



uttonUp

Empowering local communities



2023

PROFILE



At a glance

ButtonUp is an Egyptian social enterprise that emerged from the convergence of entrepreneurship and community empowerment. Established in 2019, our organization adopts a bottom-up approach to drive economic empowerment among women and youth residing in Egypt's most marginalized regions.

During our senior year at university, we initiated an educational project for children in collaboration with a community development association based in Izbet Khairallah.

2016

Through voluntary efforts and the support of our network, we successfully trained 20 women from Izbet Khairallah on sewing skills and provided them with the necessary machinery.

2019

By incorporating new products, services, and training programs, we were able to expand our beneficiary base to include more women and youth. Additionally, we extended our geographical reach beyond Izbet Khairallah, creating a scalable model that better caters to the diverse needs of local communities.

2015

In response to high dropout rates among students due to the financial difficulties faced by families, particularly those supported by women, we embarked on developing a new intervention.

2017

ButtonUp was officially launched, marking the beginning of our sewing workshop in Izbet Khairallah. This marked the first milestone in our journey to establish an Egyptian brand that aims to empower women and youth in local communities through various eco-friendly industries.

2020 - 2023

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Meet the Founders



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Managing Director

MSc. in Gender & Development

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MSc. in Gender & Development

BA. in Political Science from the Faculty of Economics and Political science, Cairo University



Mohsen Atef, CFA

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MSc. In Economic development

BA. in Economics from the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University



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Head of Production, and Vocational Trainings

BA. in Science from the Faculty of Science, Alexandria University

Key Milestones



Queen Camilla visit – November 2021

We had the privilege of hosting Her Royal Highness Camilla, Queen of the United Kingdom, during her visit to Egypt. It was a momentous occasion as she personally selected our initiative in Izbet Khairallah to explore and meet the exceptional women driving our enterprise forward. This esteemed visit was the result of the fruitful collaboration between ButtonUp and the British Council Egypt, as we worked together to implement the Climate Change Social Action project in Izbet Khairallah.

Live in COP 26 – October 2021

We proudly participated in COP 26, in Glasgow. It was a moment of great honor for us when Abdelfattah Nada, Co-founder of ButtonUp, was selected to address world leaders on behalf of the youth of the Earth. In his impactful speech, Abdelfattah emphasized the vital role that women and youth in local communities can play in addressing climate change risks through innovative local solutions. As a representative of Egyptian youth, he extended an invitation to host the 27th edition of COP in Egypt,



Key Milestones – Cont'd

COP 27 with Taproot – November 2022

ButtonUp was proud to participate in COP27, the global summit on climate change, in three different spots, highlighting the outstanding eco-friendly products created by the Taproot project in collaboration with Emirates NBD. At our exhibition booth, we showcased the diverse range of sustainable products made by local communities, emphasizing their commitment to environmental stewardship. Our interactive displays engaged visitors and educated them about the innovative solutions implemented by Taproot to address pressing environmental challenges. Additionally, our dedicated panel discussions at the event shed light on the collaborative efforts between ButtonUp, Taproot, and Emirates NBD, emphasizing the importance of supporting local economies while promoting eco-conscious production and consumption. Our presence at COP27 not only showcased the incredible impact of the Taproot project but also solidified ButtonUp's commitment to sustainable and community-focused initiatives on a global scale.



Tamkeny Community Center – May 2023

Buttonup proudly inaugurated the Tamkeny Community Center in Ras Ghareb City, situated 350 kilometers from Cairo. In the midst of a global economic crisis, the Tamkeny Center plays a crucial role in addressing the urgent requirements of women and youth in Ras Ghareb. Our center aims to empower individuals by providing them with essential skills and creating a platform for learning. Tamkeny Center represents a significant milestone for Buttonup, closely aligned with its vision of expanding its model to various communities across Egypt.



