

READY FOR TOMORROW جاهزون للغد

From Idea to Impact

Founders, programmes and partners behind three years of youth entrepreneurship across Egypt



~4,000

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

114

STARTUPS SEEDED

~55%

WOMEN PARTICIPANTS

24

GOVERNORATES REACHED



INSIDE

**Three years,
thousands
of ideas,
more than a
hundred
new
businesses.**

FOUNDERS AT THE EGYPT CITIES
HACKATHON, IMPACT EDITION ·
BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA,
2026

This booklet tells the story of the young Egyptians who came through the Youth Inclusion and Employment Project, and of the hub, the method and the partners behind them.

01	A word from the founder	3
	Vision, method and an invitation	
02	ICEALEX, the bigger picture	4
	Since 2011, on many fronts	
03	What we believe	5
	Four levels of change, the capital ladder	
04	How we work	6
	A programme for every stage of a venture	
05	The YIEP partnership	7
	Plan International Egypt and DAPP	
06	Impact at a glance	8
	Numbers, map, years	
07	The journey and the programmes	11
	42 cycles, five programme families, government partners	
08	Eighteen sectors, one lens	14
	The portfolio through an impact lens	
09	Women leading change	15
	From 16% to 50%	
10	The founders	16
	Founder stories, MumGuard first	
11	The ripple effect and the field	24
	Founders who come back, partners who visit	
12	Looking ahead	27
	Six ways to partner	



Dr. Ahmed M. Bastawy
Managing Director & Founder,
ICEALEX



Talent should not have to move to the capital. Opportunity has to move to talent: skills, capital, markets and institutions, built where young people already are.



We build runways, not only programmes.

Dear partners, founders and friends,

When we started ICEALEX in Alexandria in 2011, we made a simple bet: that the next generation of Egyptian and African founders would not come only from the capital, and that the hardest part of entrepreneurship is not the idea but everything that has to happen after it. More than 20,000 community members and over twenty countries later, that bet has become a method.

On what this booklet shows. Since July 2024, with Plan International Egypt and the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme, about 4,000 young people from Alexandria to Assiut have come through our hackathons, leagues and accelerators. More than half are women. Around 114 startups received seed capital. Behind every number is a person who chose to build rather than wait, and a team that made sure they did not build alone.

On how we work. We do not run isolated events. We run a pipeline that matches support to the stage a venture has reached: hackathons that test an idea in a weekend, leagues and awards that turn it into a validated business, incubators that take it to market, and an alumni network that brings founders back as mentors, employers and investors. A good idea born far from the capital deserves the same runway as one born in it. Building that runway is our work.

On capital. Grants are the first rung, not the ladder. We treat ours as micro-impact funding: small, fast and tied to evidence, and we work to multiply it. Government-backed innovation hubs matched our winners with their own funds in 2025 and 2026, a business association now matches from its side, and our founders have gone on to win backing from corporate competitions, banks and national youth platforms. Capital follows proof; our job is to produce proof.

On systems. The ventures in these pages answer real local and industry challenges: a gap in early breast-cancer detection, millions of tonnes of farm and household waste, classrooms without data, crafts at risk of disappearing, and a labour market that still leaves too many women outside. When women-led applications to our accelerator rise from 16% to 50%, that is not a statistic. It is a system beginning to move.

On pride. I am proud of our founders, of a team that delivered in six governorates at once, and of partners who trusted a hub outside Cairo to lead. When Dina Mansour of MumGuard travels with us to Copenhagen in October 2026 for the International Girl Award, she carries all of this with her.

On what comes next. The next chapter needs partners at every level: to co-fund matching pools, adopt an industry challenge, meet our pipeline early as investors, host cohorts, and mentor and judge. We would be honoured to build it with you.

With gratitude and conviction,

Dr. Ahmed M. Bastawy, Managing Director & Founder

02 · ICEALEX, THE BIGGER PICTURE

Innovation, Collaboration, Entrepreneurship. Since 2011.

ICEALEX is a social innovation and entrepreneurship hub founded in Alexandria. We design and run programmes, operate innovation hubs, build ecosystems in secondary cities and connect founders to markets and capital across Egypt, the Middle East and Africa.

16

years of work in
Alexandria, 2011 to 2026

100+

incubation and
acceleration cycles
delivered

20,670

people in the ICEALEX
community

20+

countries reached by our
programmes

FIVE STRATEGIC PILLARS, ONE MISSION



Ecosystem building

Policy dialogue, mentor training, the Mentoring Lounge and networks that connect founders, institutions and capital.



Ventures Launchpad

Incubation and acceleration for youth, women, green and creative ventures, in-house and with partners.



Hubs and ESO development

Public innovation hubs, university centres, Hub in a Box, the Borg El Arab electronics complex, a FabLab.



Innovation research and consulting

Innovation strategy, sector mapping and impact diagnostics for corporations, governments and INGOs.



Innovation ignition programmes

Hackathons, sustainability awards and circular-economy training that open the pipeline.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH ACROSS FOUR KINDS OF PARTNER

59 organisations have worked with ICEALEX since 2011

21

Development and funding partners

Co-designed programmes, grants and technical assistance with bilateral, multilateral and foundation partners.

10

Public institutions

Government hubs, ministries and agencies that host cohorts, refer founders and fund matching grants.

11

Universities and schools

Campuses from Alexandria to Assiut that bring students, faculty and venues into every cycle.

17

Business and ecosystem partners

Associations, accelerators, banks and networks that open markets, capital and mentors.

Change happens on four levels at once.

Our thesis is simple to say and hard to do: a programme only matters if it moves people, ventures, ecosystems and systems together. Every YIEP activity was designed against all four.

