



Accelerating the Entrepreneurial Ambition of Arab Youth

Launching the
INJAZ Start Up Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Partnership between INJAZ Al-Arab and Boeing



June 2014



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Acknowledgements

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About the Author



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“we are engineers by training and identity, and because of the INJAZ *Start Up* Program, clients are now easily convinced that we are also professional businessmen and consultants”

- LEANUTION
Start Up Company

INTRODUCTION

Whilst the MENA region has one of the fastest-growing workforces in the world (Ahmed et al, 2012), it continues to face significant challenges in addressing unemployment especially amongst its burgeoning youth population of over 100 million (World Bank, 2010). The IMF projected that by 2020, the MENA region will see 10.7 million new labour market entrants (Masseti et al, 2013). This is coupled with continuous labour market inefficiencies whereby employers regularly report a mismatch and / or lack of labour skills and talent (WAMDA, 2014), a large public sector that has generated a lack of economic dynamism in the region (Ahmed et al, 2012), and a low entrepreneurship rate almost four times lower than that of Europe and Central Asia (Klapper and Love, 2010).

However, the MENA region is experiencing rapid social and political change, encompassed within Schroeder's (2013) 'entrepreneurial revolution remaking the Middle East'. Indeed, the entrepreneurship landscape in this region has experienced precipitous growth. Numerous international, regional and local players often compete and sometimes collaborate in their efforts to fertilize and grow this landscape through recognizing youth as an asset rather than an impediment. It is a fast race to enhance innovation and creativity amongst today's youth and tomorrow's leaders of the region, and to create entrepreneurial ventures that will generate substantial employment opportunities for the new labour market entrants, grow the economy and contribute to lasting stability across the region.

The collaboration between INJAZ Al-Arab and Boeing presents a thoughtful and strategic partnership in supporting youth start ups and enhancing entrepreneurial talent within the entrepreneurial landscape across the MENA region. It also demonstrates how such partnerships can successfully fill some of the existing voids within the entrepreneurship landscape. Through its Global Corporate Citizenship, Boeing connects with partners such as INJAZ Al-Arab to fund education programs and entrepreneurship training in the MENA region. To date, Boeing has funded education programs and entrepreneurship training for more than 2,000 individuals across the MENA region (<http://www.boeing-me.com/en/Boeing-in-the-Middle-East/Community>).

INJAZ Al-Arab is a nonprofit organization that believes in the limitless potential of youth in the Arab world and their ability to create viable economic opportunities. Their teams of enthusiastic, dedicated and visionary practitioners are committed to inspiring, preparing and empowering Arab Youth to succeed in the global economy. Together with the private and public sectors, their programs provide hands-on learning in financial literacy, work readiness and entrepreneurship skills.

Named one of the top 100 NGOs in the world by Global Journal 2012, INJAZ Al-Arab has impacted the lives of over 1 million students since its inception in 2004. Today the organization operates across 15 countries in the Middle East and North Africa region, encouraging youth to excel in entrepreneurship and coaching them to overcome the challenges of starting businesses.

Part of Junior Achievement Worldwide (JAW), INJAZ Al-Arab is a unique organization committed to developing a generation of highly-skilled workers and future entrepreneurs by equipping Arab youth with practical business-related skills through the hands-on mentorship of business leaders who invest their resources in the future of the region's youth.

With Boeing's generous support, INJAZ Al-Arab embarked upon creating a *Start Up* Program for youth, accelerating their entrepreneurial talent into registered, operational ventures within an intense six month period combining funding, training, mentoring and business operations. A pilot program was operationalized by INJAZ Egypt and an evaluation of this program was completed in 2014. The purpose of this report is twofold; firstly to present the lessons learnt and the relevant identified best practices that have informed the design and development of the INJAZ Al-Arab *Start Up* Program. Secondly, to launch the INJAZ Al-Arab *Start Up* Program to be implemented across all countries where INJAZ Al-Arab operates: UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Palestine, Pakistan, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Yemen, Jordan and Lebanon.

CHALLENGING TIMES FOR THE YOUNG START UPS

The launch of the INJAZ Egypt *Start Up* Program coincided with the 2011 Egyptian Revolution and was considered by the students as a symbol of positive change and an opportunity to be a part of that positive social change. Sadly, the consequences since that revolution have had detrimental effects on the Egyptian people, their enterprises and their overall economy. The arising insecurity and instability have been felt by all those interviewed, and fears of further consequences such as a reduction in potential sponsorships for programs such as the INJAZ *Start Up* Program were very real.

