



**EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**  
**On**  
**Simulation Games for Change Project**  
**Simulating Egyptian Transition (SET III)**  
**Vision for Egypt 2025**

Submitted to:  
**CRISP - Crisis Simulation for Peace e.V.**  
**Center for Development Services**

**19<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

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## I. PROJECT CONTEXT

The Egyptian uprising in 2011 caused several shockwaves to the political, economic and social norms and structures. Youth played an unparalleled role in mobilizing millions of Egyptians towards claiming a better future that involves reformed and enhanced public services, expanded and safeguarded freedoms, and clear and effective policies that help establish equality and social justice. Having took to the streets and witnessed the country's momentum shift from stagnation to vibration; many Egyptians celebrated their newly found interest in politics which was reflected in the media's dedication to cover every development in the political arena no matter how small. This revolutionised the youth's accessibility to political knowledge which was a promising step towards increasing youth's political and civic engagement. Furthermore, Egyptians in general and the youth in particular experienced electoral events for the first time. They had to make decisions about political candidates, evaluate promises and ideologies.

Amid this excitement, the ghost of division and polarization hovered over the electoral polls. Religion played a significant role in obstructing the path towards constructive social dialogue. It influenced this transition process in various ways. In one way, religion was used by election candidates to gain popularity in their constituencies. For example, many candidates presented themselves as righteous and promised to abide by the religious values. In another way, religious institutions such as houses of worship mobilized its visitors to vote for certain candidates or political parties.

As the youth carved more spaces for participation, religious affiliations transformed into political rivalry, which quickly escalated to violence at all levels. Violence took place on the streets between protesters and security forces, and even extended to family strife whereby members who support different political ideas transcended into petty conflicts. The emphasis on religious identity as a de facto political identity, contributed to the exacerbation of the tensions between Muslims and Christians, and other religious minorities. Given that Egypt had already existing tensions between minorities especially in Upper Egypt and rural areas, the tensions listed above added insult to injury, thus prompting the need for peaceful co-existence as a way to ensure a prosperous future for Egyptians.

The society became even more polarized following the ouster of the Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi supported president, Muhamad Morsi in July 2013. Morsi supporters engaged in several violent clashes against opposition groups yielding the loss of hundreds of lives. The spilling of blood intensified feelings of hate and alienation; and hindered peaceful negotiations. Under the new president General Abdel Fatah Al- Sisi, animosity continued to grow against certain factions of the polity. Language including fifth columns, traitors and non-believers were widely circulated. This terminology was coupled with the propagation of conspiracy theories which contributed to the isolation of various political groups.

In addition, the government of Egypt further alienated active youth through a systematic crack down on civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly human rights' organizations. Sisi's predecessor, Adli Mansour had already set the stage by imposing grave limitations on the rights to freedom of expression and assembly in November 2013 which banned all public gatherings of more than 10 people taking place without prior government approval and striking hefty fines and imprisonment for violators. Under Sisi's leadership, the government of Egypt (GoE) resumed the war through the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) that set a deadline on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014 for "unregistered entities" to register under the flawed NGOs and associations' legislation – Law 84 for the year 2002 or risk being shutdown.

Subsequently, interactions between youth groups became increasingly limited which contributed to lack of knowledge and stereotyping. This phase could be summarized as “shutting out every independent, critical voice from the public sphere, individuals and institutions, Islamist or secular, as well as the erosion of the pillars of the rule of law and the constitution and the deterioration of human rights in the country to a level unprecedented in Egypt’s modern history.”<sup>1</sup>

The vast gap between political elites and the youth also widened for various reasons. A major source of division was the ascendance of the former minister of defense to power which split society into supporters and opponents of the military’s involvement in politics. Another polarizing factor was the fact that all charges against former President Mubarak, his sons and the former Minister of Interior were dropped which brought the Egyptian society to grave polarization. These developments enraged many groups in the society, particularly relatives of those who died during the January 2011 Revolution and its aftermath.

