

A holistic approach to empowering youth – who mostly lack the basic skills and resources needed to secure their livelihoods – is needed more than ever before

# Youth Economic Empowerment Initiative

Egypt Network for Integrated Development

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**Policy Brief 025**

# **YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES<sup>1</sup>**

## **Introduction**

One of the biggest challenges that Egypt is facing is to institutionalise youth engagement and to build the capacities of its young generations in order to sustain their effective participation in their country's future. Hence, a holistic approach to empowering youth – who mostly lack the basic skills and resources needed to secure their livelihoods – is needed more than ever before. The Social Contract Center (SCC) has designed and launched the Youth Economic Empowerment Programme (YEEP) in Egypt's Poorest Villages, which combines personal skills development, employment and entrepreneurship trainings, as well as hands-on community service initiatives for young people aged 18-29 residing in rural areas.

Being out of the formal education system (whether drop-outs or graduates) and with no prospects of improving their social situation due to their lack of basic skills and know-how, these young people are highly liable to being caught in an irreversible spiral of marginalisation and exclusion. Therefore, there is an urgent need to set up a system for re-integrating these young people economically and socially into the community. Based on the lessons learnt from international best practices – as demonstrated below - the YEEP model has a strong potential to provide such an opportunity to Egypt's rural youth in a sustainable manner.

On the international level, Second Chance Schools constitute a model which shares similar objectives to the YEEP, and will therefore be looked into in more detail within the scope of this paper. Piloted in a number of EU member states, Second Chance Schools are intended to set up a system for social and economic inclusion of young people who are not being taken care of by existing institutions. These include youth who are outside of the formal education system and lack the skills needed for sustainable employment, as well as active citizenship. Accordingly, the adaptability and transferability of this integrated model as a potential national programme that can be replicated and up-scaled will be examined in the following sections.

## **I- CASE STUDY: THE SCC YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME**

The Social Contract Center (SCC) Youth Economic Empowerment Programme (YEEP) offers employment-generating, capacity-building opportunities to young people in Egypt's poorest villages. These include basic trainings on personal and employability skills, allowing the participants to not only find jobs, but more importantly to retain them. In addition, a brief orientation on the concepts of self-employment and entrepreneurship is introduced to the programme participants. More importantly, the programme design relies on the concept of establishing a

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“contract” with the programme participants, i.e. they are expected to fulfill certain tasks in return of the training opportunities they are offered. Following a one-week training on the planning of door-to-door awareness campaigns, programme participants are required to implement one-week campaigns on urgent environmental and health concerns relevant to their local communities. Accordingly, the programme will eventually lead to the empowerment of its participants and their local communities both economically and socially.

SCC has formed a consortium bringing together governmental and non-governmental organizations with a clear division of tasks and a work plan, allowing each of the partners to participate in the various programme components within their own mandates. This approach aims to fill any gaps and to prevent duplications caused by the absence of a well-coordinated network of partners sharing similar objectives. For the pilot phase, these organizations included the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme (TVET), The Social Fund for Development, the CIDA-funded Egypt Enterprise Development Project (EEDP), Alashanek Ya Balady for Sustainable Development (AYB), the Ministry of Youth, the Education for Employment Foundation (EFE), and local NGOs with a track record of delivering capacity-building programmes in the target governorates. SCC, with its network of partners, has implemented the programme’s pilot phase over two cycles, both in the local unit of Kassassin-al-sharq in the Governorate of Sharqeya, in 2011/2012.

### **A. Programme Structure:**

The YEOP components were designed as follows:

#### **1- Economic Empowerment Opportunities:**

##### **(a) Skills Assessment and Identification of Employment Opportunities**

This preparatory programme component has been carried out by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme (TVET) in the pilot phase. On the one hand, programme participants are interviewed in order to assess their vocational skills. In addition, a career consultation process to guide the programme participants towards pursuing self-employment or direct employment paths also takes place. On the other hand, employment opportunities in industrial zones located in the programme's target governorates are identified. Consequently, the vocational skills that job-seekers need to acquire for already-existing job vacancies are also categorized.

##### **(b) Personal, Employability and Entrepreneurship Skills Training**

SCC has developed two training manuals for the programme’s personal (communication, presentation, negotiation, team-building and leadership skills) and employability skills components (a six-day and a four-day training programme respectively), in addition to delivering training of trainers workshops to a pool of professional trainers on both manuals. EEDP contributed to the programme by

developing a training manual on the basics of self-employment, tailored to the target group's background, needs, and interests, to be delivered over two days.

