

Background and Purpose

According to the United Nations' Human Development Report, youth comprise a considerable size of Egyptian population. Around 25% of Egyptian population is between the ages of 18 and 29. Beyond their significant number in terms of demographic composition, youth in Egypt suffered from many social ills, primarily poverty and unemployment. Youth in Egypt face the reality of poor education, low health awareness and limited access to training, educational, vocational, volunteering, and job opportunities. For long, the youth of Egypt have been marginalized and accused of being depoliticized and reckless, yet the 25th of January revolution served to alter that perception. When Egyptian youth have taken to the streets on January 25th, it was hard to confine them to that already established perception.

While the revolution cannot be attributed to one social faction solely, youth did have a large contribution. Although there was a strong build up to the revolution with worker's strikes and protests, most of the analysis associated the revolution with the middle-class social media users to have taken a wide scale initiative. In post-revolutionary Egypt, the youth have been more engaged in protests against those in power rather than engaging in political parties. Hence, there has been a justified concern that the role of the youth would come to an end with the overthrowing of Mubarak and that they would not take an active part in shaping their country as they would envision it.

Given its profound interest and work on youth empowerment for years in Egypt, FES developed a Young Leaders' National Network program. With the conviction that the role of youth needs to be fostered and developed, this program aims to enable young people to become competent and reliable leaders to allow them to play a significant role in the democratic transformation that is already taking place. The principles of social justice, freedom and solidarity are ones intertwined with FES work and form the foundation to its projects. To this end, the FES program selects 20 to 30 youth between the ages of 20 and 30 years who commit themselves to an involvement in the program for a period of 18 months.



Duration and Phases

The program is comprised of a number of methodological trainings that focus on developing the skills of participants and a number of policy debates. In the policy debates, the participants are introduced to different topics looking into the international discourse and the specificities of Egypt. Subsequently, it would be expected that, autonomously, the participants would work on initiating small projects that would serve their own communities. The idea would be providing the participants with the opportunity to directly translate the skills and knowledge acquired into initiatives.

The program will also allow them to create a strong network that will add an effective dimension to their future endeavors. There is an effort made to incorporate participants from different parts of Egypt to achieve a degree of diversity within the participants themselves and with the projects they initiate. Youth should be empowered to effectively take part in shaping their societies, engage with their communities in a productive manner, seize opportunities and create their local initiatives.

Target groups

25 – 30 selected young people from different governorates take part in the whole 18 month program

Partners

The project is implemented by FES with the support of a vast network of independent consultants and trainers.

Phase	Time / Period	Step / Activity	Result and Use
Methodological Trainings	March 2015 – October 2015	Holding a number of methodological trainings with the Young Leaders covering a wide range of concepts, skills, and discourses. The trainings build on each other and are focused on the aim that those will be youth who will undertake initiatives within their own local communities. Each training covers a specific topic and usually we reflect on the progress made in arriving at a better framed and articulated local initiative.	Participants who are better equipped with skills that will enable them to better launch local initiatives and partake proactively in the public life.
Policy Debates	March 2015 – November 2015	Holding a number of policy debates on a range of topics that are relevant to the wider context of Egypt and the MENA region. Many of these debates include reading groups as well as exchanges on literature that allows the participants to be better informed on the discussions taking place internationally and to also reflect on the realities of Egypt.	Participants who are more knowledgeable with analytical skills that allows them to better understand the realities unfolding around them.
Project Initiatives	September 2015 – December 2015	Working in smaller groups of the young leaders who are working on local initiatives in order to sharpen its focus and discuss its sustainability.	The expected result will be that by the end of the 18 months local initiatives that are able to introduce small changes to a local context will be in place.