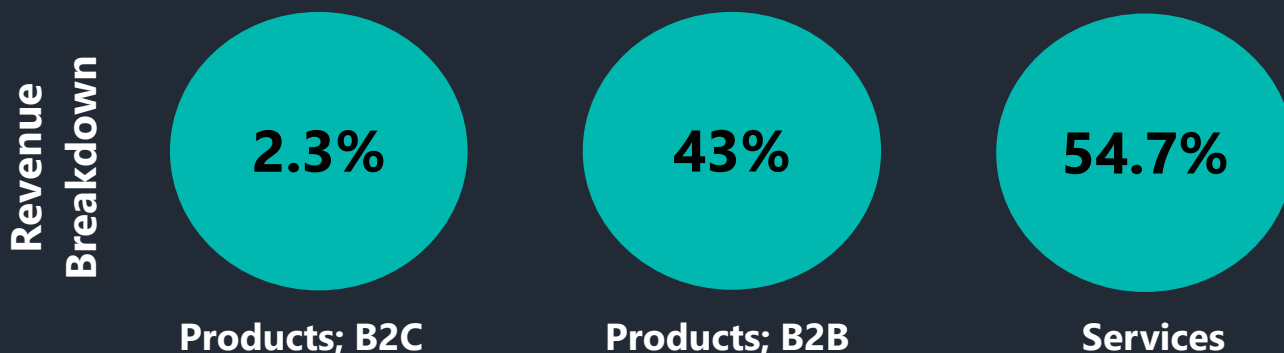
Our Business

ButtonUp is a purpose-driven company that is committed to making a remarkable difference in local communities. Our primary focus is on unlocking the power of these communities to bring about positive change.

At ButtonUp, our mission is to create a thriving and sustainable environment that promotes the economic empowerment of women and youth in Egypt's most underprivileged areas. To achieve this vision, we operate across two interconnected business segments: products and services.

In the products segment, we offer a diverse range of niche products including tote bags, backpacks, shoulder bags, lunch bags, laptop sleeves, notebooks, and flasks, among others. What sets our products apart is our incorporation of cultural elements into their design. By blending modern aesthetics with heritage-inspired themes, we cater to a growing yet underserved market. Moreover, we prioritize the use of high-quality materials and adhere to environmentally friendly production practices. This unique business model enables us to meet the spiritual and physical needs of our individual and organizational clients.

In the services segment, we provide vocational, entrepreneurship, and business-related trainings, among other offerings. Our comprehensive training portfolio spans various skills, from sewing, tailoring, and embroidery to marketing and finance for micro-enterprises. These training programs aim to enhance the capacities of our beneficiaries, equipping them with the necessary skills to enter the labor market or embark on their own entrepreneurial ventures. Furthermore, we offer customized services tailored to the specific needs of our clients.



Total Revenues: EGP 6.59 million

Number of Products Sold: 30,435 pieces

Number of B2B clients: 41 clients

Number of B2C clients: 700 clients

Number of services clients: 10 clients

Our Social Impact

At ButtonUp, our unique social mission is at the core of our business model, driving our efforts to empower local communities in Egypt through social entrepreneurship.

Since our official launch in 2019, we have made remarkable strides in establishing the first-of-its-kind Egyptian brand in Izbet Khairallah, an underprivileged area in Cairo. Our focus has been on connecting female employees to the marketplace through eco-friendly products, resulting in the sale of over 16,000 items to individuals and organizations. Furthermore, we have secured 16 partnerships with private sector players and civil society organizations, enabling us to provide vocational and soft skills training to more than 350 women and youth.

Our commitment for building resilient local communities has been especially evident in our response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the strain on the Egyptian healthcare system, we took action to support medical staff by producing and distributing over 10,000 gowns to various isolation hospitals, helping to address the shortage of protective gear.

As we continue to grow, our commitment to social entrepreneurship and empowering local communities remains unwavering. We are driven by the belief that sustainable, inclusive development can be achieved by creating opportunities and fostering resilience in the face of adversity. Through partnerships with other development actors, we seek to replicate our successful model in Izbet Khairallah across different areas of the country in the years to come.



