

## Oxford Business Group: Young Egyptians Gain ICT Capabilities and Entrepreneurial Skills with New Programs

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A report published by Oxford Business Group (OBG) stated that human capital is Egypt's single biggest competitive advantage in the knowledge-intensive ICT industry. Authorities and sector players are keen to move the market to the next level with a range of programs designed to develop skills and nurture entrepreneurship. While playing an important role in developing the ICT sector at a grassroots level, these initiatives have also catalyzed public-private partnerships with major international technology and education companies.



### **Next Technology Leaders**

The report also stated that in November 2016, President Abdel Fattah El Sisi launched Next Technology Leaders (NTL), an initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) that aims to build capacity among young people using the latest ICT technology. Targeting 16,000 youths, goals of the initiative include boosting the caliber of the workforce, equipping young Egyptians with the skills they need to compete at a global level and supporting the competitiveness of local ICT companies. The programme is also developing a nationwide network of experienced technology professionals who can mentor and support less experienced colleagues.

NTL allows Egyptians who graduated in 2006 or later access to fully subsidized online courses by top universities and companies, with most lasting six months or less. Participating businesses include Indian online education firm Udacity, US-based education technology company Coursera and online course provider edX, founded by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard.

Courses include a “nanodegree” in virtual reality in partnership with Google VR, a seven-month specialization in robotics through the University of Pennsylvania, and a four-stage course in strategic management and innovation in conjunction with Copenhagen Business School.

Artificial intelligence, big data and cloud computing qualifications are also available – areas in which Egypt’s ICT sector has particular potential. Levels vary from novice to advanced, and those who complete the courses receive certification from the universities and companies involved. More than 6000 courses had been completed by the end of 2017.

### **Innovation Support Programs**

The report also stated that MCIT supports industry development programs, including through Egypt Makes Electronics— a new national initiative that focuses on electronics design and manufacturing— and the Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre (TIEC), founded in 2010 and operated with international partners. By the end of 2017, TIEC had trained 11,693 people, helped establish 120 start-ups and supported a further 318.

Together, Intel and TIEC run “Egypt Internet of Things League”, an acceleration program for early stage start-ups working on the internet and related fields. The free program is designed for university students, young entrepreneurs and graduates who receive support, mentoring and knowledge transfer, selecting top projects for financial support, access to partners’ business resources and business acceleration.

Google is the main partner for TIEC’s Mobile Application Launch Pad, established in 2015. The program provided training for an initial 2000 students and young graduates. Promising participants can apply for start-up competitions with funding of up to \$200,000 to help commercialize ideas for new apps.

TIEC also runs InnovEgypt, which aims to develop entrepreneurial skills among university students with ICT specializations. The six-day course includes a module on innovation and technology management, followed by a two-day ideation module on idea creation and

innovative solutions. The final stage covers the basics of entrepreneurship. By the end of 2017, nearly 3900 students from 21 universities had taken the course.

Perhaps the most notable development of 2017 was the December launch of the African Regional UN Technology Innovation Lab (UNTIL) in Cairo. This lab represents the first such center in Africa established by the UN Development Program (UNDP), within the framework of implementing the UN plan to deploy a set of technological innovation labs worldwide, one or more labs in each continent. It will train entrepreneurs, host events and implement technology innovations to address global challenges and achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Oxford Business Group (OBG) is a British company with world-wide reach, employing more than 200 staff and continuing its commitment to producing detailed analysis. The Group publishes authoritative reports and online economic briefings covering 34 countries around the world. Its reports are used by the world's leading CEOs, governmental and policy leaders and international decision makers both as a platform for expressing opinion and as a key source of insight.

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