LEVEL 1 People

Skills and confidence. Young people, especially young women, learn to test an idea, read a market and pitch with conviction.

LEVEL 2 Ventures

Validated businesses. Ideas become companies with customers, revenue and a plan, judged by juries, not by us alone.

LEVEL 3 Ecosystems

Hubs outside the capital. Universities, government innovation hubs and associations in secondary cities become a connected innovation spine.

LEVEL 4 Systems

Rules and markets that shift. Links to Egypt's MSME Development Agency (MSMEDA), industry and finance, and evidence that changes how partners fund.

THE CHALLENGES WE DESIGN FOR

Opportunity is concentrated

Capital, mentors and investors cluster in Cairo while talent is everywhere, from the Delta to Upper Egypt.

Women are under-represented

Female-led applications to our accelerator stood at 16% before the women's programmes began.

Industry wastes value

Farm residue, cotton offcuts, tyres and date pits are problems that founders can turn into products.

Jobs alone are not enough

Youth unemployment and informality call for founders and freelancers, not only job seekers.

Early money is scarce

Most ideas die between the first prototype and the first investor. Small, fast capital closes that gap.

Support is fragmented

Programmes rarely connect. We build a pipeline so no founder has to start from zero twice.

THE CAPITAL LADDER

STEP 1

Micro-impact funding

Seed grants of EGP 20,000 to 150,000 (EUR 360 to 2,700), fast and tied to evidence. About EGP 6.9M to 114 startups.

STEP 2

Matching funds

Partners add their own money to our winners: a government innovation hub matched EGP 190,000 over two years, and a business association now matches from its own side.

STEP 3

Follow-on capital

Investor readiness, Alumni Connect matchmaking and Angels Garden put proven founders in front of investors, banks and competitions. Bekya Pay added EGP 1.125M in awards to its grant.

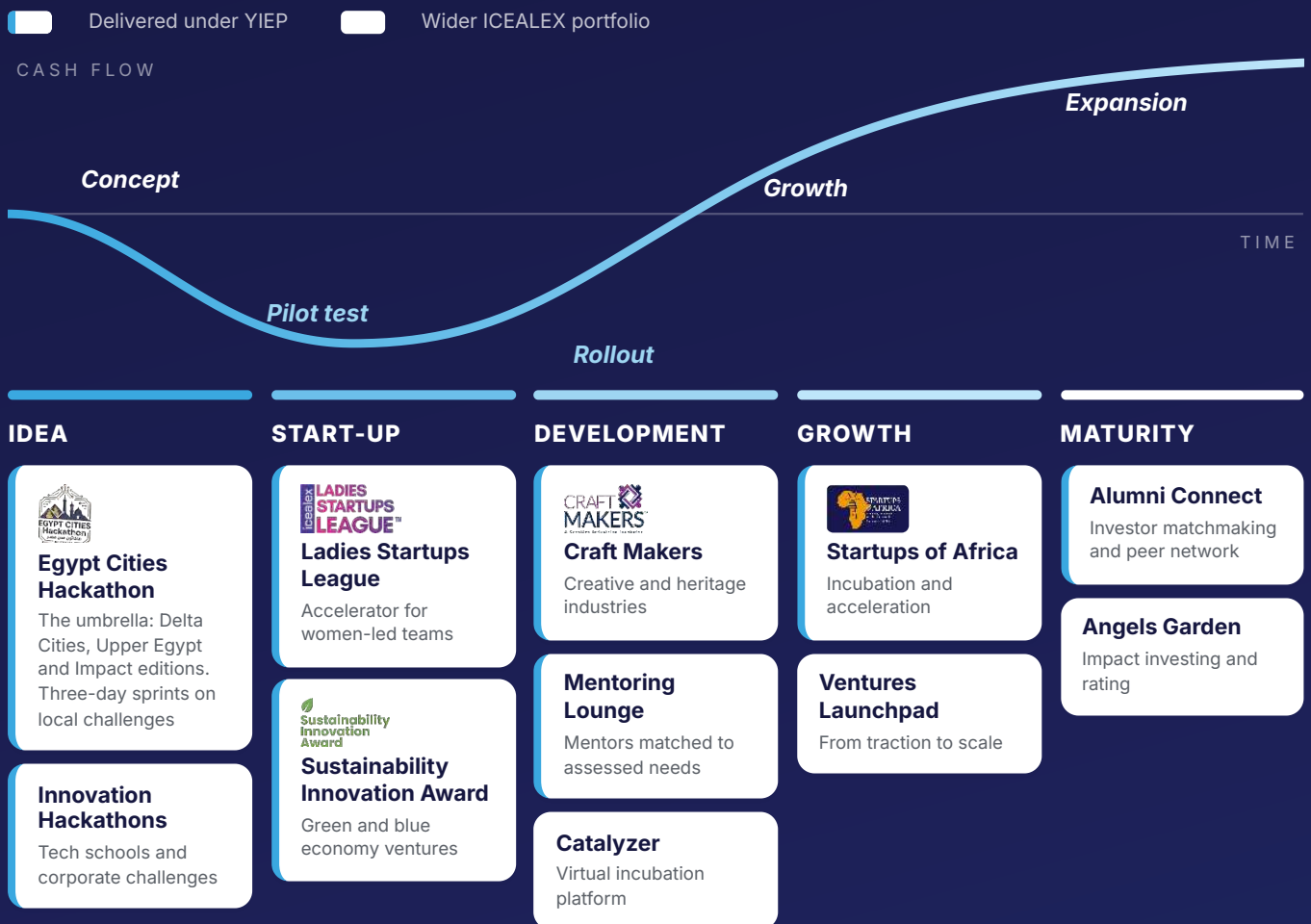
STEP 4

Beyond capital

What money alone cannot buy: mentors matched to assessed needs, peer-to-peer support, market access through Chimney Talks with MSMEDA, association memberships, and an alumni network that brings founders back as coaches and investors.