Capacity Building for Youth and Women: 955 trainees on business and vocational trainings

Partnerships for Community Mobilization: 21 partnerships with CSRs, NGOs and CDAs

Encouraging Self-employment of Women: 6650 working hours in our production unit*

Number of upcycled Products Sold: 1800

Unlocking the Power of Local Communities

“Our Approach”

Our business model is designed such that to ensure that no one is left behind, we aim to strike a harmonious balance between operating a successful business in a competitive landscape and creating positive social and environmental impact. We achieve this by empowering local communities and leveraging their potential to provide locally driven solutions.

ButtonUp takes a grassroots approach, focusing on innovative and targeted solutions tailored to specific geographical areas in need. This approach allows us to deliver customized and responsive interventions and continuously evolve to meet the changing requirements of our beneficiaries. In addition to providing employment opportunities, we strongly believe in the multidimensional nature of empowerment. Hence, we support our beneficiaries in developing the skills and agency to become entrepreneurs themselves through comprehensive capacity-building training programs.

Moreover, we recognize the power of local communities in devising solutions to combat climate change risks. To contribute to this cause, we have implemented a green supply chain process, ensuring that all our products are environmentally friendly. By prioritizing sustainability, we aim to create a positive impact on both local communities and the environment.

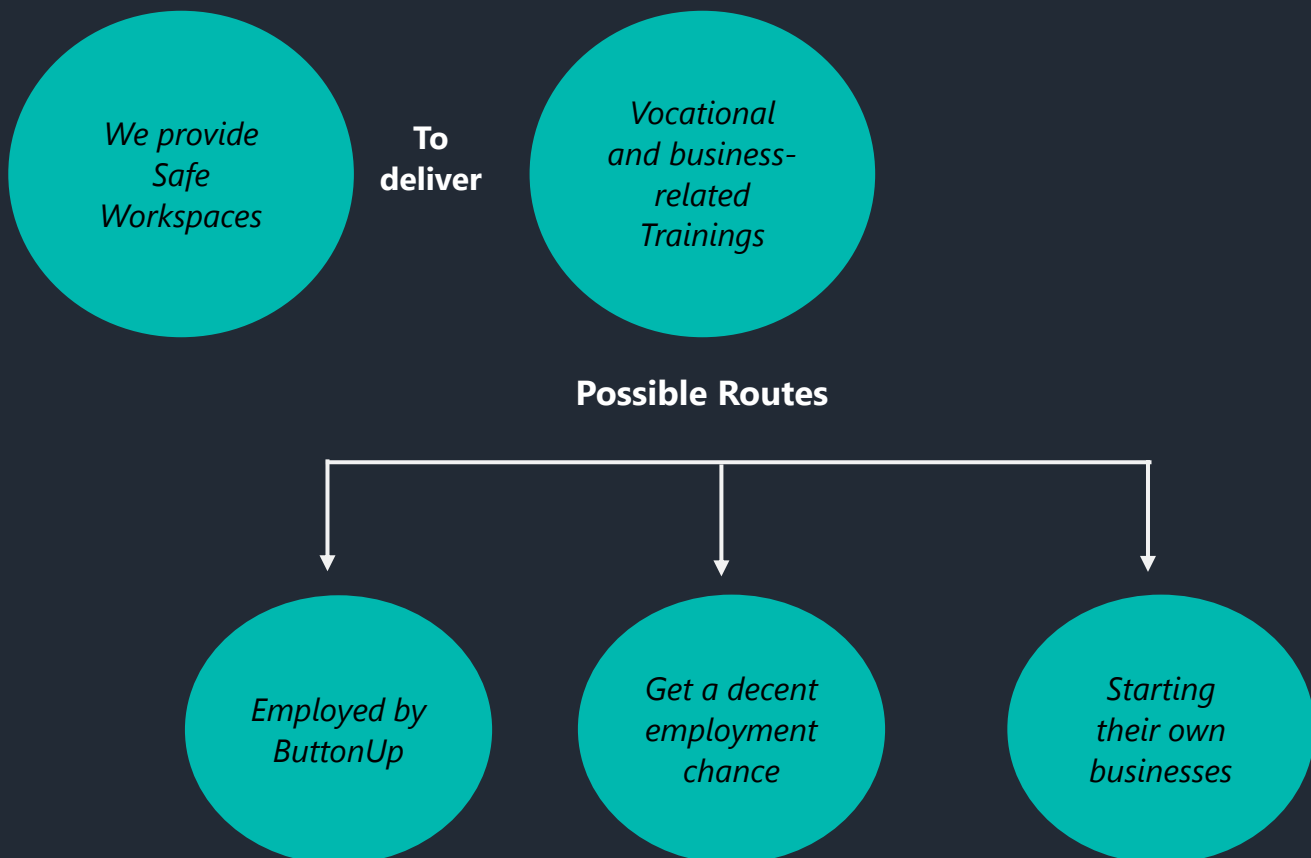


i. Creating Opportunities

We are driven by a deep commitment to economic empowerment, placing it at the heart of our social mission. We strive to develop skills, foster entrepreneurship, offer employment opportunities, and facilitate connections for hard-working women in today's dynamic marketplace.

By forging partnerships with local community associations, ButtonUp establishes safe workspaces that attract women and youth from diverse areas, providing them with invaluable opportunities to learn essential vocational and business-related skills that is crucial for success in the modern marketplace.

Beyond the women and youth that we employ, our comprehensive capacity-building trainings empower our beneficiaries to enhance their employability in the labor market or embark on their entrepreneurial journeys should they choose to do so. Through these initiatives, we aim to create a positive impact on individuals' lives and contribute to their long-term success.

