PROJECT INFORMATION SHEETS

18 Emerging Social Eco-Innovations in Egypt

Selected initiatives for the SwitchMed Civil Society Empowerment Programme’s “Grassroots initiatives on social eco-innovation” workshop

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at SEKEM Ecovillage (Egypt)

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1. Make your rooftop paradise!
(خلي سطح بيتك جنة!)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Engaging children and retired citizens in roof top gardening, for beautification, fun, and local food production.

Description:
In Qena and the neighboring Sohag, they have been raising awareness about roof top gardening and implementing demos as a registered foundation: Cleaning roof tops, engaging people (housewives, NGOs, children, elderly, potential entrepreneurs, etc), producing organic product, implementing sustainable practices in the design and operation. Several demos are already implemented.

The visionaries:
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Qena
2. Palm Products
(منتجات النخيل)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Benefiting from the surplus of palm tree and dates resources and wastes in the city to encourage sustainable generation of job opportunities for youth through training.

Description:
Palm trees are abundant in Abulreish village in Qena, and their waste is largely abandoned. This initiative idea aims to use this opportunity to reduce unemployment while addressing an environmental issue. Palm tree and date waste is converted into diverse products and handicrafts through youth in the village. This idea stems from the local needs and is championed by the local NGO to provide the platform for awareness, training, and assistance with marketing and networking.

The visionaries:
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Aswan
3. Hand in Hand
(يد بيد)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Raising awareness and engaging citizens in cleanups and greening the public urban environment.

Description:
Recognizing the deteriorating quality of public spaces in Qena and the interest of citizens to collaborate to address littering problems, they innovated in their approach to traditional clean-ups. They follow their clean-ups with tree-planting activities in the same areas that were cleaned up, thereby motivating people to maintain the new space. Networking with the local authorities further enables the multi-stakeholder collaboration. They aim to continue and expand their existing activities.

The visionaries:
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4. Giran

Social & Environmental Cause:
Providing a virtual platform to enable on-ground collaboration and civic engagement in neighborhoods and shared urban spaces.

Description:
This initiative, incubated in a developmental foundation in Egypt, is built around a mobile app: Giran. It connects community service-providers with home owners and tenants in certain neighborhoods for better collaboration in the improvement of the shared built environment. Giran is based on 2 pillars; access to info and collective actions; both are enabled through a collaborative network of civic organizations, public & private sector.

The visionaries & teammates:
Walaa Dowidar; Laila El-Gueruetly

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Cairo
5. Sorting at Source - Menya

Social & Environmental Cause:
Promoting sorting-at-source at the village-level and improving livelihoods of garbage collectors.

Description:
Initiated by locals in four villages in Menya, this initiative, organized by a registered foundation works towards improving the status of garbage collectors and raising awareness to enable sorting at source at the households. A novel approach in the villages is to further use the organic portion of wastes to produce biogas, a sustainable source of heat energy.

The visionaries:
Mariem Gorg; Samih Usama Hegab

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Menya
6. Go Bike (جو بايك)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Promoting cycling as an environmental and healthy mode of transport in all governorates of Egypt.

Description:
The initiative, with a team of 25, promotes cycling and organizes thematic cycling events (historical areas, museum visits, nature, etc). They are based in Cairo but have organized events in many other governorates as well (Alexandria, Ismaileya, and many others). It is expanding its volunteer base and geographical coverage with time. Events include provision of rental bikes with minimal costs to encourage people who don’t own bikes yet.

The visionaries:
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7. A Clean Environment

Social & Environmental Cause:
Taking advantage of the momentum of a local waste crisis to start an extensive follow-up awareness and preventive campaign for a cleaner environment.

Description:
An initiative coming into live in reaction to the growing problem of uncollected waste and open-burning causing episodes of intense local air pollution in Koum El-Arab village. With a team of 35 local youth, and under the umbrella of local NGO, extensive cleanups and community engagement has been achieved and plans for further expansion are in process. The idea is to build on this momentum and start an ongoing awareness campaign about waste management and beautification, turning the crisis into an opportunity.

The visionaries:
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Sohag
8. Rooftop Gardening - Assiut
(زراعة أسطح)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Taking advantage for the vast spaces of unused rooftops to provide capacity building grounds for residents to learn rooftop gardening and fish cultivation to improve their living.

Description:
The non-profit capacity building initiative trains youth and women on starting rooftop gardening businesses and aquaponics. The initiative shall build on awareness seminars in collaboration with the local university in Assiut and the Arab Union for Sustainable Development.

The visionaries:
Randa Ragheb.

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9. Together Our World is Prettier
(دنيتنا أحلى بينا)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Integrating environmental activities with art and aesthetics.

Description:
Engaging youth from within the member base and from the network of volunteers in neighborhood cleanups and beautification activities. Beautification is not only through greenery and cleanups but activities that improve the aesthetics of neighborhoods such as artistic interventions including painting murals and houses creatively.