A programme for every stage of a venture.

Founders do not need the same help at every moment. Our portfolio follows the startup lifecycle, so each venture meets the right programme, the right jury and the right capital at the right time.



01

REACH

Open calls and awareness workshops with local partners.

02

LEARN

Bootcamps on models, finance and pitching, with an alumni success story in every session.

03

BUILD

Peer-to-peer mentoring, plus the Mentoring Lounge: mentors matched to each team's assessed needs.

04

PITCH

Juries of investors, experts and Plan staff.

05

GROW

Seed and matching funds, Catalyzer virtual incubation, alumni and investor links.

05 - THE YIEP PARTNERSHIP

One programme, built by many hands.

The Youth Inclusion and Employment Project (YIEP), known in Egypt as “Ready for Tomorrow”, is led by Plan International Egypt and funded through the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme. Since July 2024 ICEALEX has designed and delivered its entrepreneurship track.

We find young people with ideas, train them in practical business skills, test those ideas with real customers and award seed grants to the most promising teams. The work began in Alexandria and Beheira, reached Upper Egypt in 2025 and now runs through six operation nodes, drawing participants from 24 governorates, through public-private partnerships: government-backed innovation hubs, universities and business associations host the cohorts, and a dedicated green track, the Sustainability Innovation Award, backs green and blue economy ventures.

6

operation nodes, with public hubs and universities

20

hackathon cycles since 2024, including the 2026 Impact Edition

42

programme cycles delivered, July 2024 to September 2026

5

Ladies Startups League cycles in 2025 alone



Ms. Rozan Khalifeh, Country Director of Plan International Egypt, with Dr. Ahmed Bastawy at ICEALEX, November 2025

Plan International Egypt

Leads YIEP, sets its direction and keeps its focus on young people, above all young women, and on safe, inclusive practice.

Danish-Arab Partnership Programme

Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs funds YIEP through DAPP, with Dansk Erhverv, the Danish Chamber of Commerce, as a partner.

ICEALEX

Designs and delivers the entrepreneurship track with local partners, from outreach to seed grants and alumni follow-up.

DELIVERED WITH





July 2024 to September 2026

What three years of YIEP add up to, across bootcamps, hackathons, leagues and seed grants.

~4,000

young entrepreneurs reached through YIEP

~55%

of them women, rising to 67% in Assiut

~114

startups awarded seed grants

EGP 6.9M

in micro-impact funding (about EUR 125,000), plus EGP 190,000 (EUR 3,500) in Creativa matching funds

6 nodes

where we operate, with participants from 24 governorates

18

sectors across the portfolio of winning startups

HOW WE MEASURE

Every founder is scored at entry and at exit with the **ICEALEX Impact Diagnostic**, our evidence-based tool that rates a venture from 0 to 100 on founder readiness, social and economic value, scale potential, ecosystem contribution and long-term sustainability, so progress is a number, not an impression. Between live sessions the curriculum runs on **Catalyzer**, our virtual incubation platform.

Euro figures are approximate, at an average of EGP 55 to EUR 1 over July 2024 to September 2026 (EUR 1 is about DKK 7.46).



IMPACT
DIAGNOSTIC

16% → 50%

Share of **women-led applications** to ICEALEX's main accelerator, before and after the women's programmes.

EGP 1.1M+

Awards won by a single YIEP alumnus, Bekya Pay, on top of its seed grant (about EUR 20,000).

Six nodes. Twenty-four governorates.



All 24 governorates, 2026: Beheira, Gharbia, Menofia, Ismailia, Qalyubia, Sharqia, Sohag, Alexandria, Kafr El Sheikh, Port Said, Damietta, Cairo, Dakahlia, Giza, Qena, Aswan, Beni Suef, Fayoum, Suez, Red Sea, Minya, North Sinai, Matrouh, Assiut.

6

operation nodes
with teams on the
ground

24

governorates
participants came
from in 2026

3

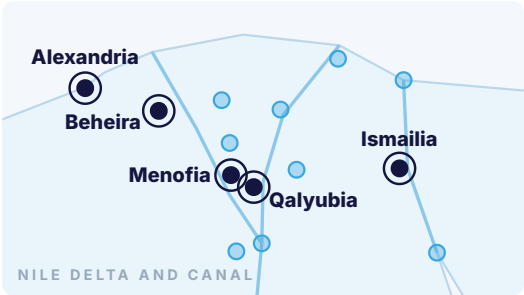
regions beyond
Alexandria: Delta,
Canal and Upper
Egypt



UPPER EGYPT HACKATHON, ASSIUT, 2025

We deliver through **six operation nodes**, where our teams, hubs and partners run cohorts on the ground. The young people who come to them travel from far wider: in 2026 alone, participants came from **24 of Egypt's 27 governorates**.