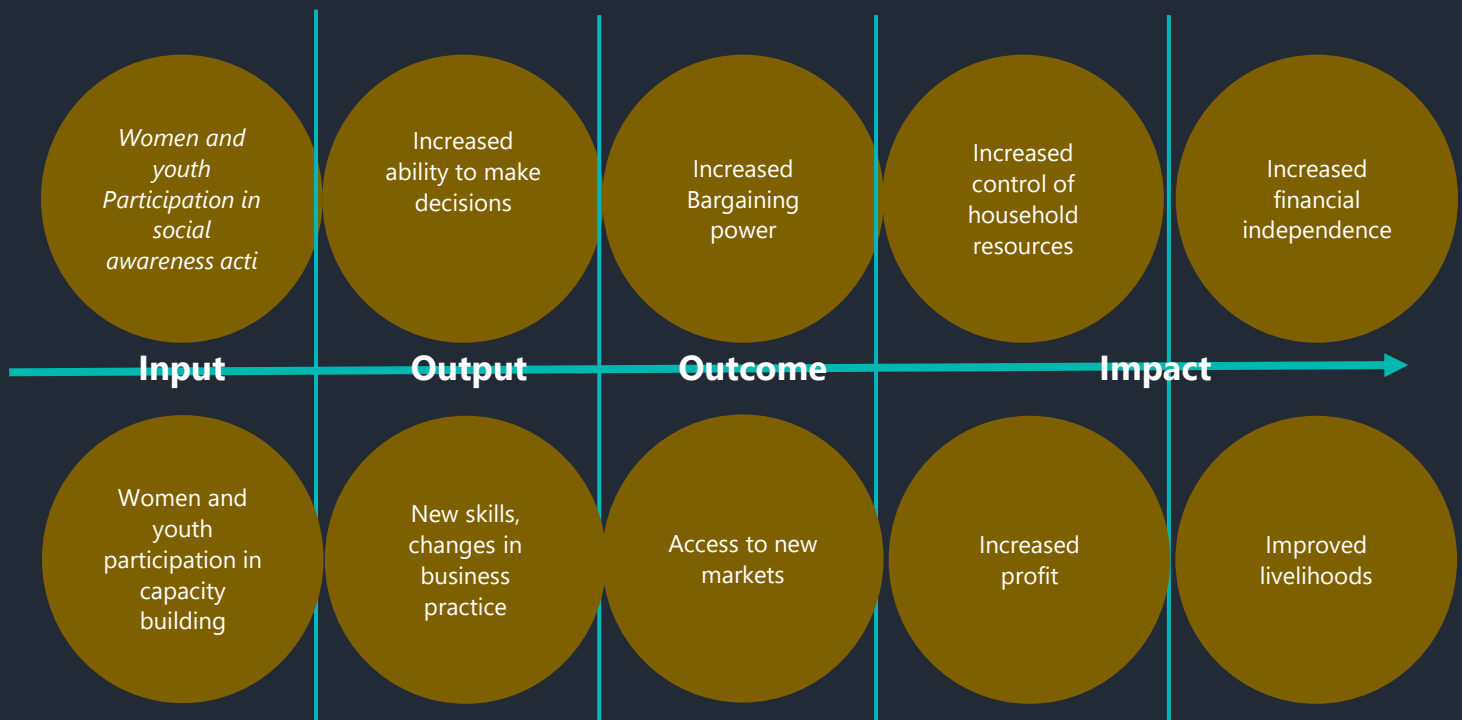


ii. Our Theory of Change

ButtonUp commitment to empowering women in local communities extends beyond merely enhancing their vocational skills. We firmly believe that true economic empowerment for women is achieved when they possess the autonomy to thrive and progress economically and possess the ability to make informed and effective economic choices.



Power and Agency



Economic Advancement

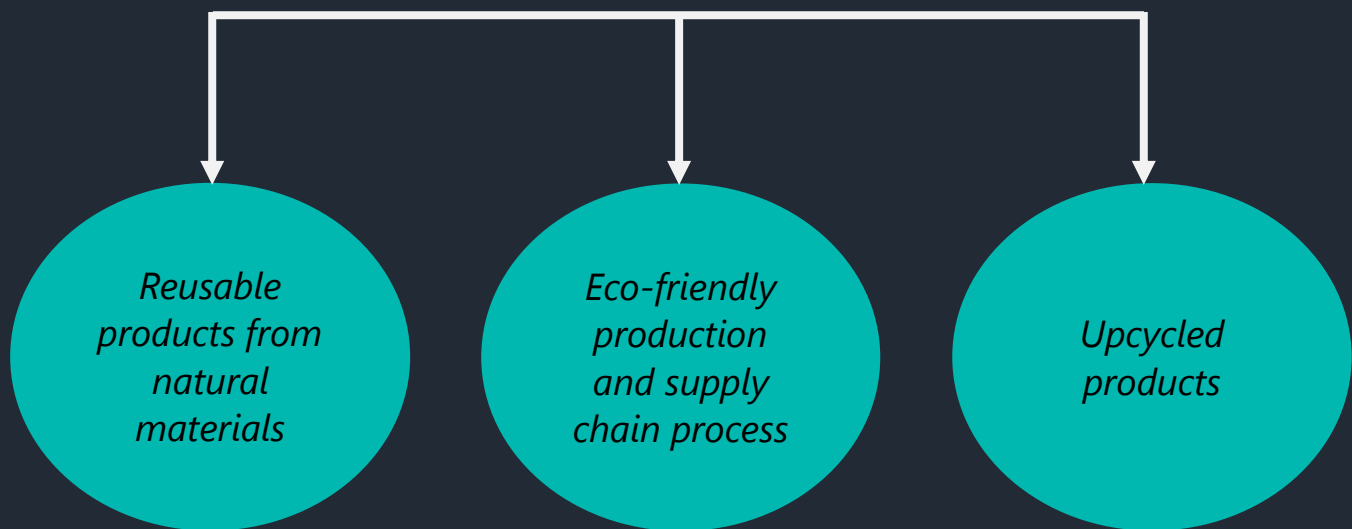
iii. Toward Net Zero

The challenges posed by climate change have necessitated a shift towards sustainable consumption and production. At ButtonUp, we are committed to providing a model that empowers small businesses to embrace sustainability. We achieve this by manufacturing upcycled and reusable products, implementing environmentally friendly processes, and offering comprehensive training on eco-friendly practices.

Our approach enables young entrepreneurs to actively participate in environmental conservation while simultaneously driving profitability. We firmly believe that adopting greener processes yields multiple benefits, including cost reductions, increased productivity, and enhanced product appeal.

