

Impact Brief Series, Issue 16

Realizing Innovation through Social Entrepreneurship

RISE Egypt

This brief describes how the non-profit organization **Realizing Innovation through Social Entrepreneurship (RISE) in Egypt** is measuring the results of its Fellowship Programme, which supports the scaling up of innovative social enterprises in Egypt by leveraging technical assistance, training and research. It illustrates how RISE Egypt envisions its long-term impact, describes the measurement tools and workflow used to track the programme's outcomes, and highlights recommendations that will guide the organization to further build its capacity in monitoring and impact evaluation

KEY MESSAGES

- **Planning:** A strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan needs sufficient human and technical resources, as well as ample planning time, to have M&E tools in place at the start of the programme or project. This includes digitizing data collection tools to enable real-time data collection.
- **Visioning:** Obtaining full team visibility and alignment when setting the programme's strategy and M&E system ensures a coherent vision among team members and a clear understanding of how their roles contribute towards achieving this vision.
- **Culture:** A strong M&E culture within an organization is a key factor in promoting M&E and its importance; this culture can be transferred to beneficiaries and other stakeholders dealing with the organization.
- **Communication:** Having a set of consistent indicators that are regularly reported on can be a highly efficient way of communicating impact to stakeholders.
- **Comprehensive scope:** An M&E system that includes quantitative and qualitative approaches is able to capture impact comprehensively by relying on both numerical indicators and in-depth insights into why certain results materialize.



Source: RISE Egypt

Background


RISE Egypt

RISE Egypt is a global non-profit organization working directly with Egyptian social enterprises (SEs) that are deploying innovative solutions to the country's most frustrating development challenges. Its flagship initiative, a two-year Fellowship Programme, provides deep subject area technical assistance to SEs, along with ongoing training and research, to inform a data-driven approach to scaling up initiatives that create jobs and contribute to development in Egypt.

The organization is powered by a global community of givers, who pledge financial and technical support to accelerate innovation and development in the country. In addition to working directly with Egyptian SEs, there are a number of other ongoing and planned programmes and functions within RISE Egypt. These include a research arm conducting impact and best practice research, a "Brain Gain" initiative to leverage diaspora talent and networks, a Global Ambassadors Programme, and an annual Solutions Summit to shed light on evidence-based innovations in various development sectors.

RISE Fellowship Programme

The first round of the RISE Egypt Fellowship Programme enrolled a class of five SEs. These enterprises are working in a range of sectors: providing quality education to primary- and secondary-level school students through focusing on self-actualization and student-driven learning (Educate Me, Mavericks); promoting inclusive workplaces for people with disabilities (Helm); creating job opportunities for agricultural workers and craftspeople by converting agricultural waste into sustainable wood products (Jozour); and facilitating safer and growing employment opportunities for workers within the e-waste management industry (RecycloBekia). These enterprises contribute to job creation in a number of ways: first as the organizations grow and are able to increase their employment capacity, second as they enhance the skills and job readiness of their beneficiaries within the context of their impact



area and hence improve their chances of employment, and finally when they create job opportunities across their value chain as they expand their operations.

Moreover, 40 per cent of the SEs supported in the Fellowship Programme are (co-)led by female entrepreneurs, who have developed their business and decision-making capabilities and skills through the work done in developing and scaling up their respective SEs. Today they are considered to be key examples of inspiring female entrepreneurs in the Egyptian entrepreneurship scene. And it is this special consideration for equality and diversity that RISE Egypt aims to keep by working with different groups across the community within its various programmes moving forward.

Taqeem support

Since the start of its activities, RISE Egypt has developed a number of assessment tools to monitor the Fellowship Programme. These include needs assessments, used to guide the programme design and to set goals and track progress for each fellow. The assessments were in depth and primarily qualitative in nature to allow for a deep dive into the strategic needs of the fellows. They did not, however, include sufficient quantitative measures to evaluate the progress of the SEs in scaling up throughout the programme.

Initially, the Fellowship Programme was accompanied by a series of pulse surveys to obtain rapid feedback from the various stakeholders involved, including fellows and advisers. Yet, despite the presence of some tools to measure results and evaluate activities, challenges in retracing data and capturing it comprehensively in a systemized and digitized manner highlighted the need for a comprehensive internal M&E system for RISE Egypt moving forward.

Through the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Taqeeem Initiative, RISE Egypt received technical and financial support to lay the foundations for an effective M&E system for the Fellowship Programme. This allows RISE Egypt to:

- build a cohesive data collection system, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to evaluate the impact of the Fellowship Programme's activities and the growth of the SEs within the programme;
- leverage Salesforce (the organization's customer relationship platform and cloud-based enterprise system) to digitally integrate its evaluation tools into a single system;
- integrate M&E as a value across the organization and all of its activities, and work on ways to transfer this value to all RISE fellows;
- develop its internal M&E capacity through a designated M&E function that works across the organization.