The most common challenge reported by the participants of the evaluation study, was Egypt's political and economic instability. 84% reported that the political and economic climate had a very negative impact on their businesses' performance and productivity, especially during the curfew period. However, this negativity was not transferred to the participants themselves. Rather, the vast majority of participants considered the political and economic turmoil that Egypt is experiencing as a "rebirth", "regeneration", and "new dawn" which will "create a better Egypt", and an "Egypt that we can be proud of". Indeed, an impressive majority of participants in the focus groups agreed that *"it is our responsibility to make Egypt a better place for us all. It is our future so we have to shape it well, now"*. When asked how they will achieve this, unsurprisingly, the vast majority swiftly agreed *"through our ventures, ethical business practice and responsible behaviour"*, and some also stated *"through manufacturing our products here in Egypt"*. This generation will lead this region's future, and thus, continued support and guidance is a necessity to shape and realize their enterprising outlooks.

The closure of numerous manufacturing plants in Egypt due to the political turmoil also resulted in many of the interviewed start up teams engaging in international operations to produce their innovative products. The most popular location choice for manufacturing was China. Indeed, in November 2013, Edutks was awaiting their first shipment of their electronic Arabic speaking Friendly Teddy Toy from China. Generally, the participants agreed that manufacturing in China was *"a steep but necessary learning curve"*, and *"a necessity rather than choice, we definitely would have preferred to manufacture our products here in Egypt."*

"It is our responsibility to make Egypt a better place for us all. It is our future so we have to shape it well, now".

-SOLETRIK
Start Up Company

"through our ventures, ethical business practice and responsible behaviour".

-WAZNER
Start Up Company



"Expect that not everything will go according to your plan and that way, you will be prepared for the unexpected which is great planning".

-EDUTKS
Start Up Company

THE INJAZ EGYPT START UP PROGRAM PILOT

INJAZ Egypt has been piloting and enhancing the INJAZ *Start Up* Program since 2012. By November 2013, a total of 30 enterprises had been created in Egypt through the INJAZ *Start Up* Program pilot. Typically, each start up comprised a team of university students and / or graduates who excelled on the INJAZ Egypt *Company* Program and its competition, and won their place on the INJAZ *Start Up* Program. The students' specialisation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) related disciplines was often reflected in their start ups. Given that STEM related enterprises are often associated with high growth (Al-Dajani et al, 2014; Chatterji et al, 2013), the start ups show a promising future. Figure 1 below shows the number of start ups operating in each sector.

Figure 1: Sectoral Spread of the Start Ups from the INJAZ Egypt *Start Up* Program

Sector	Number of Start Ups	STEM Related
Technology / Internet / Software/ and / or app development	8	✓
Energy	4	✓
Engineering	4	✓
Creative Arts	3	
Environment	3	✓
Education	2	✓
Social Services (child care, tourism)	2	
Recycling	2	✓
Biomedical	1	✓
Entertainment	1	
TOTAL	30	

Recyclobekia has been recognised internationally as a success story and is listed in Forbes (2013), **10 Middle Eastern Start Ups You Need to Know** report. Recyclobekia is reducing toxic landfill waste by collecting electric waste and parts from Egyptian businesses and reselling them locally and internationally for recycling. Axology and Simpion are also success stories that completed the INJAZ *Start Up* Program in 2011 alongside Recyclobekia, amidst the backdrop of national political and social turmoil. Simpion is Egypt's first company to produce 3D glasses, and were selected by Cairo Startup Cup as one of the best seven Start-Ups in Egypt. Cairo Angel Investments have ranked Simpion amongst Egypt's most innovative enterprises. Axology designs and manufactures innovative high quality products for consumers and businesses. Their first product consisting of an iPhone protector swiftly sold 300 pieces, and their second product - security plastic fork locks for retail display, received a quick order for 5000 pieces. For more information about these start ups, please visit http://injaz-egypt.org/?page_id=20.

“Our premises and location are giving us a great professional image. Our clients take us seriously when they know where our HQs are located. So definitely consider your business location strategically”.

- RECYCLOBEKIA
Start Up Company



EVALUATING THE INJAZ EGYPT START UP PROGRAM

“Despite increasing attention to [global] graduate entrepreneurship, there remains a lack of research on entrepreneurial intentions and enterprise / entrepreneurship education and training in varied and multiple contexts” (Nabi and Holden, 2008: 545). Thus, this evaluation study addressing the acceleration of Arab youth’s entrepreneurial ambition, makes a timely and significant contribution to the call for a more nuanced understanding of international entrepreneurship education and training which is of interest to researchers, policy makers and business support providers globally.