As an organization, ButtonUp is dedicated to facilitating the transition towards a net-zero future. Through our innovative model, we strive to inspire businesses to take responsibility for their ecological impact and contribute to a more sustainable world.

Environmental Sustainability Pillars



iv. Contribution to SDGs

At ButtonUp, we firmly believe in the power of social entrepreneurship to make meaningful progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (“SDGs”). The global adoption of the SDGs has heightened the demand for sustainable solutions to development challenges, and we recognize social entrepreneurship as a promising approach to address these issues effectively.

As a social business, we adhere to and implement several core principles. Firstly, we leverage business and management practices to tackle social problems, particularly in cases where conventional market solutions or government interventions have fallen short or proven insufficient. Secondly, we prioritize the development of efficient, affordable, and cost-effective solutions that can bring about tangible and lasting impact.

Our unique product offerings are strategically designed to capitalize on the abundant human, natural, and cultural resources available in our country. By promoting and supporting crafts production, we actively contribute to poverty reduction and the improvement of livelihoods in rural and remote areas. Simultaneously, we are committed to the responsible use of natural resources, ensuring their preservation for future generations. ButtonUp is committed to making a meaningful impact on several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly focusing on Gender Equality, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Climate Action. Our approach directly addresses these goals in the following ways:



1) SDG 5 - Gender Equality

We believe in driving real change by tackling the gender gap in the labor market from the grassroots level. Our business model is designed to empower women in local communities across Egypt. We begin by providing comprehensive training programs tailored to their potential, covering various industries. Subsequently, we offer them employment opportunities, help establish their brands, and explore new markets. Throughout this process, we ensure the provision of high-quality products at reasonable prices, vital for survival in a competitive marketplace. By adopting a sustainable approach based on market dynamics, we aim to achieve lasting gender equality and women's empowerment. Unlike traditional NGO interventions that rely on large amounts of funding with temporary and insufficient results, we are pioneering social ventures that bring about transformative shifts and integrated solutions.



2) SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

We recognize the crucial role played by the handicrafts sector in Egypt's economy, especially in rural and impoverished areas. By providing a safe workplace and fair compensation within their residential areas, we offer women and youth a platform for personal development and social integration. The production of handcrafted products, when done consciously and sustainably, not only preserves the country's cultural heritage but also generates significant foreign exchange. By ensuring fair prices and direct sales, we contribute to improving the Egyptian economy in a distributionally friendly manner.



3) SDG 13 – Climate Action

We are dedicated to providing vocational skills-based training and hands-on guidance in the field of cleaner production. Through our focused approach, we have successfully contributed to the creation of new employment opportunities and the enhancement of income levels. Central to our mission is the promotion of green manufacturing, advocating for the production of goods that minimize harm to the environment. This is achieved by selecting eco-friendly fabrics and creating reusable products as alternatives to plastic, such as grocery and tote bags, as well as recycled notebooks.

ButtonUp team firmly believes that our innovative and market-driven strategies will lead to long-term and significant transformations within local communities across Egypt. By fostering sustainable practices and empowering individuals with the necessary skills, we aim to drive impactful change that positively influences both the economy and the environment.

PRODUCTS' SEGMENT OVERVIEW



Niche Product Portfolio

A unique selection of products that are designed for everyday use. Our primary focus is on bags, which come in a variety of shapes, designs, and functionalities. Our flagship bag collection includes tote bags, lunch bags, grocery bags, shoulder bags, and backpacks, among others. In addition, we offer an extensive range of leather, linen, and hardcover notebooks. Our expertise also extends to laptop sleeves, with a diverse range of shapes and sizes available to meet our clients' specific needs. Furthermore, we provide wallets, pouches, and flasks, among other items, all carefully chosen to make our clients' everyday lives a little easier. We also offer customized B2B solutions tailored to our clients' requirements.

Inspired by Cultural Heritage

Our products are crafted with inspiration from various cultural themes, with a particular emphasis on Egyptian cultures such as Khayammia, Bedouin, Nubian, and ancient Egypt. Additionally, we incorporate elements from African and Persian cultures, allowing us to offer unique and culturally rich designs.