-  **Operation node**, where ICEALEX runs cohorts
-  **Coverage**, where participants come from



Alexandria ICEALEX hub, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Senghor University, Alexandria Business Association, Borg El Arab Technological University. Egypt Cities Hackathon Impact Edition partners: the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, ABA, Plan International Egypt and Creativa Innovation Hubs

Beheira Creativa Damanhour, Damanhour University, Ganaklees institutes

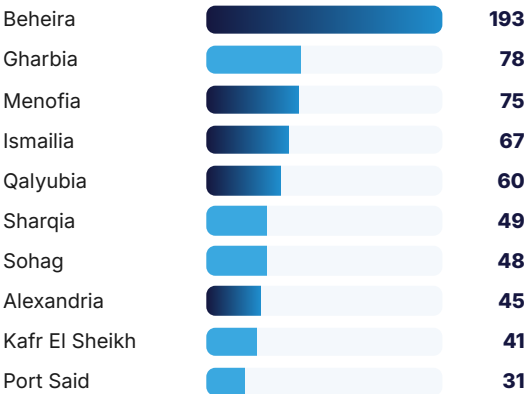
Menofia Creativa Menofia, with AMIT

Qalyubia Creativa Banha, with Right Solution

Ismailia Creativa Ismailia with KAAF; demo day at Suez Canal University

Assiut Upper Egypt Hackathon, Ladies Startups League, Craft Makers and Sustainability Innovation Award cycles since 2025

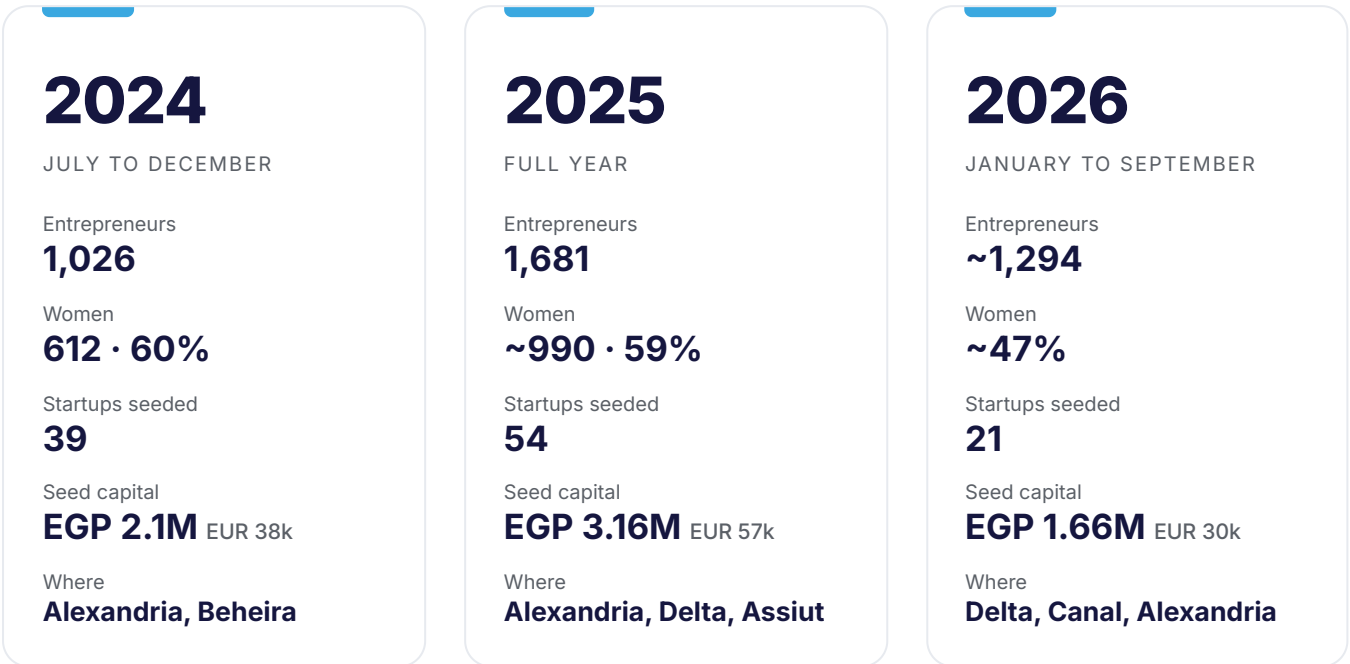
WHERE 2026 PARTICIPANTS CAME FROM, TOP TEN



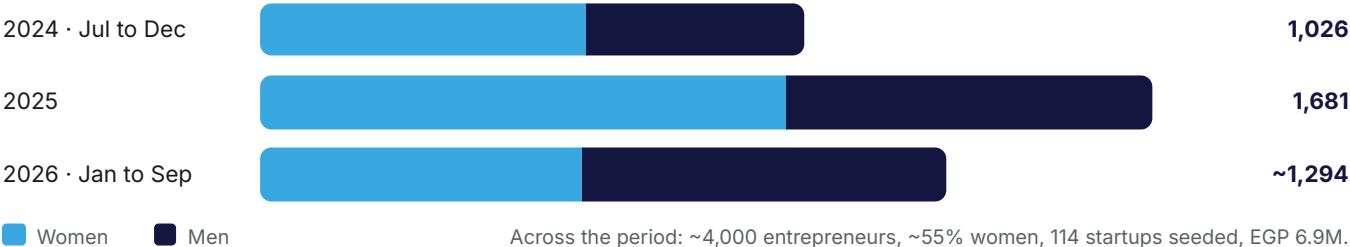
Navy: operation nodes. Blue: coverage governorates. Unique participants, January to September 2026.

Growing every year.

Each year brought new places, new partners and new founders.



ENTREPRENEURS REACHED, WOMEN AND MEN



WHAT EVERY FOUNDER RECEIVES



ASSIUT, 2025

539 young people in our first Upper Egypt year. Two in three were women.

Left: Egypt Cities Hackathon winners at a technological school, 2026

Three years with Plan International Egypt, programme by programme.

Under YIEP, ICEALEX ran 42 programme cycles in 27 months: hackathons that opened the pipeline, leagues and awards that validated it, incubation that took founders to market. Here is how the collaboration unfolded.

2024

THE FOUNDATION · JUL TO DEC

12 awareness workshops in Alexandria universities and professional syndicates reach 307 young people.