To optimize the evaluation process, a mixed methods methodology was adopted and comprised; a survey totalling 103 students, nine focus group interviews with INJAZ *Start Up* Program student teams, and seven individual interviews with INJAZ Egypt staff and mentors. The survey data collection was completed in March 2014, and the qualitative focus group interviews and individual interviews were conducted by Dr Haya Al-Dajani in Cairo, in November 2013.

Figure 2 below presents the sample size and response rate for the survey. A response rate of 42.67% for the INJAZ *Start Up* Program, and 10.58% response rate on the *Company* Program were obtained. However, a gender discrepancy within the sample can be observed in Figures 2 and 3 below.

Figure 2: Evaluation Study Sample Size

	Males	Females	Total	Response rate
<i>Start Up</i> Program	59	8	67	42.67%
<i>Company</i> Program	30	6	36	10.58%
Total	89	14	103	

Over **40%** of the participants currently operating from rented business premises.

Although committed to their start ups, 42% of the participants were involved in other unrelated, simultaneous employment. The majority within this sub-sample were employed full-time within the private sector for less than 2 years, and stated that this was their first job. Since 42% of the INJAZ *Start Up* Program teams were applying bootstrapping strategies for their start-ups and were not drawing any wages or salaries, engaging in other employment especially for the university graduates is expected. Within the *Company* Program sample, 72% were currently engaged in employment. Figure 3 below presents the employment patterns of the employed participants and their parents amongst both the *Start Up* and *Company* Programs.

Figure 3 (a): Employment Patterns of the Participants

	<i>Start Up</i> Program	<i>Company</i> Program
Employed in the public sector	17%	0%
Employed in the private sector	83%	100%
Employed part time	29%	n/a
Employed full time	71%	n/a
Is this your first job	60%	40%
Period of employment < 2 years	100%	100%
Period of employment > 2 years	0%	0%
Family business background	36%	16%

Figure 3 (b) : Employment Patterns of the Participants' Parents

Trends in the Employment Patterns of the Participants' Parents	<i>Start Up</i> Program		<i>Company</i> Program	
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Employed in the public sector	33%	44%	42%	29%
Employed in the private sector	8%	16%	6%	22%
Self-employed	0	24%	12%	27%
Unemployed / Homemaker	51%	0	32%	0
Retired	8%	16%	6%	22%

Over **53%** of the participants agreed that the mentoring they received on the INJAZ *Start Up* Program helped them to progress and develop their entrepreneurial idea to the business they are now running.

Figure 4 below profiles the nine start up teams that provided qualitative data through the focus group interviews.

Figure 4: Focus Group Participant Enterprises

Participating Start Up	Year of Completing the Start Up Program	Registration Year	Current Number of Partners
Axology \$ 4098	2012	2012	6 (♂ 5, ♀ 1)
Cairo Sitters \$ 4098	2013	Not registered yet	4 (♂)
Edutks \$ 4098	2013	2013	4 (♂ 2, ♀ 2)
Hatly \$ 4098	2013	2013	6 (♂ 5, ♀ 1)
Leanution \$ 4098	2013	2013	6 (♂)
Matlefesh \$ 4098	2013	2013	7 (♂ 6, ♀ 1)
RecycloBekia \$ 4098	2012	2012	9 (♂)
Soletrik \$ 4098	2012	2012	6 (♂ 5, ♀ 1)
Wazner \$ 4098	2012	2013	2 (♂)

Seed Funding Awarded US\$

RECRUITMENT

Participants of the INJAZ Egypt's *Start Up* Program completed the *Company* Program and 'won' their place on the INJAZ *Start Up* Program. This approach was successful as it clearly set the standards and benchmarks for the INJAZ *Start Up* Program. It also harmonized the natural links between the *Company* Program and the INJAZ *Start Up* Program which are exemplified within the INJAZ Egypt pipeline that was designed and developed by Abelhameed Sharara and is presented in Figure 5 below. The INJAZ *Start Up* Program overlaps with Sharara's Incubation phase.

Figure 5: The INJAZ Egypt Pipeline



LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE INJAZ EGYPT START UP PROGRAM PILOT

A 67% majority of the survey participants agreed that the *Company* Program had prepared them well for the INJAZ Egypt *Start Up* Program. The persistent challenge however was in the progression from the *Company* Program to the INJAZ *Start Up* Program due to:

1. Scaling down the size of the team to maintain key partners and discharging others
2. Copyright and business ownership expectations amongst all team members
3. Managing all team members' expectations

To overcome these challenges, it is imperative to minimize the number of participants within the *Company* Program teams to allow all team members to be maintained upon progression to the INJAZ *Start Up* Program.