In fact, many people started to think that the uprising failed to reach its goals, as little seemed to have changed and so the positive energy resulting from the uprising had started to wear off. The security apparatus, internal state bureaucracy, state media and the armed forces all collectively referred to as the “deep state” remain resistant to any change or reform. This situation is creating a state of polarization and alienation of youth groups; and could be seen as counterproductive in the transition process towards a democratic, civilian government. To the extent that the positivity or the glue that helped keep the youth on the same side can no longer sustain the pressure.

In 2015, peaceful dialogue became more improbable as Egypt witnessed a surge in terrorist attacks that targeted a host of both state and civilian groups. Incidents ranged from the Supreme Court bombing in February, a series of explosions in Alexandria in March, a bomb that killed 15 military conscripts in Sinai and last but not least the assassination of State Prosecutor Hisham Barakat who’s death spread terror among state officials and stroke doubt in the minds of millions of Egyptians who started to lose faith in the government’s ability to protect itself let alone secure the citizens.

Four years have passed since the beginning of the transitional period and the Egyptian society continues to be plagued with hostilities and divisions. On the one hand, many are incensed over their loved ones who had died in vain and are blaming other factions of society for taking their lives. While on the other hand, others feel better now that Sisi’s military prowess will stop Egypt from descending into chaos. However, most agree that their hearts are filled with fear. Nevertheless, Egyptian youth exhibit strong inclinations towards fighting for peaceful co-existence; and political and social engagement to carve a better future. This could be realized through building bridges of trust and hope to overcome the sense of exclusion, alienation and betrayal. Here is where this project has been relevant and crucial where it provides a space for youth to fulfill a change of perspective; generate mutual understanding of what they envision for the future; find a way to express themselves and vent out their aggravations as well as respect each others’ differences, opinions and viewpoints.

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<sup>1</sup>After 20 Years: CIHRS Moves Its Regional and International Programs outside Egypt." *Cairo Institute for Human Rights*. 9 Dec. 2014. Web. 12 Nov. 2015.

## II. INTRODUCTION TO SET III

This document is an evaluation report on the Simulation Gaming: Simulating Egyptian Transition (SET III) “Vision for Egypt 2025” implemented jointly by CRISP – Crisis Simulation for Peace e.V. and the Center for Development Services (CDS) in Egypt during the period between 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2015 and 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2015 through funding provided by the German Federal Foreign Office.

This project builds on the successful accomplishments of the first two levels of the implementation phases which included the establishment of simulation gaming through 10 workshops in 10 major governorates. The final evaluation was implemented to assess the progress of the project and the overall process towards the objective of the project which is the vision for Egypt 2025. As implemented; level 1 included Luxor, Sohag, Assuit, Cairo, and Al-Fayoum and level 2 included Alexandria, Beni Suef, Aswan, Port Said, and Al-Sharqia in the implementation phases of the simulation games.



Fig. (1): SET (III) Team

SET III project is in reaction to the growing demand from Egyptian youth, particularly from deprived and remote governorates, to participate actively in political and social participation. Opportunities in the field of civic education and youth active engagement are quite limited and almost non-existent outside Cairo and Giza governorates, which form Greater Cairo, the largest and most populated area in the country. Through training a core group of local youth trainers on simulation gaming - who in turn train other facilitators and peers on the methodology and its application, Egyptian youth become empowered and learn to implement more activities regarding political participation and democratic decision-making. The simulation gaming methodology has proved to be a powerful tool to explain political processes, democratic structures and create alternative problem-solving approaches (*Training Manual on Simulation Games for Transition*, May 2013).

To accomplish this, the scenario is set in a city called “Wasa’aya.” *Wasa’aya* mirrors the political, socioeconomic, geographical and demographic realities of Egypt. Like Egypt, the city has one of the longest histories of any modern country which provides its people with a great sense of pride. It also shares with Egypt its blessed strategic position which allows it to soak in culture, knowledge and tradition from several regions. The city’s economy is also similar to the Egyptian one because it is plagued with crony capitalism in which a handful of families control resources in cooperation with the political elites which creates income disparities and spreads grave poverty. Moreover, the city has a youth bulge whereby they constitute over 50% of the total population and suffer from dire unemployment. Furthermore, the city encapsulates a number of religious, tribal and class-based struggles which manifest into deep societal scares that hinder development and prosperity.