Ladies Startups League Cycles 1 and 2, 83 women, Alexandria and Beheira.

Startups of Africa, Fast Track Cycles 9 and 10.

Sustainability Innovation Award editions 2.0 and 3.0: 267 participants, Carbonera and Cotton Town among the winners.

Innovation Hackathons, 4 rounds with Fathallah technological school and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

1,026
entrepreneurs

39
seeded

2025

THE EXPANSION · DELTA AND UPPER EGYPT

Delta Cities Hackathon, 6 cycles: Fathallah, Creativa Damanhour (twice), Creativa Menofia, Borg El Arab Technological University, Creativa Banha. 21 winners, EGP 1.2M.

Startups of Africa Cycles 1 and 2 with Senghor University and the Alexandria Business Association (ABA): Bekya Pay, Chocotini.

Ladies Startups League (LSL): 3 cycles at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina with the Alexandria Businesswomen Association (ABWA), 2 in Assiut. Winner: MumGuard.

Sustainability Innovation Award at Damanhour University and Ganaklees; **Craft Makers** in Alexandria and 3 rounds in Assiut.

Upper Egypt Hackathon, 2 editions at Badr and Sphinx universities.

1,681
entrepreneurs

54
seeded

2026

THE SYSTEM · CANAL, SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT

Egypt Cities Hackathon, 7 cycles: Damanhour, Menofia, Banha, Creativa Ismailia with KAAF, 431 technological-school students, and a research edition at Suez Canal University (OMREX).

Sustainability Innovation Award, Delta Edition, and **LSL** Cycle 1 (Passos).

Chimney Talks with MSMEDA at the Bibliotheca; **Alumni Connect** at the hub, the U.S. Embassy and Ismailia.

Egypt Cities Hackathon, Impact Edition: 200 founders, Demo Day 19 November.

~1,294 to Sep

21 seeded

PROGRAMME CYCLES DELIVERED UNDER YIEP

20 hackathon cycles

8 Ladies Startups League cycles

6 Sustainability Innovation Award editions

4 Startups of Africa cycles

4 Craft Makers cycles

Five programmes, one pipeline.

Each programme has its own brand, its own partners and its own place in a founder's journey. Together they let a young person in the Delta or Upper Egypt move from a weekend idea to a funded company without leaving home.

FLAGSHIP · GROWTH STAGE · 4 CYCLES UNDER YIEP



Startups of Africa Accelerator

ICEALEX's flagship incubation and acceleration track, run under YIEP in 2024 and 2025 with Senghor University and the Alexandria Business Association: twelve weeks of mentoring, customer validation and investor readiness, ending in a jury and seed grants of up to EGP 125,000. Winners include Bekya Pay, Chocotini, MindPal, Machinova and GREENHAYES.

~130

founders in 2024 and 2025

EGP 610k

seed in 2025 alone



Egypt Cities Hackathon, with Delta and Upper Egypt editions

IDEA STAGE · 20 CYCLES

One three-day format under three regional names: Delta Cities and Upper Egypt (2025), Egypt Cities (2026). Hosted by Creativa hubs, universities and technical schools from the Delta to Assiut. Winners: Robocode, SOLO, Baganic, B medix, MediCode, OMREX.

~2,100 founders

EGP 2.5M seed



Ladies Startups League

START-UP STAGE · 8 CYCLES

ICEALEX's accelerator for women-led startups, run at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina with the Alexandria Businesswomen Association, at Creativa Damanhour and in Assiut. Winners: MumGuard, Passos, Kiko, Tally Bint Al-Jabal, Al-Israa Library.

~360 women founders

EGP 840k+ seed



Sustainability Innovation Award

START-UP STAGE · 6 EDITIONS

Green and blue economy ventures judged on impact and viability, in Alexandria, Beheira and Assiut. Winners: Carbonera, Cotton Town, HNDL, Transformellica, Eco-Feed, Safe Food AI.

~880 green innovators

EGP 800k+ seed



Craft Makers

DEVELOPMENT STAGE · 4 CYCLES

Heritage and handmade businesses, many run by women from home, in Alexandria and Assiut. Winners: Talaky, Tohfa Handmade, Engineer for Wheel Tires.

~200 makers

EGP 300k seed

Programme figures are rounded and do not include every 2024 grant. Seed funding across all programmes totals EGP 6.9M.

WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT AND THE ECOSYSTEM

Support that reaches founders directly.

CHIMNEY TALKS · WITH MSMEDA

A needs assessment first, then the right expert in the room.

In 2026 ICEALEX brought Egypt's Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (MSMEDA) to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina to meet YIEP founders. ICEALEX first assessed each startup's needs, from licensing and finance to export and industrial land, then seated founders at roundtables with the MSMEDA expert who could answer their question, with referrals into the agency's services.

ICEALEX does the matching, government provides the depth, and founders get a direct line rather than a brochure.

152

founders at the
Bibliotheca Alexandrina

100+

startups matched to
MSMEDA expertise

18

sectors represented on
the day

1:1

roundtables and
referrals, not panels



Ms. Hoda Mohie, Plan International Egypt, opens the Egypt Cities Hackathon Impact Edition, October 2026



Abir of the ICEALEX team opening a programme session



U.S. angel investor Nancy Hayes at Alumni Connect, April 2026

The matching fund

Creativa Damanhour, a government innovation hub, adds its own grants to our winners: EGP 75,000 in 2025 and EGP 115,000 in 2026 (EUR 3,500 in all). A separate MCIT round added EGP 98,750. Partners fund on the strength of ICEALEX's selection.

Strategic partnerships

Partnerships that extend support beyond the programme. The Alexandria Businesswomen Association gives selected startups, MumGuard among them, a free annual membership and its network. The Alexandria Business Association, our Startups of Africa partner, now offers a matching fund of its own.