OPERATIONALIZATION:

The following operationalization strengths informed the design and development of the INJAZ Al-Arab *Start Up* Program's operationalization:

1. **INJAZ branding:** the INJAZ brand is highly developed and is recognised for its professional delivery of educational enterprise programs. Its role in addressing the enterprise education void created within higher education institutions in Egypt, is both highly accepted and respected. Indeed, participants generally agreed that:

“When we speak to potential investors, partners and others in the business world, they are always ready to listen more when they hear that we are an INJAZ Start Up. INJAZ is an excellent brand”.

- SOLETRIK
Start Up Company



2. **Seed Funding:** this was perceived as a competitive advantage by all students and the mentors participating in the evaluation study. It seemed that the INJAZ Egypt *Start Up* Program was the only program within the Egyptian enterprise eco-system with such a model.
3. **Student Recruitment:** this was perceived as a competitive advantage by all students and the mentors participating in the evaluation study. It seemed that the INJAZ Egypt *Start Up* Program was the only program within the Egyptian enterprise eco-system with such a model.
4. **Mentor Recruitment:** given the significant mentoring component of the INJAZ *Start Up* Program model, mentors must be fully committed and engaged with their assigned student teams for the duration of the INJAZ *Start Up* Program.
5. **Resources:** Within the INJAZ country office, it is important to have a Champion of the INJAZ *Start Up* Program, as well as a dedicated manager to this Program.

TRAINING:

Feedback on enhancing the training delivery were identified in the evaluation study and informed the the design and development of the INJAZ Al-Arab *Start Up* Program's training component:

1. Streamline developmental and incremental training content that addresses the start up process.
2. Ensure that all training content is up-to-date and engaging.
3. Provide effective, relevant and experiential training content that complements the start up process.
4. Encourage participants to engage in their own research and learning by providing introductory subject specific training content that individuals can build upon independently or with their team members and / or mentor, as required.
5. Provide a comprehensive toolkit with training content covering all components of the start up process and adopt a flexible learning approach whereby participants can design, select and implement a tailored training outline with the support of their allocated mentor.
6. Encourage participants to seek professional subject specific online and offline training beyond INJAZ.
7. Ensure that all participating mentors are familiar with the INJAZ *Start Up* Program training content and process, and are confident in its delivery to their allocated team members.



67%

of the survey participants agreed that **the Company Program had prepared them well for the INJAZ Egypt Start Up Program.**

This word cloud identifies the participants' training needs:



MENTORING:

Generally, participants reported a preference for meeting at professional settings such as the incubator, the team's business premises, the mentor's workplace and a team member's home. Meeting in public spaces such as university and cafes were not ideal nor convenient due to the levels of noise, interruptions, lack of reliable wifi, transport and parking at the locations.

The lessons learnt about mentoring are:

1. Assigning one rather than a team of mentors is a recommended best practice. This lead mentor ought to be aware that part of their mentoring responsibilities however, is to connect the mentees with other entrepreneurs, experts and colleagues when needed during the start up process.
2. Ensure that the mentoring match is predominantly determined by subject relevance. In doing so, the mentor is most confident in their contribution to the mentees' needs, and the mentees gain directly relevant expertise to enhance their start up's performance.
3. Limiting and formalizing the mentor's contact and availability to the mentees during the start up process. This will teach mentees to manage and plan their available mentoring time wisely with their assigned mentor, avoid mentees' dependency on the mentor, and will attract increased registration and commitment from mentors.
4. Ensure that all team members attend all mentoring meetings to maximize commitment, contribution and learning amongst all team members.
5. Ensure mentor commitment and provide mentors with regular follow up and support from the INJAZ *Start Up* Program champion.



“Our mentor was really helpful in helping us develop our business plan. He was a great consultant as he helped us grow our friendship to a formal and productive professional relationship”.

**- LEANUTION
Start Up Company**



SEED FUNDING:

Despite the contravening circumstances clouding Egypt in 2012 – 2013, by November 2013, a total of 30 start ups were initiated, funded and registered through the INJAZ Egypt *Start Up* Program. The range of seed funding allocated to each start up team extended from US\$ 2532 to US\$ 12 658, depending on the team’s application and finance needs. All seed funding should be paid in instalments dependent on the registration of the start up. Generally, the grant based seed funding model was considered as a competitive advantage over other start up programs that offered loans. Indeed, when asked ‘to what extent did the seed funding help you to progress your entrepreneurial idea to your business venture?’, 75% of the sample answered ‘to a great - good extent’.