Commitment to Sustainability

We prioritize environmental best practices throughout our production process. From responsibly sourcing our materials to operating our workshop in an eco-friendly manner, we strive to minimize our environmental impact. Our commitment extends to packaging our products and ensuring sustainable delivery methods. Moreover, we offer a wide range of upcycled and reusable products, providing sustainable alternatives to traditional options.

High Quality and Affordable

Our products are meticulously crafted by skilled women in local communities, and we take pride in delivering exceptional quality. Despite our commitment to excellence, we strive to keep our prices reasonable, ensuring that our customers receive both value and craftsmanship from our local brand.

Our Business Model



Client Segment

Female, aged from 18-60 belonging to middle and upper-middle income classes.



Sales Channels

Online platforms, exhibitions, and fairs with a planned expansion into instore retail



Key Resources

A team of highly motivated ladies, CO-founders with diverse areas of expertise, and a wide network of relevant stakeholders.

Tote Bags



Pouches



Laptop Sleeves



Notebooks



Shoulder Bags



Back Bags



Our B2B Clients

10
INGOS



10 NGOS



5 Social
Enterprises



2 Public
Institutions



9 Corporates



5 Toll
Manufacturing



SERVICES' SEGMENT OVERVIEW



Enablers

Our team boasts a diverse range of educational and professional backgrounds, encompassing expertise in fashion, sewing, product development, market research, economic empowerment and investment. Furthermore, our extensive network of partners empowers us to extend our offerings beyond our core competencies, providing additional value whenever required.

Competitive Advantage

i-Comprehensive Solutions:

Alongside our in-house expertise, our extensive network of partners spans across various industries, enabling us to offer a wide array of solutions that precisely cater to the needs of our clients and beneficiaries.

ii-Competitive Pricing:

Through our flexible business model, we can offer our clients a competitive pricing structure. We understand the importance of affordability without compromising on quality.

iii-Alignment of Interests:

As a social enterprise, our vision's key performance indicators (KPIs) align our interests with those of our clients and their stakeholders, fostering a collaborative approach and shared success.

Our Services Portfolio Includes

1. Vocational Trainings

Sewing and Tailoring Trainings

Leather Handicraft Trainings

Embroidery Handicraft Trainings

Fixing and Maintenance of Sewing Machines Trainings

Upcycling Tiers Trainings for Manufacturing New Products

Roof and Indoor Planting

Pottery for Manufacturing Reusable Ecofriendly Products

Cooking of Healthy Food for Planet-based Diet

2- Entrepreneurship and Business-related Trainings:

Basics of Social Entrepreneurship for Youth

Project Management for Social Initiatives

Business Administration for Micro-Businesses

Basics of Market research for Micro-Businesses

Basics of Branding for Micro-Businesses

Basics of Marketing for Micro-Businesses

Pricing and cost control for Micro-Businesses - Accounting for Micro-Businesses

Quality Control for Handicrafts and Micro Businesses

Gender Awareness Sessions and Trainings

Eco-friendly production Processes Trainings

Soft Skills for Young Entrepreneurs

3- Other Services:

Evaluation of sewing workshops' capacities and technical abilities of their workers.

Feasibility and market research studies for small businesses working in the field of handicrafts.

Consultancy services for equipping/upgrading the new sewing workshops.

Consultancy services for donor based economic empowerment and livelihood projects.

Consultancy services for the management of CSR projects.

Management of community mobilization and networking activities in Local communities.

Our Services Clients



Successfully executed "the Green Economy project", encompassing a comprehensive range of initiatives aimed at fostering business and social entrepreneurship skills, as well as providing vocational training in three distinct eco-friendly crafts: sewing and tailoring, upcycling old tires, and roof planting. This undertaking has directly impacted the lives of 23 young individuals and women, who have benefited greatly from the project. All activities took place in the vibrant community of Izbet Khairallah, contributing to the local development and environmental sustainability of the area.