(c) Training for Self-employment

The Social Fund for Development (SFD) generally provides training programmes on planning and managing small and micro income-generating enterprises. The SFD's non-financial services include consultations on investment opportunities, training courses on business plan preparation, and management of small and micro projects relevant to the local communities in question. The SFD has agreed to offer its standard services to the programme participants in their villages, and subsequently, participants will be eligible to receiving loans provided by the SFD to start up their own micro and small projects. Alternatively, Alashanek Ya Balady for Sustainable Development, a local youth-led NGO, offers micro loans up to a maximum of 10,000 EGP to programme graduates, in addition to technical assistance services to loan-seekers.

(d) Technical and Vocational Training for Direct Employment

Based on the skills assessment and the employment opportunities identified at the onset of the programme, the TVET Reform Programme is to provide technical and vocational training courses on the skills requested by the employers, who will in turn commit to the direct employment of programme graduates upon completion of the trainings. Alternatively, in-house vocational training is to be provided by the employers.

## **2- Contributions to Local Community Development**

In order for programme participants to become eligible to applying for any of the above-mentioned capacity-building programme components, they are required to commit to delivering specific community services. Following a short training on the design and implementation of door-to-door health and environment awareness campaign provided by an NGO with a track record of capacity-building programmes in the target villages, participants will be required to implement awareness campaigns on the most urgent health, hygiene and environmental concerns relevant to their local communities. Each participant will have to commit to a minimum duration of seven days for each campaign.

## **B. Key Lessons Learnt**

The following sections briefly outline the main lessons learnt, based on the monitoring and evaluation of the programme's pilot phase implemented in Sharkeya governorate. The methodology used to assess the lessons learnt included a combination of questionnaires developed for each of the programme components, group discussions with programme participants, records of attendance throughout the programme, reports submitted by the programme partners and trainers, as well as video documentations.

While the YEEP programme is designed with the overall goal of empowering underprivileged youth residing in Egypt's poorest villages both economically and socially through capacity-building and job creation opportunities, the strategic objective of implementing the pilot phase in Sharqeya is rather to assess the effectiveness of the programme structure and content, as well as the development of successful partnerships between concerned stakeholders and the synchronization of their efforts to achieve more efficient and cost-effective results.

## **1- Overall Findings**

- (a) The YEEP pilot phase has successfully reached its target beneficiary group to a great extent.

As mentioned above, the YEEP targets literate young people aged 18-29 years residing in the poorest villages, based on the results of a needs assessment mapping conducted by SCC in some of the villages identified as Egypt's poorest. The villages in the local unit of Kassassin-al-sharq have been ranked among the poorest 151, along with others in Sharqeya, Beheira, and four other governorates Upper Egypt. It is noteworthy that civil society organizations in Upper Egypt are significantly more active and experienced than those in the Delta, and consequently, this is where most of the development aid funds and efforts are channeled. Accordingly, the conscious decision of implementing the pilot phase of the YEEP in Sharqeya has certainly filled a gap that has been overlooked by many development stakeholders to a great extent.

According to the programme database, approx. 90% of the participants are aged between 18-29 years, 59.8% male and 40.2 % female, thereby achieving a satisfactory gender balance. Given that the capacity-building training components rather address blue-collar employment levels, the fact that over 80% of the programme participants are graduates of technical schools or have only completed their basic education signifies a success in reaching the programme's principal target group. Additionally, over 50% of the participants have never been employed before; and 75% have never had access to social insurance or medical insurance benefits following their years of schooling.

- (b) YEEP has achieved notable improvements in its target group's basic skill levels and knowledge base.

It is evident from the participants' evaluation of the programme, particularly the personal skills component, that they have acquired skills and experiences that they have never been exposed to before, such as public speaking and working in teams, as well as giving and taking constructive criticism. These skills have significantly boosted the participants' self-confidence and helped them cope with conflict situations in a mature and civilized manner throughout the programme, in addition to their increased

willingness to translate what they have learnt into effective actions on the personal, social and professional level. It is noteworthy that 94% of participants in the first cycle demonstrated their determination to apply their newly-acquired skills to contribute to the development of their local communities.

Additionally, post-assessment questionnaires indicated a significant increase in the participants' knowledge level compared to the pre-assessment, namely an average of 70%, 14%, and 45% following the employability skills, entrepreneurship, and the awareness campaigns trainings respectively.

- (c) The establishment of a well-coordinated network of partners has led to more effective outreach activities in the target communities.

