar fund
- Young Arab Leaders- Dubai
- Anna Lindh Foundation

### **Increased supply and organization of volunteer efforts**

- **Increased foreign interest:**
  - in Egypt and the Middle East
  - in funding youth for volunteering
- **Increased local interest:**
  - Egyptian volunteers and increased sense of social responsibility
- **Increased trend of corporate social responsibility:**
  - Includes corporate volunteerism like Save the Children, INJAZ
- **New channels to promote opportunities:**
  - magazines, bulletin boards, cultural centers
- **Increased institutional support:**
  - Example: Gerhart Center, OSD
  - UN Volunteer Program

Useful links:

- Ashoka
- Skoll Award
- Schwab Foundation



## Nahdet El Mahrousa Project Proposal Form

Adapted from Nahdet El Mahrousa NGO Incubator of Innovative Social Enterprises<sup>3</sup>

(2 pages max without appendices.)

**Project Title:**

**Submitted by:**

**Date submitted:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**1. Executive Summary** (a one page maximum that includes brief descriptions of key information from each section of the proposal. It is better to be written last, after you've completed writing the entire proposal.)

### **2. Background**

**2.1 Problem Statement** (required): briefly state the rationale and the need(s) for the proposed project (ex. For Torath el Ma7rouсах: new generations of Egyptians are beginning to lose their cultural identity and distinctive cultural treasures). Beneficiaries' participation in writing this would be a plus.

**2.2 Project Description:** briefly describe how the project will address the needs identified above and how it fits within NM's Mission.

**2.3 Strength & Innovation** (required): briefly state the team's qualifications that enable them to implement such a project, including past approaches to address these needs and how this idea differs from them, and lessons learned.

**2.4 Networking/Partnerships (required):** list potential partner organizations and networks, and how synergy and linkages could be achieved to maximize project impact. It would be helpful to have a scan of organizations/projects with similar mandates to this project, and how the idea will draw from, build on and complement these efforts.

**2.5 Policy component:** does the project have a clear policy component and propose to change policy for more sustainable change and development?

**3. Target Group/Beneficiaries (required):** indicate type (age, gender, geographic location, educational level, etc) and number of beneficiaries targeted--both primary and secondary (the more focused, the better). You can split it into phases if you think the scope is too big. Explain how they'll be affected, how they'll participate in planning the project.

### **4. Goal & Objectives (required):**

**4.1 Intended Project Result/Outcome:** State the overall project goal, its added value, long term vision.

**4.2 Specific Objectives:** state in an active voice at least three concrete/measurable objectives for the proposed project. Project objectives should be SMART (S= Specific, M=Measurable, A= Attainable, R=Realistic, and T= Time bound) as it refers to the timeframe of your project, the beneficiaries, and the location.

**5. Timeline:** Present a timeline indicating key milestones of achievements with target dates (ex. April 1st-april 15th: brainstorming, April 15th-30th recording the first 3 vendors, etc). Is this

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<sup>3</sup>Courtesy of Nahdet El Mahrousa NGO

a one-phase or multi-phased project? This will provide a framework to measure your progress against. Use the work plan template in annex #2.

**6. Activities (required):** list and describe in details all the activities the team will be doing to realize the project's objectives, answering questions such as: how, why, who, for whom, how many, when, for how long, needed tools, alone or with partners, etc.

**7. Monitoring & Evaluation:** Describe how the effects of the intervention will be measured. List quantitative and qualitative performance indicators (e.g. number of beneficiaries reached, quality of services provided, improved, etc). Where will the information or data come from? Who will collect the data? How and how often will data be collected? That will assist you and the group in measuring performance, evaluating project progress and assessing the impact of your project.

### **8. Management Structure:**

**8.1 Team Structure:** indicate the structure for managing the proposed project in terms of roles & responsibilities of the implementation team, the total number of volunteers needed, brief job description of volunteer vacancies, team leader and team members replacement policy, decision-making processes, coordination, monitoring, needed human resources (inside & outside the team e.g. experts/ advisors to project), required trainings for the team, etc.

**8.2 Logistical Management:** describe logistical arrangements needed, if any (ex. for mentoring program: we need a filing system, for street vendors: tapes, cassette recorder, etc) and equipment.

**8.3 Administrative and Legal Requirements:** indicate any administrative/legal requirements for project implementation, such as permits, registration, fees, etc.

**9. Sustainability:** refers to the ability of a project to continue once the incubation period ends.

**10. Financial Feasibility:** Describe the financial resources the project will require. The costs to be covered by NM and the costs or resources to be covered by the community, local authorities, and/or any other partners should all be listed. Please include a budget according to the attached budget form (annex # 3). Also, identify your plan to raise needed funds if resources are not available.

**11. Risks:** List and analyze the risks which may constrain achievement of the anticipated results. Specify the measures required to minimize these risks.

**12. Nahdet El Mahrousa's Support (required):** What is the support you expect from Nahdet El Mahrousa? (ex. human resources, administrative, research, financial, etc).

### **Appendices with Nahdet El Mahrousa project proposal Form:**

1. Logical Framework
2. Work plan
3. Budget

## **1. Logical Framework**

The Logical Framework is a tool for management and planning. It is an ‘aid to thinking’, as it allows information to be analyzed and organized in a structured way, so that important questions can be asked, weaknesses identified and decision makers can make informed decisions based on their improved understanding of the project rationale, its intended objectives and the means by which objectives will be achieved.