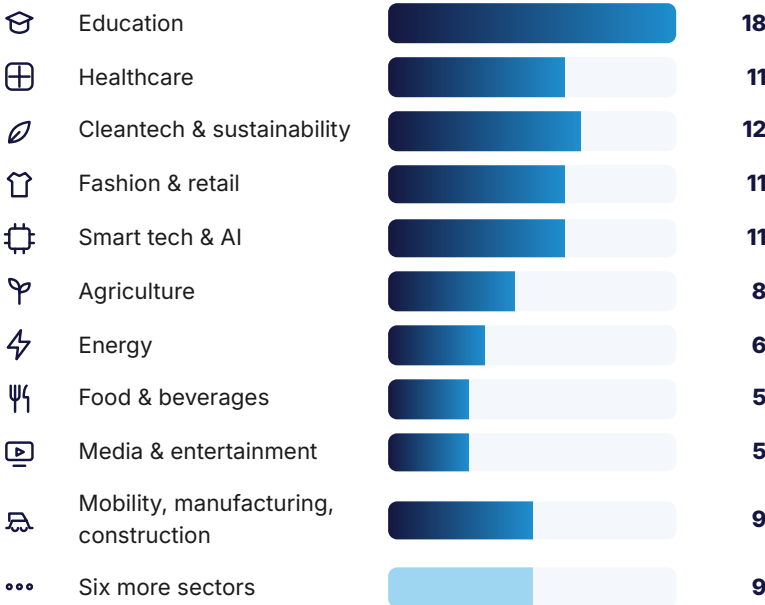
Alumni Connect

Three editions in 2026. In April the U.S. Embassy in Cairo brought angel investor Nancy Hayes to mentor five ICEALEX alumni startups one to one, with Plan International Egypt taking part.

Wide by design. Selected for impact.

We back founders across the economy, from health and education to agriculture and fashion. What they share is a lens: each venture must fix something real, for someone real, in a way that can scale and shift the system around it.

WINNING STARTUPS BY SECTOR, 2024 TO 2026



Sector data for the 105 startups classified in the ICEALEX alumni register, of 114 seeded. Six more sectors: social impact, proptech, tourism, fintech, professional services and one pending classification.

OUR SELECTION LENS

- 1 · A real problem.** Evidence that the pain exists, locally.
- 2 · A founder who owns it.** Lived experience, grit and coachability.
- 3 · Impact in the model.** The more it sells, the more good it does.
- 4 · A system to shift.** A waste stream, a care gap, a market that excludes.
- 5 · Inclusion.** Women and young people from outside the capital first.

THE SYSTEMS OUR FOUNDERS ARE CHANGING

Access to care

Earlier detection, safer medicines, care closer to home. [MumGuard](#), [MEDEX](#), [CuraX](#), [Medora](#), [Veinotronic](#)

Waste into value

Farm residue, tyres, cotton, date pits and household waste. [Carbonera](#), [Wheel Tires](#), [Cotton Town](#), [Chocotini](#), [Bekya Pay](#), [EcoPack](#), [ChitoChar](#)

Learning that works

AI skills, instant exam marking, robotics for children. [The Outliers](#), [OMREX](#), [Techy Global](#), [GMind](#), [Kiddev](#)

Women's livelihoods

Heritage crafts online and family retail that grows. [Tally Bint Al-Jabal](#), [Al-Israa](#), [Awani](#), [Toobi Mosaic](#)

More than half are women.

When we built programmes around young women, they came, they stayed and they won.



Ladies Startups League, Cycle 1, 2026: a finance session on break-even

16%
↓
50%

women-led applications to ICEALEX's main accelerator, before and after the women's programmes

60%

of 2024 participants were women

14/21

seed grants won by women-led teams, Dec 2024

86%

of LSL 2026 Cycle 1 participants were women

"It is a game changer that brings us closer to achieving our goals and making a lasting impact."

A WOMAN FOUNDER, FIRST SEED BATCH, 2024

In October 2026 this work travels to Copenhagen, to PlanBørnefonden's DNO International Girl Award, where MumGuard's founder, Dina Mansour, joins the ICEALEX delegation to tell her story.

01

MumGuard

A pharmacist taking on breast cancer, one prototype at a time.

Dina Mansour, founder and CEO,
Alexandria

Ladies Startups League 2025, Bibliotheca
Alexandrina

YIEP seed grant: EGP 35,000, raised to EGP
125,000



Dina Mansour and her team take first place in the national health track, ITC Egypt 2026



MumGuard's founders with their award certificates



Where it started: the Ladies Startups League seed award



First place, Egypt Rally 2025

Early detection, made accessible and non-invasive for every woman.

Dina is a pharmacist and researcher. MumGuard combines contact thermography with bio-impedance sensing to detect early signs of breast cancer without radiation or pain, in a device designed for clinics far from the big hospitals.

She joined the Ladies Startups League at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina with an early idea. With YIEP's seed grant, mentorship and network, MumGuard reached its fourth prototype, completed preclinical trials and a pilot study with women, and registered as a company. A founder team became a multidisciplinary company of hardware, software and AI engineers.

Clinical proposals are with Baheya, Ayady and El-Mery hospitals, and an NDA with SpotSee, an international supplier, is shaping custom components.

4th

prototype, after preclinical trials and a pilot with women

9

awards and top placements in 2025 and 2026, plus a STEM grant

EGP 400k+

in prize money and grants after YIEP

"Through the programs, we gained much more than funding: mentorship, business guidance, technical support, networking opportunities, and the confidence to turn an idea into a real, developing venture."