The participants are then faced with an ultimate challenge. A foreign investor offers to buy a large piece of land (4000 meters squared) and the political elites welcome the prospects of the sale. However the decision evokes a lot of resistance from the general population especially the large resource-owning families. Having reached an impasse, the political elites decide to initiate a comprehensive social dialogue through which a unanimous decision regarding what to do with the land could be generated.

The sale of the land is intended to simulate a point of disagreement within an overall dynamic of great change. In other words it emulates the transition phase in Egypt. Therefore, the aim of the Simulation Gaming: Simulating Egyptian Transition (SET III) project is to contribute to the inspiration of Egyptian youth at this transitional stage in Egypt's contemporary political and social history by showing opportunities for constructive participation and peaceful coexistence during the ongoing transitional process. More specifically, the Simulation Gaming: Simulating Egyptian Transition (SET III) "Vision for Egypt 2025" hopes to envision Egypt 2025 as a peacefully coexistent community guaranteeing justice for all, offering equal opportunities, celebrating diversity through raising awareness and activating rightful legislations.

### III. EVALUATION

#### A. Methodology

The principles that dictate the approach to this evaluation assignment are as follows: Firstly, a high priority is given to create a robust of actual evidence on results achieved against those planned during the lifetime of the project. The evaluator conducted a desk review of the relevant project documents - project proposal, project's evaluation reports, evaluation sheets, field notes and activities' reports. The aim of this desk review was to assess the key findings and impact of the project against the logical framework outputs, milestones, targets, assumptions and risks.



*Fig. (2): Evaluation workshop's session*

The evaluation also relied on conducting first hand interviews and focus group discussions with 18 trainers and facilitators who participated in the first, second and third phase of the project to develop and apply the simulation game and the 2015 Egypt vision. This was followed by in-depth interviews with the project's coordinators from CDS and CRISP, and a round-table discussion with CRISP and CDS project managers to assess the project and discuss the next phase. The in-depth interviews were later transcribed into a collection of success stories in the form of case studies that aimed to reflect as well as analyze real life cases with the aim of highlighting the impact of the project on both the project team and the participants. Using what if questions, this evaluation focused on the actual results and outcomes of the project versus those planned with the outmost support from the participants in the creation of new ideas for the future.

## B. Limitations

As a result of the restricted time frame allocated for the evaluation exercise, the evaluator found it challenging to meet and interview a large number of beneficiaries as well as visit governorates/areas where the simulation game exercise was implemented. Also, a number of the participants shied away from sharing their opinions openly on account of the lack of prior acquaintance with the evaluator. Nonetheless, this was helpful in reducing the margin of the personal bias possible if the facilitators had been the ones conducting the evaluations.

Another issue that should be put into consideration is the fact that group dynamics could have tampered with the participants' overall reaction to the sessions. Issues like peer-pressure whereby some hesitated to express their thoughts, especially when their thoughts opposed the views of other participants.

However, the responses and feedback obtained from the informants during the FGDs and interviews compensated both in depth and reliability, thus providing adequate data to formulate a comprehensive overview of the project and its effectiveness and impact at the outcome and output levels.

## III. IMPACT

*Al Wasa'aya* incorporated both simulation gaming techniques whereby the facilitators and the participants were provided with a set of rigid rules and regulations that they were to abide by. At the same time the scenario was malleable enough to allow them to partially construct their own realities through a series of improvisations. The impact assessment is a difficult task to carry out. It is also challenging to assess the impact of the simulation gaming on real-life situations and how it paves the way towards more communication between the different social groups and engages constructively to debate and discuss political and social issues in the Egyptian society. However, utilizing a mixed approach of Design-in-large (DIL) and Design-in-small models (DIS), SET (III) aimed to simulate the actor's decision-making processes and to showcase the consequences in relation to existing social systems; and consolidate learnt experiences through a sequence of debriefings. This mixed approach allows for part of reality to be represented, simulated and applied as a dynamic model which manifests in the form of a scenario (DIL). It then moves on to integrate stakeholders as agents and actors who are later invited to influence the design and dictate the outcome (DIS). The first round of debriefing takes place throughout the whole process as a way of enhancing the learning process and to apply newly gained insights, knowledge and skills on the simulated reality. The secondary debriefing or the meta-debriefing helps participants take a step back from this life-altering experience to evaluate and assess the similarities as well as the differences between reality level 1 and the constructed realities in an effort to generate a number of values which can then be applied to help young men and women achieve a vision for Egypt 2025.