The visionaries:
Faten Said Abbas.

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10. Bike Stop
(موقف دراجة)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Promoting cycling in Zamalek, an urban Nile island in Cairo for healthier and environmentally-aware living.

Description:
Bike stop is a manual bike-sharing system in Zamalek district, in Cairo that shall consist of two stations in the trial phase of the project. It will enable customers (students) to rent public bikes from a station and return them to any one of them so that they can use bikes as a mean of transportation daily through monthly memberships.

The visionaries:
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Cairo

UNIDO  UNEP  Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production  CEDARE
11. WTDS for waste recycling
(إعادة تدوير)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Build capacity of individuals and organizations in waste reuse, recycling, and up-cycling.

Description:
The initiative aims to build a community that exchange experiences and benefits to reach sustainability. It helps both corporations and individuals understand the importance of waste management in their spaces and training on how to recycle, re-use, or up-cycle into creative artistic products. The novelty is that the creativity in recycling shall be fostered from within the community itself not the initiative. This bottom-up approach deepens people’s engagement and therefore, the project sustainability.

The visionaries:
Rafif Sharif, Ahmed El-Hadeka

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12. Green Deals
(الأعمال الخضراء)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Create a platform to foster collaboration for generating local solutions for waste reduction and management.

Description:
The initiative aims to build a community that exchange experiences and benefits to reach sustainability. It helps both corporations and individuals understand the importance of waste management in their spaces and training on how to recycle, re-use, or upcycle into creative artistic products and simultaneously reducing food waste. It is in its early idea-creation phase.

The visionaries:
Osama Bilal.

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13. Collect & Sort at Source - Gharbeya

Social & Environmental Cause:
Training youth on skills necessary for waste management businesses, addressing unemployment and environmental challenges together.

Description:
They train and raise awareness about entrepreneurial opportunities in waste management. The initiative stems from the observed unemployment problem and the wasted resources found in abandoned waste of different types (municipal, agricultural, construction debris, etc), leading the NGO to tailor approaches to the local context and are not restricted to municipal waste only.

The visionaries:
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Gharbeya
14. New X Old
(قديم x جديد)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Training women to upcycle old clothes into carpets and artistic handcrafts while mitigating the threats of unsafe waste disposal of fabrics in the village of Koum Hamada.

Description:
In the village of Koum Hamada in Qena, about 900 families dispose of their old clothes and fabrics in an unsafe and unorganized way, including disposal through open burning or in waterways or use as fuel in ovens of informal staircase industries. Together with locals, New X Old project gathered clothes from 100 families (2 tons of fabric) and trained 25 girls in carpet-making and upcycling handcrafts. Their work was later featured in an international competition and received a first-place award.

The visionaries:
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15. Green Kids
(الفتى الأخضر)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Conditioning street children to gain environmental, social, and aesthetic awareness.

Description:
Green Kids aims to provide space for educating and training disadvantaged children through interactive activities to boost their awareness about environmental, social and artistic/aesthetic values. It focuses on street children and shall assist them in exploring their hidden skills and abilities through self-exploration and arts. The initiative is in its idea creation phase and stems from the challenges observed by the community in Ezbet El-Safih, an informal settlement in Cairo.

The visionaries:
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Cairo
16. The young environmental contractor
(المقاول الصغير)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Simultaneously building capacity to create jobs while solving waste management problems in Qena.

Description:
The initiative is based on the growing problem of unemployment in Qena. Youth have realized the potential job opportunities that can be created through waste management and recycling but they found that they have a significant gap in training, whether in technicalities or in business development. The non-profit initiative therefore aims to develop a training program for youth to enable them to start their own businesses and create job opportunities for themselves and their peers. It shall later collaborate with governmental training agencies once the proof-of-concept is established to ensure a ripple effect.

The visionaries:
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17. Green City
المدينة الخضراء

Social & Environmental Cause:
Spreading greenery while protecting groundwater in the city for the people and the environment.

Description:
The initiative aims to build on the momentum of local initiatives in Cairo concerned about the cleanliness of streets and the lack of greenery. It shall develop an educational and awareness campaign that is developed by the people and for the people in order to engage them in the project while implementing actual greening interventions. Awareness about water use and management as well as protection of groundwater shall be integrated to ensure that the invisible impacts on the environment are taken into account as well. Spreading greenery shall also occupy the space that is otherwise filled by open dumpsites.

The visionaries:
Tamer Nassar.

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18. Help the Environment - Qena
(ساعدوا البيئة)

Social & Environmental Cause:
Promoting recycling, reuse, and upcycling to reduce waste and improve people’s employability skills.

Description:
The initiative in Qena gathers 20 local volunteers that are collaborating through a local NGO to tap into a waste management opportunity in their city; there is an abundance of unused clothing that can be used as a resources for new products. They aim to train locals to collect and recycle their waste fabrics. Through the process, the trainees

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