DINA MANSOUR, FOUNDER

YIEP

What the programme gave MumGuard. A women-led cohort at the Bibliotheca, a seed grant that grew with the evidence, mentors in business and regulation, a free annual membership of the Alexandria Businesswomen Association with access to B2B deals to test the MVP, and a stage from which every later award followed.

CPH

Copenhagen, October 2026. Dina joins the ICEALEX delegation at PlanBørnefonden's DNO International Girl Award, taking an Alexandria health-tech story to a Nordic stage.

RECOGNITION

- 1st** Arab Bio-Innovation Competition 2025, 13 Arab countries
- 1st** Egypt Rally 2025, EGP 150,000 prize
- 1st** ITC Egypt 2026, national health track
- 1st** Tech-Innovation Challenge, health tech, EGP 50,000
- 1st** SIC Competition
- ★ World Impact Award, INJAZ Egypt 2025
- 1st** NTRA Award, VICTORIS 5, IEEE, 2026
- 5** Top 5, Global Student Entrepreneur Awards, 2025
- 3** Top 3, Shabab Shamel
- + STEM incubation grant, EGP 200,000



02 Bekya Pay

Rewarding people for recycling.

Omar Saleh · Alexandria · Waste fintech · Startups of Africa 2025 · EGP 125,000 seed grant

Egypt's cities produce mountains of household waste, and most of its value is lost. Bekya Pay pays households for sorting it, through a simple digital platform that turns recycling into income and gives collectors a reliable supply.

Alongside its YIEP seed grant, Bekya Pay took second place and EGP 125,000 at the Shell Intilaaqah Egypt Annual Award 2024, run with Flat6Labs, and won EGP 1 million at the Youth Summit in September 2025, backed by Arab African International Bank. It also hired new staff at YIEP's own job fair.

Capital follows proof. Bekya Pay produced the proof, and backers followed.

WHY THIS STORY MATTERS



Second place, Shell Intilaaqah Egypt Annual Award 2024, with Flat6Labs

EGP 125k

YIEP seed grant

EGP 125k

Shell Intilaaqah award, 2024

EGP 1M

Youth Summit award, 2025

EGP 1.25M

in seed and awards combined (about EUR 23,000)



03

TAGHREED ABDELHADY, FOUNDER OF CHOCOTINI

FOOD INNOVATION

Chocotini: a healthy spread made from date pits

Taghreed Abdelhady · Alexandria · Startups of Africa 2025 · EGP 100,000

Egypt is the world's largest date producer, and about 300,000 tonnes of pits a year are thrown away. Taghreed, a biochemistry graduate and university teaching assistant, saw a food ingredient where others saw waste.

Chocotini roasts and mills date pits into a chocolate-style spread with less sugar and no palm oil: a healthier option for children, a new income line for date farmers, and a waste stream turned into value. The seed grant took her from kitchen tests to food-safety trials and her first public sale, and demand outran supply within days.

The impact lens: circular by design, nutrition for families, and women-led manufacturing in Alexandria.

30 kg

sold out at her first bazaar

150+

sales in four days, EGP 13,000



Chocotini's first bazaar stand

From seed grant to two markets.

Two Sustainability Innovation Award alumni that have grown well beyond their seed stage.

04

FLEET SAAS

HNDL
FLEET MANAGEMENT

HNDL: fleet management across Egypt and Saudi Arabia

Adham Hanafy and team · Alexandria · Sustainability Innovation Award 2024 · EGP 50,000

HNDL began with automated, cashless fuel management that protects fleet owners from fraud. It is now a full software-as-a-service platform for fleet performance, maintenance and carbon emissions, registered in both Egypt and Saudi Arabia and integrating with government platforms in the Kingdom.

USD 36k

annual recurring revenue

1,760

active vehicles, 20,000 in pipeline

2

legal entities, Egypt and Saudi Arabia

"Becoming an official entity in both Egypt and Saudi Arabia is a major step, enabling us to start integrating with governmental platforms in KSA, opening a new layer of opportunities."

ADHAM HANAFY, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO

Oct 2024

Seed grant, SIA 2.0

Sep 2025

Sanabil Accelerator demo day, Riyadh

Late 2025

Web Summit Lisbon, Biban Riyadh

2026

Entities in Egypt and Saudi Arabia



MEDEX among the winners on stage

05

PHARMA CIRCULAR ECONOMY

MEDEX: expired medicines, collected and turned into energy

Alexandria · Sustainability Innovation Award · EGP 50,000

A logistics platform for expired and unused medicines, with patent-pending technology that converts pharmaceutical waste into green energy. MEDEX represented Egypt at COP28 and works with the Ministry of Environment and KIT Germany.

USD 3.2M

total sales to date, as reported by the company

16,000+

active clients, as reported by the company

1st

Startup Power, MSMEDA 2025



Where it started.

Three founders from our very first batch, each turning a local problem into a business with reach.

06

EGP 50k

Seed Batch 1, 2024

Green tech

Beheira

Carbonera: farm waste into advanced materials

Dr. Maha El Attar · PhD chemist

Egypt burns or dumps millions of tonnes of farm residue every year. Maha, a PhD chemist, turns it into biochar and activated carbon for soil, water filters and energy storage: farmers get a buyer for waste, growers a cheaper soil amendment, and carbon stays in the ground. The grant funded her first reactor and the research behind it; Carbonera is now a registered company.

"The grant greatly accelerated our prototype and supported the research needed for real impact."

DR. MAHA EL ATTAR

07

EGP 50k

Seed Batch 1, 2024

Sustainable fashion

Alexandria

Cotton Town: Egyptian cotton, farm to fashion

Heidi El Gendy · founder

Egyptian cotton is a global brand, yet much of its value, and most of its offcuts, leave the country. After 14 years in marketing, Heidi built a B2B platform that links Egyptian cotton producers to brands, and a product line made from recycled cotton waste. The grant expanded the recycling line and the range, keeping value and jobs in Egypt and offcuts out of landfill.