## A. General Impact

At the workshops' level, the process itself was empowering for both the facilitators and participants. A useful way of assessing this impact was to consider the participant's reactions when asked to evaluate the methodology. Through a series of reflection questionnaires and an open forum evaluation session, participants stated that the method of simulation gaming is considered a learning method towards development that can be used in more than one subject and to simulate more than one issue/problem in the community. They agreed



*Fig. (3): Group work during one of the workshops*

that simulation gaming is an approach to reach real life problems and issues using the exchange of roles and ideas as well as enriching the knowledge and information of the participants through a diversity of people/personalities/characters. Other participants stated that the concept of simulation gaming can change the perspectives on certain fixed views and beliefs that are concrete in the society.

All the participants agreed that the method of simulation gaming is an open-minded approach that develops problem-solving skills through discourse, role-play and teamwork. They also described the method as giving the participants the space for freedom of expression with little to no restraints. More so, they said that the simulation game gave them the freedom of information and expression where they play different roles that have various backgrounds – “it was motivating and interesting”. In addition, they praised simulation gaming for its ability to reformulate the value of development from a new and different perspective and how it can be effective within the community. Other advantages that were pointed out by the participants included the possibility to utilize this method as a tool of persuasion, in addition to being an important asset for the development of the community.

## B. Individual Impact

The impact at the individual level on the master trainers and the facilitators was evident. One can easily spot the commitment and willingness of the trainers and facilitators to push for the continuation of the Simulation Club; which is already formed and structure of responsibilities developed.

The participants also reflected on their experiences at the workshop and their remarks were particularly eye-opening. They mainly highlighted the impact of simulation gaming on creating a sphere for self-expression, exchange of opinions, and constructive dialogue among participants during the game itself.

The game had a positive impact on providing the participating youth with a set of advanced soft skills including communication, interpersonal and negotiation skills, teamwork skills, analytical thinking, decision-making skills and problem-solving skills. It also highlighted the participants' shortcomings such that the participants themselves discovered that internally they had issues of their own – real issues that most of them were not aware about – such as communication/negotiation/self-expression/the ability to change – and other important concepts such as citizenship/basic human rights/etc. The deliberations of

the game definitely had a positive impact on increasing the participation of the youth involved; enhancing their sense of empathy and responsibility towards each other. Moreover, it facilitated the creation of channels of communication to engage in a productive manner and embrace their differences. It also facilitated some sort of “Brain Switch”; which helped them adopt other perspectives and play roles different from their temperament and personal values. Most importantly, simulation gaming helped them realize their true value that provided a number of participants to pursue their dreams which will be later highlighted in the success stories.

## IV. REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This section highlights several points to be reflected upon in the overall evaluation of the Simulation Gaming: Simulating Egyptian Transition (SET III) “Vision for Egypt 2025”

DIS: Reflections upon the experiences gained through the design of a simulation game or a controlled emulate of reality

At the planning level:

- Enhancing the networking with other entities to ensure better technical and financial support;
- Establishing networking mechanisms with government entities to facilitate the operationalisation of the set timeframe and deliverables;
- Incorporating a strategy for each group in each of the 10 governorates to smoothen the progress of the simulation game;
- Reactivating the simulation gaming club so that the participants can continue working as a group on values and how they can be translated into new games;
- Better coordination of the simulations’ Facebook pages to facilitate networking among the different groups;
- Increasing the presence of expert partners throughout the workshops particularly in regards to explaining the intricate of social dialogue;
- Developing a detailed monitoring plan and ensure its timely implementation;
- Organizing new games and scenarios that deal with a wider range of social issues such as elections, entrepreneurship and education;
- Incorporating humor in the writing of the scenarios;
- Extending the duration of the local workshops beyond two days;
- Investing enough time in the recruitment and the capacity building of the participants.