Monitoring and results measurement system

Setting out the logic

The results chain of the Fellowship Programme describes a pathway to RISE Egypt's theory of change for creating jobs and enhancing quality of life in Egypt. Through the support provided to SEs to scale up their innovative solutions, RISE Egypt envisions four ultimate areas of impact: bridging

development gaps in key sectors, combating unemployment through job creation, helping to create a collaborative community, and expanding a culture of data utilization for decision-making.

Once enrolled in the Fellowship Programme, SEs complete a needs assessment that helps them to identify gaps in their business approach, as well as sector-specific knowledge gaps, and guides them to develop initial action plans. Subsequently, fellows receive clearly articulated technical assistance workshops and training, opportunities for site visits to global learning partners, and high-impact advisory work focusing on each of their sectors. This also includes training on M&E and data-driven approaches to scaling up operations. In addition, fellows are able to showcase their work to an audience of stakeholders through a series of on-stage events and online media. The programme also facilitates peer support, collaboration and knowledge sharing by organizing retreats throughout its duration.

The activities implemented enable fellows to build and improve their business operations and management skills, gain access to and apply global best practices and expert advice, build knowledge networks within their specific sectors and promote their work to potential investors and stakeholders. As a result, they will develop a better understanding of how to design and implement an M&E system and measure their own impact. They will build a long-standing relationship with learning partners, becoming better positioned to attract investment and donor commitment. Overall, SEs are expected to scale up their operations and become more sustainable organizations, leading to employment creation and social gains.

FIGURE 1. Results chain of the Fellowship Programme

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs assessment Technical assistance and on-site visits to learning partners M&E training on data-driven approaches for scaling up Showcasing SEs: online and through global stage events Co-learning retreats: knowledge sharing and support among fellows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaps in business approach of SEs identified SEs build skills to improve business operations and M&E systems SEs engage with partners, learning from international best practice Promotion of local SEs, e.g. facilitating investment opportunities SEs develop personal linkages, critique and support each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEs grow by improving the quality and scale of their interventions SEs implement high-quality M&E systems SEs build long-standing relationships with learning partners SEs attract investment and donor commitments Development of a supportive community of practitioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development gaps bridged in key sectors Job creation (organizational and across the value chain) Culture of data for decision-making and scale-up of innovations Building a culture of collaboration

Data collection instruments

Table 1 below describes the main data collection tools of the Fellowship Programme's M&E system. These tools are used by RISE Egypt staff to collect indicators for the different activities within the programme, the direct impact of the programme on the SEs, and the development and growth of each SE. The latter indicators are also used by the SEs to develop their internal M&E systems. This allows them to monitor their direct outcomes and impacts, particularly in terms of job creation and outcomes for their beneficiaries.

TABLE 1. Summary of the data collection instruments

Instrument	Description	Main indicators
Fellowship application and initial interview	Application forms are filled in online by applicants interested in the Fellowship Programme. One-to-one interviews are then held with selected applicants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">SE profiling and business approach, e.g. business model, identified competitive edgeInitial number of employees and beneficiaries; initial amount of investment and revenuesTargets for employment, social and environmental impact
SE needs assessments and in-depth interviews	Plans of action are developed with each team every six months in order to identify areas for technical capacity building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Current financial situation and organizational systemsBusiness Model CanvasSector-based technical needs assessment
Technical assistance surveys	One-to-one surveys are held with fellows and learning partners after initial site visit with learning partner and after learning partner visit to SE site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">For fellows: satisfaction with technical assistance (e.g. relevance to SE workplan) and learning partnerFor learning partners: satisfaction with technical assistance and SE fellow engagement
Mid-term and post-programme surveys	Structured one-to-one interviews are held midway through the programme (between stages 1 and 2) and post-programme as a follow-up to the initial interview to capture reflections on the entire process and ways to move forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Quality and implementation of SE approach, e.g. diversification of revenue streams, shifts in programme approach to improve impact# interactions with sector experts/technical assistance/training (and relevance to SE activity and quality)
SE fellow monitoring records	These are quantitative indicators that measure SE growth and impact. They are additionally used by SEs, which collect them at regular intervals for internal M&E.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Growth in:<ul style="list-style-type: none"># SE beneficiaries# SE employeesSocial impact, e.g. socio-economic, environmentalRevenues and revenue streamsInvestments and funds% of funds from self-generated revenue