As mentioned above, SCC relied on a consortium of governmental and non-governmental organizations in the planning and implementation of YEEP. This consortium was formed in an attempt to insure more efficient service delivery to the programme's target beneficiaries by filling gaps and overcoming obstacles preventing the partners from fulfilling their respective mandates in an optimal manner.

One of the most significant gaps identified during the early planning phase of the programme is the absence of linkages to the local communities that many partners are mandated to work with, as well as the lack of reliable and updated needs assessment studies identifying the actual needs of these communities (as identified by the community members rather than for them). By capitalizing on SCC's previous programmes and partnerships with local NGOs and grassroots in the target villages, the YEEP network was able to facilitate the outreach process for many partner organizations.

However, as with any "experiment" involving a number of "catalysts", YEEP has struggled to embed the concept of working within a network in some of its partners' internal culture and operations, as will be demonstrated in the following sections.

- (d) Most struggles occurred due to [the lack of] values embedded in the target group's culture and mindset.

It was noteworthy at all stages of the programme implementation that many young people in the local unit of Kassassin-al-sharq are somewhat resistant to the idea of building their own capacities, and more importantly to recognizing the necessity of acquiring and retaining jobs for longer periods than they are used to. This behavior is possibly attributed to the fact that very few – if any – similar interventions are executed in these communities. Additionally, group discussions have revealed that most young people depend on daily labour to secure their livelihoods, and are therefore

not accustomed to long-term contracts or to any other forms of employment. Also, it was noted that many of the participants' families own pieces of land – even if significantly small – which has contributed to the lack of pro-active attitude among youth in these villages.

## **2- Summary of partnership-based achievements**

- YEEP was partially successful in filling significant gaps in service delivery through a well-coordinated network of partners, thereby achieving a more integrated programme.
- Combining capacity-building programme components with employment opportunities.
- Combining direct employment and self-employment opportunities in one programme to provide alternative routes for the target beneficiaries.
- Providing an assessment stage at the onset of the programme to guide the participants in choosing the career paths most appropriate to their abilities.
- Engaging more than one partner in each employment component to provide a space for the programme graduates to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each option and to decide on what best meets their needs (numerous private sector companies from different industrial sectors in the direct employment alternative; SFD and AYB in the self-employment alternative).
- YEEP was most successful where it fully engaged local leaderships.
- The outreach to the programme's target beneficiaries was only successful through the involvement of a local NGO with a track record of providing similar programmes in the target governorate, and more importantly through the active engagement of natural and official leaders in each village in all stages of the programme.
- YEEP was successful in linking partner organizations to grassroots NGOs in the target villages.
- YEEP provided a platform to grassroots NGOs in the target villages to explore potential cooperation opportunities with programme partners (such as AYB), thereby gaining increased visibility and capacity-building opportunities (indirect beneficiaries).

## **3- Limitations and Obstacles**

### (a) Partnership-Based Challenges:

Although most stakeholders realise the continuous duplications of efforts and the prevalence of the "reinventing the wheel" approach, YEEP struggled to embed the concept of working within an integrated network in the culture and operations of some of its partner organizations. Consequently, many attempts of bringing on-

board organizations with similar mandates to build synergies between their efforts have been unsuccessful on a number of occasions. It has been especially challenging for the programme coordination team to negotiate funding opportunities with both governmental bodies and private sector foundations - whether for the implementation of the various capacity-building components or for funding the programme graduates' micro-enterprises.

Moreover, it has been especially challenging for the YEEP network to hold the private sector employers to their initial expressions of interest in recruiting programme graduates. It has been noted during both cycles of the pilot phase that employers do not commit to the number of job opportunities offered at the onset of the programme, which has led to very negative impressions of the programme as a whole and caused a significant trust issue between the programme graduates and representative of the YEEP network.

Furthermore, due to the rigidity in rules and regulations of most partner organizations, there are no special programmes tailored to the needs and living conditions of young people living in the poorest villages.

(b) Financial Implications (Cost-Effectiveness):

Although the initial plan for the implementation of the YEEP relied on building partnerships with concerned governmental and non-governmental bodies to fund and implement the programme's various capacity-building components, the resistance that some of the approached organizations have demonstrated and the fact that most agencies with track records of providing excellent capacity-building programmes are from the NGO sector (i.e. non-profit organizations relying on external funding) have compelled the programme management to sub-contract these services. It is worth mentioning that successful partnerships have been built at the onset of the YEEP pilot phase with the TVET Reform Programme and the Egypt Enterprise Development Programme (EEDP), who committed to both funding and delivering their respective programme components.