- At the implementation level:

- Giving more time to activities- explaining the tasks clearly and in details to avoid confusing the participants;
- Undertaking several icebreaking and teambuilding exercises to ensure harmony between the participants;
- Providing clear conceptualization of what the term value entails both in theory and in practice so as not to confuse participants;
- Providing continuous monitoring and follow up of the facilitators and participants to ensure a high quality delivery of the simulation game;

- Investing more time and effort regarding the skills development of the participants;
- Encouraging participation to create a sphere for joint learning and exchange of experiences;
- Promoting the participants' sense of achievement and self-esteem;
- Giving enough time for reflection and room for all participants to express their emotions and vent out any stresses they may have encountered;
- Considering approaches to capture these reflections in writing such as asking participants to keep a daily journal, writing case stories, using digital storytelling or other documentation techniques;
- Implementing the idea on various institutional levels particularly in the health sector in Egypt;

The DIL: Applying the outcomes on real issues and implementing the vision for Egypt 2025

- Participants' suggested starting with revenge killings and other pressing issues in the Egyptian society;
- Reaching out to other entities and expanding scope to cooperate with public entities and the private sector;
- Networking and exploring new avenues for the application of simulation gaming and engaging new partners and donors from the public and private sector to support the process;
- Enhancing networks in different communities in order to achieve the vision all over Egypt;
- Engaging with the media to create a support base for simulation gaming methodology in Egypt to explore different topics and create knowledge on these areas such as human rights, environmental issues, gender, refugees and migrants, etc.
- Creating a media committee that can be responsible for all publications as well as the organization of all social media channels associated with the project.
- Utilizing the networks to facilitate the application of the strategies of change in real life.

## V. SUCESS STORIES

### Success Story 1

#### Ahmed El Saïdy: “The Legend” or Ostoura

*“We are all citizens of this country, we all struggle but we all have duties and responsibilities towards each other as members of one nation.”*

Ahmed El Saïdy is a distinguished model of a young man aspiring to break through the development scene in Egypt. Having graduated from the Faculty of Law in Assiut governorate in 2007, he went on to become a Human Rights’ advocate. Following the January 25<sup>th</sup> revolution, he found his passion in defending issues that range from human rights in general to freedom of expression, women’s rights, harassment, gender-based violence and torture.



He commenced his flourishing career in 2014 by being one of the participants of the CRISP CDS project - Simulating the Egyptian Transition (SET II) and being an essential player of the Zamposia simulation gaming initiative. This particular interactive system seeks to replicate segments of reality whereby participants engage in a thorough process of self-reflection, conflict-handling skills and personality development. El Saïdy suggests that these role playing exercises are indispensable for infusing values of co-existence, compassion, and empathy among the Egyptian society. He also emphasizes the value-added of the simulation gaming technique regarding its unparalleled ability to provide participants with the know-how and skills needed to independently embark on a journey of self-discovery and capacity building.

Following the conclusion of his first practice at Zamposia, El Saïdy hoped to expand and share this educational and life-altering experience with people all over the country. Hence, he successfully led the application of several simulation games in 2015 in Cairo, Alexandria, Ein El Sokhna, Sohag and Fayoum governorates. These workshops bravely tackled highly sensitive issues/taboo concepts including Muslim-Christian relations, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Gender-based violence, sexual harassment and domestic abuse. Among El Saïdy’s proudest highlights of the workshops is the case of Mariam, a Christian girl and Salah, a Muslim man who visited Cairo together for the first time despite the difficulties restricting their interaction back in Sohag governorate.

He consolidated his career by creating sustainable platforms for the dissemination of simulation gaming concepts. Through these platforms, he was able to ensure the empowerment of what he called “Ambassadors of Change and Dialogue”. The essence of such an establishment is to foster peaceful relations between NGOs, CSOs, and the public and private sectors. It also aims to bridge the conceptual and practical gaps between these entities so as to establish fruitful cooperation, progress and change. In El Saïdy’s words “we are all citizens of this country, we all struggle but we all have duties and responsibilities towards each other as members of one nation.”

## Success Story 2

### Mariam Michelle Malak: A Changed Woman

*“In the midst of our differences, there are always things that unite us.”*

Mariam Michelle Malak is a 24 year old woman. Malak grew up with her family in Sohag where she also gained her Bachelor degree in Business administration and is currently working on her master’s degree in Accounting. Her giving nature led her to take a career path in charitable work and thus she became a supervisor of illiteracy eradication projects in Sohag governorate.