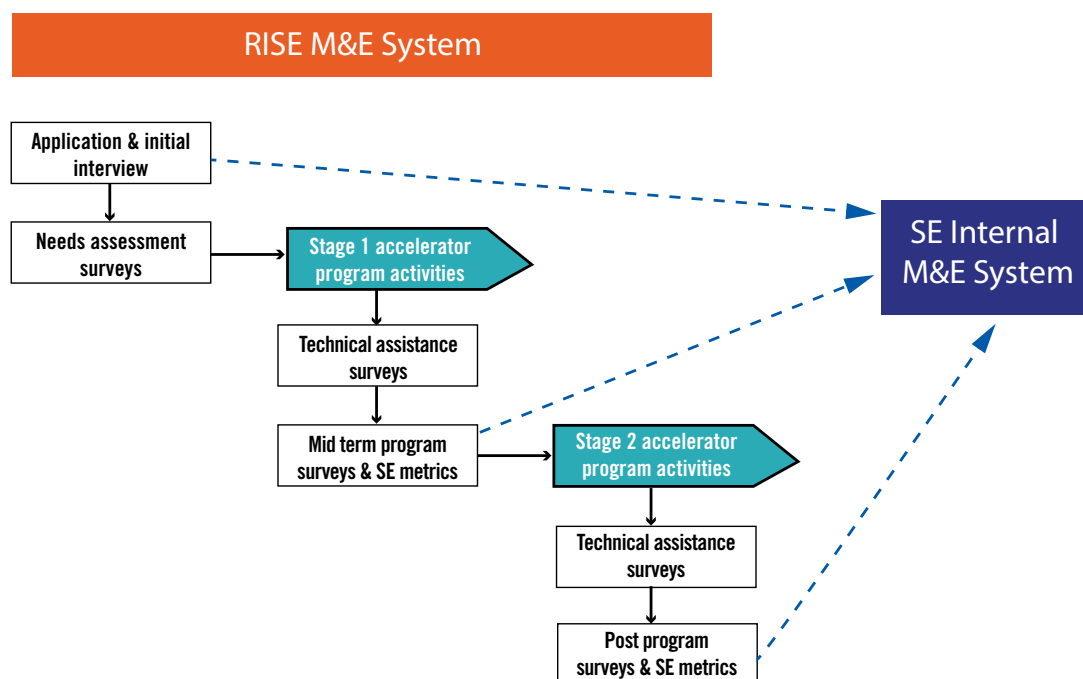
Data management

RISE Egypt uses various data collection tools that are cohesively combined in a logical workflow (see figure 2). It is working on digitally systemizing these tools on a single platform and enabling access for a number of stakeholders (both internal and external). This is being achieved through RISE Egypt's cloud-based customer relationship platform, Salesforce, with the goal of making all applications and surveys web-based. The platform will allow easy access for stakeholders to fill in information and feed the data into a collective database that can generate tailored reports (e.g. reports over time or cross-sectional reports).

Each SE has access to a spreadsheet containing specific quantitative impact indicators, which it uses to collect data at regular intervals. The spreadsheet is sent back to RISE Egypt staff, who feed the information into their database. In future, it is planned to automate this process to increase efficiency and allow for easy analysis of the data. The quantitative list of indicators also assists the SEs in organizing their existing data and developing their own internal M&E systems

based on these data, which are often collected for administrative purposes. SEs are supported in identifying data gaps and subsequently working to collect the missing data. With time they can develop further indicators to capture the various aspects of their impact on their direct beneficiaries.

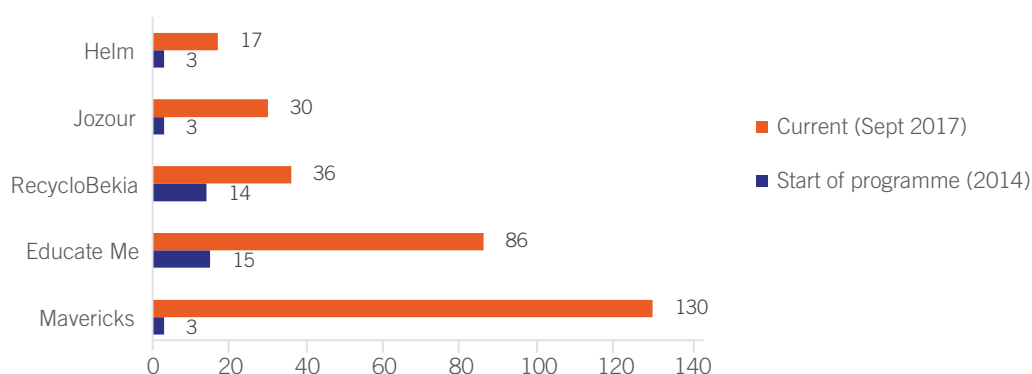
FIGURE 2. Data collection workflow of the M&E system for RISE Egypt and its SEs