## **II- INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE: SECOND CHANCE SCHOOLS**

The following sections draw on the lessons learnt from **Second Chance Schools Project** piloted in a number of EU Member States, briefly outlining its inception and development, as well as attempting to reflect on how such an initiative can be adapted to the Egyptian context.

Second Chance Schools were first set up as a European Commission pilot project in response to the White Paper 'Teaching and Learning: Towards a Learning Society



(European Commission, 1995). The project intended to provide capacity-building opportunities for young people who lacked the skills necessary to enter the job market or to re-integrate in education (European Commission, 2001). Accordingly, the main objective of this project is not to provide qualifications as other educational institutions do, but rather to cater to the needs of these young people as a whole, with all their talents and failings. Similarly to the YEOP, the schools only accepted those whose attendance at school was no longer compulsory. Although no upper age limit was set, in practice the age of 25 was a common 'ceiling'.

Initially, pilot schemes were set up in the following countries: Germany, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, and the UK.

The particularities of each school were to depend to a large extent on local and national circumstances but some '**general**' **characteristics** were considered important:

- 1- A committed partnership with local authorities, social services, associations and the private sector, the latter in particular with a view to offering possible training places and jobs to pupils;
- 2- A teaching and counseling approach focused on the needs, wishes and abilities of individual pupils; stimulation of active learning on their part;
- 3- Flexible teaching modules allowing combinations of basic skills development (numeracy, literacy, social skills, etc.) with practical training in and by enterprises;
- 4- A central role for the acquisition of skills in and through ICT and new technologies (European Commission, 2001).

## **A. Management and Funding of Second Chance Schools:**

The Commission supported each project that was accepted into the pilot, providing them with both advisors and networking opportunities. They also aimed to place Second Chance schooling on the political agenda of all member states. They did not fund the projects, although they did help to identify sources – and most of the projects were funded through the EU Structural Funds. A range of other funding types was secured for each project, including private, national and local government funding (Second Chance UK, 2012).

Organisations and institutions that are responsible for managing, funding and setting up second chance education schemes vary from national government to a wide range of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In most cases, a mix of stakeholders is involved in the governance and management of second chance schemes. For example, Matosinhos Second Chance School in Portugal opened as a partnership between the Association for Second Chance Education (AE2O, a local NGO), the local authority which provides the site, and the government education

ministry. While some of these schemes are implemented as national initiatives across a number of sites in the country (e.g. Fairbridge Centres in the UK), others are unique to a specific location. The funding for second chance education is often linked to national and local government funding streams related to education and/or employment, with relatively small funds provided by the private sector. Some of the programmes, such as the Leeds project in the UK, were set up as 'projects' with heavy emphasis on state and European funding, so were therefore subject to policy and funding changes – in many cases, there was little or no large investment from the private sector. Leeds itself was funded almost entirely by European and government money. However, it lost its funding after a successful run of 7 years due to council downsizing (Second Chance UK, 2012).

Therefore, relationships with employers have made a huge difference to the success of some Second Chance Schools by not only providing financial support and training and employment opportunities, but also by sending 'a message of hope and serious intent' (European Commission, 2001).

## **B. Second Chance School Programmes:**

All schools alternate practical experience with education, although the forms of implementation differ. Educational programmes include methods of reacquiring life skills, upgrading basic knowledge, technical knowledge and skills required in the workplace, advice on health and hygiene, in addition to learning how to tackle everyday tasks such as going through administrative formalities. A main component of the project is combating 'technological illiteracy' by teaching technology as a subject or by using it as a tool for learning. Nevertheless, an important component of re-engaging individuals is their **initial assessment** and the associated processes of developing objectives and drawing up action plans. The attention given to establishing the relationships, getting to know the programme, and the development of personal development plans contributed to the active engagement and motivation for learning. These are most effective when conceived as a single coherent package (European Commission, 2013).

Moreover, programmes are not limited to skills development for employment, but are also hubs of community activity and have become an integral part of local development projects. Health, culture, and citizenship dimensions have also been integrated in the curricula. Noteworthy is the fact that the main concept behind these schemes is to treat each young person as a whole, with his aptitudes and shortcomings, allowing young people to become active players in their own personal and professional development. Therefore, teams with experience in education, training, career guidance and counseling are engaged in the programmes.