There are many different ways to structure your Logical Framework; however, using a matrix is usually the most commonly utilized format for development initiatives. The following is the format that we suggest you utilize when submitting your Logical Framework matrix:

## Sample Logical Framework <sup>4</sup>

Project Description	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumption
<p><b>Goal</b></p> <p>The broad development impact to which the project <b>contributes</b>—at a national or sectoral level (provides the link to the policy and/or sector program context)</p>	<p>Measures the extent to which a contribution to the overall objective has been made. Used during evaluation. However, it is often not appropriate for the project to try and collect this information.</p>	<p>Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it (including who and when/how frequently).</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p><b>Objective(s)</b></p> <p>The development outcome at the end of the project – more specifically, the expected benefits to the target group(s)</p>	<p>Helps answer the question 'How will we know if the objectives have been achieved?' Should include appropriate details of quantity, quality and time.</p>	<p>Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it (including who and when/how frequently).</p>	<p>Assumptions (factors outside project management's control) that may impact on the objectives – Intermediary results linkage</p>
<p><b>Intermediary Result(s)</b></p> <p>The direct/tangible results (goods and services) that the project delivers, and which are largely under project management's control</p>	<p>Helps answer the question 'How will we know if the intermediary results have been delivered?' Should include appropriate details of quantity, quality and time.</p>	<p>Sources of information and methods used to collect and report it (including who and when/how frequently).</p>	<p>Assumptions (factors outside project management's control) that may impact on the objectives – Intermediary results linkage</p>

Make sure to add rows to capture the different objectives and intermediary results that you will add. However please note that a project usually has one overarching goal. Also, please note that the Logical Framework is not a static document, but rather is changeable depending on the actual changes in the project as it evolves. The team should therefore use the logical framework as a guide for managing their project.

<sup>4</sup> Utilized definitions from the European Commission, Aid Delivery Methods report, March 2004

## 2. Work Plan

In submitting your project’s work plan, we expect a general sense of your progress over the lifetime of the project under the Nahdet El Mahrousa incubator program. We ask you to develop and submit a Gantt chart detailing your anticipated progress quarterly.

Title Of Project:														
Goal														
Project description	Key Activities	Person	Yr 1				Yr 2				Yr 3			
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
Intermediary result 1														
	1.1													
	1.2													
	1.3													
	1.4													
	1.5													
Intermediary result 2														
	2.1													
	2.2													
	2.3													
Intermediary result 3														
	3.1													
	3.2													
	3.3													



### 3. Project Budget Format (in Egyptian pounds)

Based on your Logical Framework, you need to put together a budget that will allow you to successfully carry out your intermediary results for the project and ultimately help you achieve your objective(s).

ITEM	Unit	Quantity	Cost per Unit	Total Cost	NM	Matching Contributions
<b>1. Direct Costs</b>						
<b>Subtotal</b>						
<b>2. In-Kind Contributions</b>						
<b>Subtotal</b>						
<b>3. Other Costs (please specify)</b>						
<b>Subtotal</b>						
Expected Revenues						
<b>Grand Total</b>						

Community Tool Box

<http://ctb.ku.edu/>

Management Library –

<http://www.managementhelp.org/>

Useful manuals:

There's also a series of brief «how to» manuals in Arabic, developed by the Egypt NGO Support Center (<http://www.egyptngosupport.org/>)

## **Annex III: Supporting Innovations:**

### **Setting up an innovation fund in the community!**

Just as innovation receives support on the global level through mechanisms and institutions like the World Bank's Development Marketplace, it is very important to have similar mechanisms that nourish innovation at the community level. One idea would be to set up a community innovation fund<sup>5</sup>.

#### **What is an innovation fund?**

It is a competitive fund with a selection/screening mechanism, based on set criteria, priorities and availability of funds, that allocates a 'refundable sum' or grants to mobilize funds for useful ideas and pilot projects. It could be used to cover expenses needed for: 1) small pilot projects (for example, testing projects on small scale), 2) research and surveys needed for start-ups, 3) feasibility studies for large projects, and 4) creative and innovative economic development initiatives.

#### **It could help:**

- Support innovation towards breaking the cycle of poverty
- Empower community members' participation in solving their own problems
- Empower current/new volunteers to be innovative and creative in approaching development and challenging traditional approaches
- Increase chances of success for new projects
- Lower the risk of failure of new ideas by encouraging thorough studies of any new projects
- Clearly communicate that we're still experimenting (microcredit isn't the only way!)
- Put unused resources (money in the bank) to use towards core objectives of economic development and empowerment
- Position your organization
- Setting up a Research and Development model for other NGOs: Just as many companies have a "Research and Development" department, setting up such a fund would establish a model for NGOs in Egypt to be supportive of creative and innovative pilot projects and concepts.

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<sup>5</sup> More about the World Bank's Development Marketplace at:  
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEVMARKETPLACE/4416738-1196093766795/21583185/DM.htm>



**John D. Gerhart Center  
for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement**

**Ehaab Abdou** is a social entrepreneur who has spent more than 15 years working to energize young Egyptians to contribute to their country's development. He is a co-founder of the Fat'het Kheir and Nahdet El Mahrousa ([www.nahdetmasr.org](http://www.nahdetmasr.org)) NGOs. He also co-founded and was the first president of the Federation of Egyptian Youth NGOs.

This Guide presents a collection of reflections and tips for anyone aspiring to start new development projects or social enterprises. While some of the challenges will be similar any where in the world, Ehaab shares here his pointers for success within the contemporary Arab social, economic and political context.

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