Measuring results

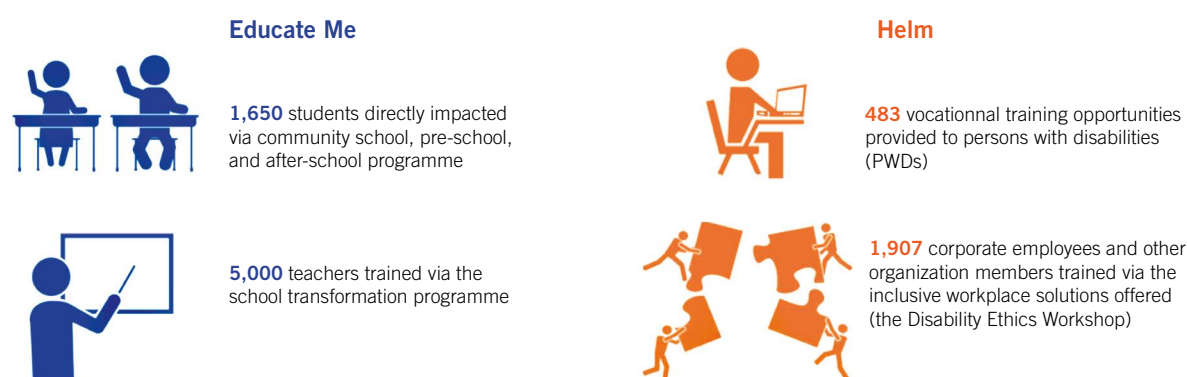
Job creation is one key long-term impact objective for RISE Egypt. The support delivered to the SEs during the Fellowship Programme allows them to grow, build a sustainable business model, and consequently create greater opportunities for employment growth. Since the start of the Fellowship Programme, all five SEs have grown into sizable organizations with significant employment capacity (as shown in figure 3).

FIGURE 3. SE employment capacity growth: # full-time and part-time employees at start of programme vs Sept 2017



Working in various development fields, each SE is directly impacting different groups of beneficiaries. Figure 4 illustrates the results for two SEs, Educate Me and Helm, which work in youth education and inclusion of people with disabilities respectively, and the direct impact they are making through the various solutions they are offering in each of their development sectors.

FIGURE 4. Results for two selected SEs



Lessons learned

- **Team alignment and embedding an M&E culture:** Having a strong culture of M&E within the organization and involving all operational staff in working on the organization's strategy creates a strong sense of alignment and unified direction across the team. Additionally, an embedded M&E culture enables RISE Egypt to pass this on to the organizations in the Fellowship Programme to improve performance, leading to sustainable growth and subsequently to job creation and social impact.
- **Digital data management:** Digitizing data collection tools and using a unified digital platform will enable efficient data collection in real time and the creation of a system that captures indicators in the long term. It will also enable different internal stakeholders to access data and analyse them from different perspectives.
- **Proactive data collection:** Establishing indicators early on enables monitoring and assessment of all activities. It also creates reliable inputs for efficient and consistent communication of impact results to the RISE Egypt stakeholder community over time.
- **Inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative approaches:** An M&E system dedicated to capturing quantitative indicators will record SE growth and impact over time. It is also important to record qualitative indicators, which can give deeper insights into the journey of each fellow and help them overcome challenges that may not be captured through quantitative analysis.



Source: RISE Egypt

Next steps

Using data collected retroactively from SEs, RISE Egypt will continue to prepare its first annual impact report, to reflect on the work done over the past three years. It will disseminate impact results to its existing network of stakeholders and use the report as an effective communication tool to attract new members into its network.

In preparation for the next cohort of fellows in 2018, RISE Egypt will use the data collected from the first class of RISE fellows to optimize the Fellowship Programme. Based on the established results chain, it will focus on the efficiency of activities in creating impact, as well as on scalability using available resources. It will also ensure that a fully completed M&E system is in place before the start of programme activities, so that all necessary data are collected proactively through the course of the Fellowship Programme.

As part of the new programme design, RISE Egypt will include an M&E workshop as a core activity for all teams of fellows, as well as alumni. It will also design an alumni programme that will prolong collaboration with previous fellows, helping them to build their internal M&E systems to ensure a strong culture of M&E is disseminated among all partners.

The Taqeeem (“evaluation” in Arabic) Initiative: What Works in Youth Employment is a technical cooperation programme of the ILO.

This brief was produced in partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), as part of an IFAD-financed project titled “Strengthening gender monitoring and evaluation in rural employment in the Near East and North Africa”. Through rigorous impact research, this capacity development and learning grant project aims to understand “what works” in the promoting of gender mainstreaming, with the ultimate goal of achieving gender equality in rural employment outcomes across the region.



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