## **C. Initial Results of the Pilot (2000):**

In 2000, the established schools enrolled 4000 young people who had previously not engaged with education, employment, or training. At this stage, the dropout rate was only 6% and 90% of young people involved said that the schools had dramatically improved their situation (European Commission, 2001). Whilst job placements can be confirmed as soon as a school-leaver enters the labour market, further analysis is needed to determine whether placements are sustained and lead to long-term social integration. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that Second Chance Schools do indeed offer – as their name suggests they should – a second chance to young people who risk being left behind (European Commission, 2001). The European Association of Second Chance Schools has been set up to provide support and assistance to the schools, promote the concept in Europe and beyond, and to maintain links between the different schools (Second Chance UK, 2012).

Even at the early stage of 2001, the pilot project had impacted upon education policy, with more financial resources in member states being directed into policies and actions dealing with social and educational exclusion. The effect of Second Chance Schools is also larger than this:

*"If 94% of dropouts can be rescued in a 'second chance' scheme then the question of whether the dropping out could have been prevented in the 'first chance' corresponding to mainstream education becomes critical. By now, Member States accept that challenge and, during the operational period of the Second Chance Schools, have demonstrated increasing willingness to translate this acknowledgement into action in their national education policies. Part of their action will be preventive and include changes in the way schools function, while another part will involve strategies to reintegrate those who have already dropped out. The Second Chance Schools embody good practice relevant to both strategies – the methods of rescuing and reintegrating young people can often be just as valuable as a preventive measure. Prevention is often a "proactive rescue". (European Commission, 2001, p.28)*

The formal settings have continued to flourish in Europe, and more state funding has been secured for these downstream measures, creating more sustainability for projects that were previously reliant on more precarious funding. The implementations vary according to the situation in the country, but the basic structure is very similar – and the aim, of providing education, training and support to young people who disengaged during the transition period, is the same (Second Chance UK, 2012).

#### **D. Key Lessons Learnt**

A key aspect of re-engaging learners is to first identify and track those who have left the system. Second chance schemes have found that **having roots in the local community** and being able to **raise awareness** and communicate via a number of networks is important in this context. Sites of the project have been identified in line with the local needs of the communities and are concentrated in areas where high unemployment rates go hand in hand with clusters of

marginalized youth. Second chance schemes have typically achieved the most success where they emphasised their distinctiveness from mainstream schools. Schemes have generally been careful to avoid negative associations with initial education, whilst at the same time ensuring that the learning opportunities are presented as a credible pathway, which might include gaining a formal qualification (European Commission, 2013).

Furthermore, Skills development has to be relevant to the local market needs, and therefore the strong involvement of employer organizations (large, medium or small enterprises) is essential. Well-established links with local authorities, employment agencies, enterprises, educational establishments, research centres and universities, and NGOs have to be formed.

In short, Strong local partnerships and the clear commitment of local authorities, employer organizations and CSOs are the keys to success.

Moreover, the establishment of the schools has to be accompanied by significant reforms in the formal education system and measures to minimise school dropout rates, as well as issues of exclusion linked to school failure.

### **III- PROVIDING "A SECOND CHANCE" TO EGYPT'S MARGINALISED YOUTH**

As outlined above, a number of overlapping points between the YEEP and the Second Chance School models can be identified and capitalized on. Both projects target groups with very similar characteristics, and both share similarities in terms of structure, factors contributing to their success in certain areas, as well as challenges and obstacles that need to be overcome.

When comparing the lessons learnt from the Second Chance Schools project pilot and the key challenges identified in the YEEP pilot, a number of questions can be answered on how certain obstacles can be overcome.

On the implementation level, the YEEP experience has proven that, as much as it is imperative for the government to provide a conducive environment, such interventions cannot be sustained without the commitment of concerned stakeholders from all sectors – the government, civil society, and the private sector. In the case of Second Chance Schools, the European Commission has played an active role in putting the model on the member states' political agendas. It is therefore imperative for the Government of Egypt (GoE) to secure the necessary enabling environment, and to encourage the active engagement of all concerned stakeholders by providing incentives. Only then can more efficient and cost-effective means to managing and funding such a programme be secured.

Furthermore, Second Chance Schools have been most successful when developed at the local level, with local partnerships and an understanding of local needs.

Similarly, the YEEP model has been most successful when planned and implemented in close collaboration with its target local communities, capitalizing on the experiences and knowledge of local grassroots organisations and natural community leaders. Accordingly, it is crucial for the GoE to follow a decentralized approach in promoting youth economic empowerment, as well as to establish local management structures to serve this purpose.