Lessons learnt about seed funding include:

1. Payment of the seed funding in instalments reflecting specific deliverables.
2. Up to 50% of the seed funding should be made available prior to business registration to assist the teams in setting up their enterprises to meet registration regulations. A penalty payment for failure to register within a realistic time period can be imposed.
3. Ensure that the seed funding amount requested at the application stage, is realistic and reflects the proposed start up.
4. Ensure that teams open a business account as soon as possible after joining the INJAZ *Start Up* Program.

Although all start ups are within their infancy stage, **31% of the participants** had an Environmental Sustainability and Awareness Program, and **23%** had a Social Responsibility Program.

Examples of these programs include recycling at work, non-smoking business premises, the reduction of carbon dioxide escaping from red bricks through plastic manufacturing. and buildi-nommodation for poor people.

PARTICIPANTS’ BUSINESS SATISFACTION AND ADVICE FOR START UPS

On average, **43% of participants** responded being satisfied to a ‘good – great’ extent with their start ups.

Dissatisfaction was largely attributed to the darkness enveloping Egypt since 2011 and the participant’s general lack of control over its business implications and consequences.

Overall, the support and promotion provided by INJAZ Egypt was considered “profoundly important”.

“INJAZ Egypt are the family, friend, mentor, manager and consultant all in one ... without INJAZ, we probably would not have this business”.

-SOLETRIK
Start Up Company



Having completed the INJAZ Egypt *Start Up* Program and successfully launched their start ups, the teams shared their advice for others contemplating embarking on a business start up.

“Start up what you can do best - start your business in an area that you are passionate about and have expertise in ... If you have a creative idea that doesn't create value, it will not create a business”.

- LEANUTION
Start Up Company

“It's much more effective to start with a small team of 5 maximum and grow it as the business grows rather than start with a huge team and reduce it”.

- MATLEFESH
Start Up Company

“Do your homework early to make sure you have enough funds to cover the business registration fee and all other related start up fees”.

- CAIRO SITTERS
Start Up Company

“the *Start Up Program* is the beginning of a long, intense and sometimes challenging, and sometimes fulfilling process. The best advice is to be prepared and enjoy the ride.”

- HATLY
Start Up Company

“The *Start Up Program* is not a game or competition. It is an opportunity so use it effectively and wisely”.

-AXOLOGY
Start Up Company

“Everyday we are learning something new. And everything we are learning will make the business stronger, and starting another new business easier! Never stop learning”.

-SOLETRIK
Start Up Company



CONCLUSION: LAUNCHING THE INJAZ AL-ARAB START UP PROGRAM

INJAZ Egypt's *Start Up* Program is a commendable example of fostering youth team-oriented entrepreneurship in MENA and demonstrates the nascent innovation and entrepreneurial talent amongst the region's youth, and especially those within higher education. Indeed, Dina El-Mofti, Executive Director INJAZ Egypt concluded that **"the INJAZ *Start Up* Program is evidence that if you help support young people through training, mentorship, seed funding and investment, the sky is their limit"**. Their knowledge, skills and vision are often considered as "key contributors to the competitiveness and success of nations. If they can maximise the development and use of these attributes, governments have the potential to boost economic growth and prosperity" (Docherty and Fernandez, 2014: 3).

The lessons learnt and best practice recommendations identified in the evaluation study, informed the design and development of the INJAZ *Start Up* Program. The program is embedded in a contextualized and state of the art model that will contribute to the acceleration of Arab youth's entrepreneurial ambition.

The INJAZ *Start Up* Program offers participants a combination of seed funding, mentoring, training and incubation over a structured and intensive six month period culminating in the spin off of officially registered and operational start ups. For more information about the INJAZ *Start Up* Program, please contact ghadeer.zalatimo@injaz-arabia.org.

Following their spin off from the INJAZ *Start Up* Program, alumni can contribute to the growth and development of the INJAZ *Start Up* Program by:

- Becoming mentors / mentor assistants for current participants on the INJAZ *Start Up* Program.
- Getting involved as judges for oncoming applicants to practice their presentations and pitches with.
- Creating a INJAZ *Start Up* Program Alumni network or community to organize social and business network events, provide an interactive on-line members' forum and maintain a presence on social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and Linked In.



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Contributors:

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