

TITLE

Large-scale support for employers who have to meet a quota of employees with disabilities

Egypt: Helm (“Dream”) Foundation

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Helm Foundation (Helm means “Dream”) aims to promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life by supporting companies to develop effective disability employment initiatives, and to ensure an inclusive work culture and environment. Since 2014, Helm has worked with a network of more than 250 companies.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Beneficiaries in 2014: 300 people with disabilities, 15 companies
- Beneficiaries in 2015: 1,500 people with disabilities, 150 companies
- Beneficiaries in 2016: 1,000 people with disabilities, 220 companies

PROBLEMS TARGETED

According to Egyptian law, companies that exceed 50 employees must meet a minimum quota of 5 per cent employees with disabilities. Yet most companies end up either paying the fine, as is the case in many other countries in the world, or even hiring a person with disability on paper, paying them a tiny salary without letting them do any work.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

To date, Helm has supported around 1,500 persons with disabilities by providing them with various opportunities to use their existing skills and to meet the needs of the open labour market through:

- Assistance in setting career goals
- Access to training opportunities
- Job placement services that best suit each individual skillset
- On-the-job training and regular follow-up with both the employee and employer

Helm also works to change the stereotype of “typical jobs” for people with disabilities by placing its clients as HR specialists, marketing and sales professionals, and IT managers and executives, among other positions.

At the same time, Helm has assisted some 300 employers by short-listing suitable candidates, identifying the required accommodations, and ensuring that employees with disabilities maintain their positions. Helm targets HR managers, marketing managers, and other top management

personnel in companies – especially those who have to apply the 5 per cent rule. Helm Foundation also makes public locations such as restaurants and hotels accessible and creates apps and websites that enable people with disabilities to find accessible places Helm’s team audits each premises based on international standards of accessibility. The organization was able to assess 300 locations, making 200 of them accessible in less than a year.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

Helm has a total budget of US\$281,500 per year and has obtained civil society funding until 2017. Moreover, the organization earns revenues from companies for its services. Helms is working towards a self-sustaining enterprise after the end of its initial funding period.

QUOTE

“I wish people could believe that I can live and work just like anyone else!”

- Ms. Nabila Yahia, a 27-year-old Egyptian woman who was born blind and is now working in the HR department of Vodafone

CONTACT

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REFERENCES

- First-place winner in the Negma Social Entrepreneurship Competition in MIT, USA, in 2013.
- The Rise Egypt Fellowship in 2014 at Harvard University, USA, 2015–2016, as one of the top five social entrepreneurs in Egypt (www.riseegypt.org).
- Won 3rd place in Total Startupper of the Year Competition, Africa, 2016 (startupper.total.com).
- 85 company CSR and HR managers attended the Preparatory Roundtable for the “Cairo 2016: A City for All” conference on exploring the Market Value of Persons with Disabilities, December 2015.
- Organized “Cairo 2016: A City for All” conference, bringing together professionals, employers, corporations, persons with disabilities’ organizations, and key thought leaders and policymakers, featuring the best practices from both national and global perspectives (15+ attending countries and 350 attendees). The conference addressed the theme of

Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities for the marketplace, employment, role of assistive technology, and focus on the value to show that Egypt can be the Tourism Destination for All.