Having been sheltered her whole life, Malak was the perfect example of a women with stifled potential. Nonetheless, conditions changed upon her participation in CRISP CDS project - Simulating the Egyptian Transition (SET III) held in Sohag in 2015. The workshop highlighted the utilization of drawing as a therapeutic tool of self-expression. It also emphasized the importance of setting goals and honoring values.

Assuming the role of a Journalist, She quickly came into direct confrontation with “the other”. Initially, she felt estranged by the unprecedented nature of the experience. She was instructed to wear someone else’s skin; which was a new experience for Malak. However, a couple of hours into the workshop, she had successfully crawled under the character’s skin and walked around in it.

Malak’s success was derived from her ability to maximize the lessons learnt from her experience in the simulation gaming workshop. Having been encouraged to leave her comfort zone and interact with people from different socioeconomic, cultural and most importantly religious backgrounds, she became familiar with various identity formations.

She went further in her journey of self-discovery to the extent that she did something she never thought she would do. She persuaded her parents to allow her to travel to Cairo: first with a group of her fellow workshop participants and later with Salah, a Muslim man - who also took part in the workshops.

Malak truly shines as someone with the ability to grow and change. She walked away from the simulation gaming experience, a changed person. She grew to appreciate diversity and overcome her fear of change. At the same time, she developed a new lens to view the world; one that allows her to regard humanitarian interaction as stemming from acceptance, coexistence and respect of others. Malak concludes saying that “in the midst of our differences, there are always things that unite us”.

## Success Story 3

### Samaher Gamal El Din Hefny: A Shining Star

*“We need to work on ourselves for the self is the core of change and development”.*

Samaher Gamal El Din Hefny is a young woman from Aswan. She has made tremendous progress in her education and now she is well on her way towards finishing her Bachelor degree at the Faculty of Agriculture in Aswan with a focus on her dream to revolutionize food processing in Egypt.

Hefny does not remember herself being particularly more optimistic than her colleagues at university. On the contrary, she used to find herself thinking about all sorts of dead ends in life: social ones; which are mainly associated with her being a women living in an isolated environment in Aswan, in addition to professional impasses that are again derived from being a female member of a workforce where unemployment, nepotism and discrimination are characteristic.



However, her mindset began to transform after she concluded her first training of trainers (ToT) session at Y-Peer Egypt. This experience opened Hefny’s eyes to a treasure of knowledge and self-development. She described these training sessions as “the only field that would help us realize behavioral change in Egypt.” Hence, she overcame cultural and traditional obstacles that could have stood in the way of applying for an advanced ToT event in Jordan.

Upon her return from Jordan, Hefny was sure she had found her path in life and thus there was no stopping her progress. From this point onwards, she spread herself as thin as possible in order to familiarize herself with all there is to know about simulation games and workshop facilitation techniques.

Her activities included Amr Khaled’s Lifemakers organization where she played a major role in the *Mashrou’ Insan* project. She also participated in Enactus Egypt and CDS CRISP Simulating the Egyptian Transition project (SET III) - Zamposia. In addition to having spearheaded several student initiatives such as Civilization Maker with engineering students and the Youth Creativity Forum; which were mainly focused on empowering Egyptian youth, Hefny’s toil did not go unnoticed for she was a recipient of Microsoft’s Aspire Woman Award. She was celebrated for her much valued contributions to the Aspire Woman’s mentorship program.

Hefny’s career in mentorship and facilitation reached its peak when she was chosen as part of a team of 40 facilitators for CRISP CDS project - Simulating the Egyptian Transition (SET III) *“El Wasaa’ya”* in Aswan and Port Said. This particular round of CRISP CDS simulation games aimed to propagate values of

peaceful co-existence so as to encourage the birth of a peaceful environment whereby people of widely differing social backgrounds, political ideologies and gender orientations live in harmony.