Successfully executed "Sewing the Seeds project" in Izbet Khairallah. This comprehensive initiative encompassed various components such as business training, gender awareness training, and vocational training in sewing and tailoring skills. The project has positively impacted the lives of 100 women, empowering them with valuable knowledge and practical skills.

Furthermore, ahead of COP27, we launched Taproot project in the same location. This ambitious endeavor incorporated a wide range of training modules, including business fundamentals, gender awareness, environmental consciousness, and eco-friendly processing techniques. Participants were exposed to five different eco-friendly crafts, namely sewing and tailoring, upcycling old tires, roof planting, poetry, and cooking planet-based recipes.

As part of the Taproot project, we have also launched a production line dedicated to these five eco-friendly crafts. This strategic step allowed us to not only provide training but also create sustainable employment opportunities for the beneficiaries. The project served 180 women and youth, fostering their personal growth and contributing to the overall development of Izbet Khairallah.



Successfully executed "Tamkeen Phase I", a comprehensive program that encompasses both business and vocational training. This phase focused on equipping 50 women and youth with essential sewing and tailoring skills. The project was based in Ras Ghareb, situated along the picturesque Red Sea coastline. Building upon this achievement, we have now initiated Tamkeen Phase II, which involves the establishment of a community learning center in Ras Ghareb. This center aims to empower over 300 youth and women by offering diverse skill development opportunities.



Implemented a green initiatives project in the past, which encompassed various aspects such as business training, gender awareness training, environmental awareness, eco-friendly processing training, as well as vocational training in sewing and poetry. The project had benefitted a total of 50 women and youth. It had taken place in the location of Izbet Khairallah.



Provided sewing and tailoring training for three workshops in Suhag as part of "the Massar Suhag Project", benefiting 32 women. Furthermore, we conducted a thorough assessment of these workshops from a technical perspective to ensure their effectiveness. As part of the same project, we also offered training on the basics of packaging and branding to 26 entrepreneurs in Suhag. To enhance their understanding of the market, we organized a study tour for 10 entrepreneurs from Suhag, guiding them through the wholesalers' markets for fabrics and accessories. This tour aimed to help them establish valuable connections and gain insights into the industry. Additionally, we provided market linkages and conducted market research studies specifically for the Lufa producers in Suhag, within the framework of the Massar Suhag Project implemented by Enroot.

Expanding our reach, we extended our expertise to Aswan as part of the Massar Aswan Project implemented by Enroot. We offered packaging and branding training to 15 entrepreneurs, assisting them in enhancing their business strategies. Additionally, we conducted training sessions on business administration and provided consultancy to these entrepreneurs in Aswan, guiding them on how to develop effective and practical business plans.



An assessment was conducted for the sewing workshop and tailoring/sewing training course at DBTI to upgrade the sewing workshop and enhance the training content to meet the market needs.



Offered sewing and tailoring training to 20 breast cancer survivors. We also provided them with the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and business administration training. Additionally, we conducted gender awareness training for the same group of 20 breast cancer survivors.



Offered sewing and tailoring training to 15 girls who were part of the orphans of Nasr City NGO.



A successful implementation of our project with the Moamena Kamel Foundation - مؤسسة مؤمنة كامل, which aimed to empower the women in Alsaïda Aïsha community by equipping them with essential skills and resources for sustainable livelihoods. Through the establishment of a dedicated workshop, we provided comprehensive trainings in tailoring and business management for 40 women. This initiative has significantly improved the lives of many women in Alsaïda Aïsha, enabling them to attain self-sufficiency and financial independence.



Empowering Women through Skill Development: Recognizing the challenges faced by women reintegrating into society after incarceration, we joined forces with Ashoka and the Children of Female Prisoners Association to develop a comprehensive training program. This initiative aimed to equip 40 women with the necessary skills and knowledge in the fields of leatherwork and tailoring.



Establishing the Shielded Brand: Following the successful completion of the training program, we realized the importance of creating sustainable opportunities for the women we had trained. Leveraging the knowledge gained during extensive market research and product development, we established the Shielded brand. This brand serves as a platform for the women to showcase their craftsmanship, and creativity.