Several commitments, policies, and programs promoting youth economic and social empowerment have to be prioritized at national and local levels, and more importantly the implementation frameworks and tools required to translate them into the desired outcomes. Also, economic empowerment of youth cannot be achieved through fragmented and isolated interventions. The lessons learnt from the YEEP Pilot Phase and the Second Chance Schools Project piloted in EU Member States provide the basis for the development of a comprehensive model with a strong potential to achieve progress towards re-integrating marginalized Egyptian youth both socially and economically into the community in a more systematic, sustainable manner.

On the policy level, and based on the existing Youth Employment National Action Plan drafted by the ILO and the Ministry of Manpower and Migration, a National Youth Economic Empowerment Strategy which sets forth a feasible implementation plan to guide and integrate all activities from all tiers of the government and other concerned key stakeholders, including the private sector and youth-led organizations, as well as outlines effective mechanisms of coordination between them, is needed more than ever before. In other words, this strategy will represent a meeting point between the National Action Plan developed by policy-makers and the practical lessons learnt from the YEEP and other similar interventions implemented on the ground, with inputs from their respective beneficiaries. The implementation framework should therefore capitalize on the experiences gained and the networks built on the ground rather than following a "reinventing the wheel" approach, with special focus on the feedback provided by the young people targeted by these initiatives.

Accordingly, there is a strong need to map and build a cooperation mechanism among all youth capacity-building and economic empowerment initiatives implemented on the national level, and to ensure that the maximum advantages are reaped from them. Readily available human, infrastructural, and financial resources can thereby be directed towards developing one integrated model working towards achieving the same goal.

In the case of Egypt, concerned stakeholders include: (1) Local authorities for the overall coordination of local partner networks; (2) Local associations to establish a permanent support network for the schools; (3) Local employers (including local small enterprises) to identify the skills and qualifications needed for integration into the local labour market, tutoring and mentoring schemes for young people, providing work placements, employing young people after successfully completing their placements/training; (4) International Organizations/Development agencies;

(5) Social, sports, and cultural associations; (6) Trade unions; (7) Individual volunteers.

Government institutions include – among others - the **Ministry of Youth** with its nationwide facilities, which can serve as appropriate venues for delivering the skills development programmes, as well as offering Training of Trainer programmes for volunteers on basic skills training components, in order for them to replicate the training to reach a wider circle of young people. In due course, youth centers will potentially act as hubs that young people turn to for guidance and capacity development. Additionally, the **Ministry of Manpower** could provide a significant bulk of the financial resources needed for the inception and development of this model through its training for employment fund. Moreover, the **Ministry of Industry** has a principal role to play through its Industrial Training Council (ITC) and Productivity and Vocational Training Department (PVTD), by channeling human, infrastructural, and financial resources available to these agencies to better support the project.

As for the role of the **business community** (through the Federation of Industries and businessmen associations), it ranges from defining the skills and qualifications required by the local employment market, mentoring, sponsoring, offering apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities, to offering jobs to the young people whom they have taken on board and who have successfully completed their training (role of the school may be limited to keeping a database of local enterprises that offer placements to its students). The return to employers is thereby having motivated young workers who are well-integrated into their structures and possess the requisite professional skills (in other words, their role is not charitable). In addition, **Corporate Social Responsibility** (CSR) initiatives, through umbrella organizations such as the Egyptian Corporate Responsibility Center (ECRC) or the CSR Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce, can also play a key role in lobbying for the active commitment of private sector corporations to the programme, whether by providing decent employment and training opportunities, or encouraging their employees to transfer their knowledge and skills to the targeted youth via their volunteering platforms.

Additionally, flexible and interactive curricula for skills development that can be tailored to the individual needs of young people participating in the programme need to be fine-tuned and standardized, using the readily-available training manuals developed by national and international organisations (such as those developed by SCC) as a starting point. **NGOs** with a good track record in providing youth capacity-building programmes can be trained on these manuals, and in turn, these can act as umbrella organizations to build the capacities of smaller civil society organisations active or emerging in the programme's target areas. This is particularly important to ensure the sustainability of the project's capacity-building components in these communities. Furthermore, local NGOs can also play the role of intermediaries between job seekers and private sector employers, which has proven to be a successful model in many countries such as India.

Last but not least, it is imperative that the establishment of such a system is accompanied by substantial reforms in the formal education system. Factors contributing to the success of these “second chance” facilities can offer guidance on how to prevent shortcomings that lead to high drop-out rates, as well as the vast mismatch between the outcomes of the formal education system and the labour market needs, thereby depriving youth of their “first chance” to self-development and empowerment.

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