The idea of peaceful co-existence hit a nerve in Hefny. Following the conclusion of the final workshop, she began reflecting on what it really meant for someone to be at peace and conversely what it meant for someone to experience conflict. This dilemma led her to question the so-called Egyptian values or in other words the lack there-of ethical pillars. Having had the chance to enrich her critical and analytical skills during the workshops, she started posing two sets of questions: What are norms? Where do they come from? And can we channel them to people who did not have values to begin with?\*

The second set of follow up questions tackled the processing of such norms: Do values and norms dictate our afflictions and behaviours? And if the answer is yes, then can we differentiate between surrendering to social pressure on the one hand and accepting difference on the other?

Having come into direct confrontation with these almost rhetorical questions for the first time, Hefny became preoccupied with the paradoxes surrounding acceptance and change. The CRISP CDS simulation established peace as a desirable end result for the clash experienced by people every day. However, Hefny did not find this answer gratifying. What is more, she highlighted the possible paradox attached to acceptance. She explained saying “we have no comprehensive understanding of what happens when we accept others. Is it simply mere acceptance or is it a manifestation of an inherent weakness within us?”

This is a question that Hefny herself could not answer. Nonetheless, what she uttered after expressing deep confusion was somewhat of an illustration of the great depth character, maturity of mind and purity of soul she reached: “We need to work on ourselves for the self is the core of change and development”.

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*\*Hefny’s scepticism on the workshops’ true ability to instil values and ethics in people that have none is a highly beneficial contribution to our development project. It is indeed undeniable that values and ethics are intangible. Luckily, they are also volatile. This means that even though we are incapable of insuring transmission, we are quite sure that we are social beings that adapt and change. What is equally fascinating is that we learn in mysterious ways.*

## Success Story 4

### Mohamed Aly Hassan Osman: Humble But Holds Grand Dreams

Mohamed Aly Hassan Osman is a man of humble beginnings but with a bright future. Osman holds a Diploma in Social Services from Beni Suf University. Even though his dream of becoming a film-director was not realized, he persevered in order to tread another path. Having been forced into pursuing social services as per his degree, he found himself being stirred towards developmental projects.



Ergo, his first step towards building a career in development was as a facilitator of a social solidarity group in his hometown, Beni Suf.

The project aimed to inform as well as educate the youth about employment opportunities and productivity enhancement methods. By way of empowering others, he was also empowered. After he became aware of his capacity to make a difference in other people's lives, he immediately felt the growth in his confidence and self-esteem. Before his experience in facilitation, his self-perception was like millions of Egyptian youth who feel victimized by their socioeconomic realities and dwarfed by their low quality education.

Having realized his self-worth, Osman went on to participate in several initiatives including Enactus Egypt and TEDx Talks. These experiences enhanced his networking and team work skills even further. Hence, he took the daring step of applying for a more competitive position at the CRISP CDS Simulating Egyptian Transition (SET I). However, he was unsuccessful in his efforts to join. Nonetheless, he later applied for CRISP CDS project - Simulating the Egyptian Transition (SET II) and got accepted.

By the end of his participation in the simulation gaming sessions, he understood clearly the importance of setting goals and working towards achieving such objectives. As opposed to his previous nonchalant attitude towards his future, he is now in better command of his life. He is developing a plan to open his own development foundation; which will provide him with the freedom and space to grow as well as help others become better versions of themselves.

Osman experienced a considerable amount of uncertainty regarding the deliberations of the simulation. He expected to get immediate results in the form of a set of mechanisms that would enable the implementation of the plan derived from the workshops. What is more, he felt that he remains skeptic of the sustainability of these plans.

Nevertheless, his contribution to bettering the sessions was quite grand. He enjoyed switching lives with other people; which allowed him to see the world from varied angles. In addition, simulation gaming also provided him with a temporary identity and by extension it enabled him to conceal his own identity;

which gave him a unique opportunity to express himself freely with little to no considerations of what people may think of him.

However, he highlighted the possible side effects of losing one's self in a character. He explained further by pointing to the time following the conclusion of the workshops. He described it saying "I was so stressed and I could not figure out why. I simply was not myself." He also suggested a remedy to get rid of the stress resulting from participants getting caught up in negative emotions. He proposed the inclusion of support groups in the final sessions whereby the participants would reach catharsis, thus discarding all traces of negative energy that they may have picked up during the sessions.

Finally, he expressed his gratitude to CDS and CRISP for granting him the chance to take part in such a life-altering experience and said that he hopes to see the simulation gaming methodology being implemented on a bigger scale.

## Success Story 5

### Zainab Heider: A Story of Empowerment

*“I want to be; it is hard to make something out of one’s self in the midst of all the poverty and the social pressures. Yet, I will continue to fight for my place in this world and I won’t give up.”*

Zainab Heidar also known as Zouzou Kaa’besh is a 31 year old female; living in Luxor governorate in Asna’ district. Zouzou is the eldest of her two siblings. Since the death of her mother - Zouzou at the early age of 15 years old - began to physically and emotionally support her siblings and carry a large responsibility. Zouzou is an optimistic young woman who found herself carrying a large burden at an early age and faced by a society where women were always deemed inferior to men. The community of Luxor is isolated and tribal by nature. She believes that she is the man of the house after her father and that she endures and is responsible of tasks more than any men. Zouzou is extremely self-reliant in order to face her harsh living conditions.



Zouzou received a diploma in Business and had to stop her educational path to support her siblings to be able to complete their education. Zouzou belongs to the lower Egyptian social class and has seen years of poverty and deprivation. Zouzou began to buy and sell clothes in Luxor and one day while waiting for transportation, she met a woman who encouraged her to attend a training workshop on handicrafts. She faced the refusal of her family first then after 3 whole months, she stood up for herself and convinced them that she had to work outside of the house and not only in buying and selling clothes. After the training received, Zouzou met members of human rights NGO and they convinced her to receive training in human development and be part of their NGO. The fact that Zouzou was not aware about anything related to human rights was a challenge but that was her first step into civil work.

Zouzou faced tough criticism from her family and people in her community and was even pushed to believe that work could challenge her marriage potentials. Zouzou did not listen to all this and followed the path that she believed was written for her. She met a journalist at her job and decided she could learn the job as well. In addition, Zouzou is very talented and creative and she began to learn, design and sell the art of handicrafts as well.

For Zouzou, it was the first time to participate in a development project and be part of the SET projects in particular. Zouzou discovered the CDS application form online through a friend of hers; she loved the idea but lacked self-confidence at first to apply and thought she was never going to be selected as a participant because she did not have enough experience. Zouzou was also very reluctant to apply because she lost faith in development agencies and every time she applied to be part of a project; the core team selected their neighbors and/or friends. Zouzou decided she was going to try again and apply to SET III. After filling the project application form, Zainab waited and finally received a phone call from CDS saying that she was selected as one of the 30 participants amongst 250 in Egypt to be part of SET III.

When Zouzou got accepted and first arrived to Cairo; she felt she was so out of place and felt demeaned since the participants were all better educated and financially stable. She decided that she could not

participate and was on her way back when she thought that CDS had chosen her because they saw something in her and her willingness to prove herself was bigger than her social and financial status.

When Zouzou participated in the first SET III seminar; she felt that she was good enough to have a say and other participants respected her and her point of view. Zouzou never saw herself having enough self-confidence and knowledge to become a trainer. Throughout the SET III training phases, she became responsible for the training group and was empowered by the encouragement and support of the project team as well as her fellow participants.

A couple of months into the simulation, Zouzou felt that she has gained enough skills to organize the local workshop in Luxor which was a great success. Then, she transferred the method of the simulation game learnt during the project to the members of the NGO she works in. She gained facilitation and communication skills and is proud to be able to stand up in front of a crowd and speak her mind with no restrictions. She also gained self-confidence and trusts that she can be a leader in her community. In addition, Zouzou has always been living in a closed community and SET III opened doors to a large network all over Egypt with the participation of 35 members from 12 governorates to the project.

Zouzou is also very talented in handcrafts and she gave several training workshops in Egypt and China regarding her work. Zouzou did benefit from her newly acquired networking skills and is confident that she can sell her products online. Zouzou is an exceptional young lady with a confident empowered smile like no other. She believes that nothing is impossible as long as the person has the willingness to fight *“I want to be; it is hard to make something out of one’s self in the midst of all the poverty and the social pressures. Yet, I will continue to fight for my place in this world and I won’t give up.”*