"The grant put Cotton Town on the map of sustainable fashion in Egypt."

HEIDI EL GENDY

08

EGP 50k

Seed Batch 1, 2024

AI and education

Alexandria

The Outliers: AI skills for teenagers

Arwa Basha · computer engineer and mother of two

Most Egyptian teenagers leave school without the digital skills employers now ask for. Arwa, a computer engineer and mother of two, built a platform where teenagers learn AI skills by doing, build a portfolio and find their first internship, so the gap between school and work closes before it opens. The grant funded the platform's first cohorts.

"It brings us closer to achieving our goals and making a lasting impact."

ARWA BASHA



39

startups seeded with EGP 2.1M in our first six months. Women-led teams took 14 of the 21 grants in the second batch.



UPPER EGYPT - ASSIUT 2025

Built in Assiut.

539 young people, 67% women, and businesses rooted in their own communities.

09

EGP 20k

Craft Makers 2025

Tyre recycling

Engineer for Wheel Tires

Adham Mustafa · Bani Ghalib industrial zone, Assiut

Egypt discards millions of tyres a year, and most are burned. Adham shreds them into rubber granules and powder for playgrounds, flooring and asphalt. In his first year he processed 300 tonnes, earned about EGP 122,000 in net profit and created jobs in an industrial zone far from the capital. Next: exports to the Gulf and North Africa.

300 tonnes in year one

~EGP 122k net profit

10

EGP 60k

Ladies Startups League 2025

Heritage crafts

Tally Bint Al-Jabal

Ihsan Ismail Ali · founder

Tally, Assiut's metal-thread embroidery, was close to disappearing with its last artisans. Ihsan trains and pays women to work it from home, designs for today's market, and sells across Egypt on Amazon and Jumia. A craft is kept alive, and women who could not leave home earn an income from it.

Selling on Amazon and Jumia

11

EGP 35k

Ladies Startups League 2025

Retail

Al-Israa Library: three sisters, one business

Esraa, Alaa and Wafaa Raafat

Three sisters took over a small stationery shop and, with training and a seed grant, turned it into a gifts and cosmetics business that serves their neighbourhood. Monthly revenue reached EGP 16,000, with EGP 20,000 in sight: a family income built and run by women in Upper Egypt.

EGP 16k a month

Target EGP 20k



539

young people
in Assiut, 2025

67%

women

17

startups
seeded across
LSL, Craft
Makers, SIA
and the
hackathon

EGP
865k

in seed grants

Winning against the odds.

Two first-place teams from 2026, each chosen from dozens of competitors.



Ladies Startups League, Cycle 1, 2026

12

IOT AND AI

Passos: keeping schoolchildren safe

Alexandria · Ladies Startups League 2026

A screen-free smartband with built-in AI, plus a school operations platform, so parents and schools know children are safe through the school day.

1st of 27

LSL 2026 teams

EGP 150k

seed grant, the cycle's largest



Egypt Cities Hackathon winners, Suez Canal University

13

EDTECH

OMREX: marking exams in seconds

Ismailia · Egypt Cities Hackathon Cycle 7

OMREX uses optical mark recognition to grade bubble sheets instantly and give teachers clear analytics. The product is already live in classrooms.

1st of 78

hackathon teams

EGP 100k

seed grant

105

teams competed for these two first places. The juries chose a child-safety device and a classroom tool: both built for schools and the families they serve.

When founders come back as coaches.

The best sign that change lasts is founders returning to help the next cohort.



14

STEM EDUCATION

Techy Global: from an AI school in Tanta to coaching new founders

Noha Fayed, founder and CEO · Tanta and Alexandria · Startups of Africa 2022 · YIEP 2024 seed grant, EGP 100,000

Noha founded Techy in Tanta in 2014 to teach children aged 4 to 18 robotics, coding and AI. She came through Startups of Africa and won a YIEP seed grant in 2024. Techy is accredited by STEM.org, has an EdTech investor on board and trains women engineers into jobs. As a local incubator partner of AFD Campus's Social and Inclusive Business Camp (SIBC) for North Africa, ICEALEX onboarded Noha onto the 2026 cohort; Techy ranked among Egypt's top five, she joined the Marseille bootcamp and was nominated for the Tunis bootcamp. Today she coaches founders on ICEALEX programmes.

25,000+

students taught

400+
competition
awards
Top 5
startups in
Egypt, SIBC
2024
EdVentures
investment

"I want to extend my deepest gratitude to all the jury members, the SIBC organization, and ICEALEX for their trust in Techy and myself."

NOHA FAYED

Alumni on stage

HNDL and Zat returned to Startups of Africa 2025 to share their journeys with the new cohort.

Jobs inside the network

Bekya Pay, seeded in 2025, recruited new staff through YIEP's own job fair.

Alumni Connect

A standing series that matches alumni with investors, buyers and each other, three editions in 2026.

A programme ends. A network does not.

Seeing it where it happens.

In November 2025, Ms. Rozan Khalifeh, Country Director of Plan International Egypt, visited ICEALEX to review the project's progress with Dr. Ahmed Bastawy. In June 2026 the two went further, to alumni at their own premises in Beheira: Carbonera's lab in Damanhour and Awani's pottery workshop in Abu Hummus, to see progress first hand, hear the founders' challenges and plan continued support beyond the programme.



Ms. Rozan Khalifeh and Dr. Ahmed Bastawy at the Awani workshop with founder Ziad Alaa (far left), Abu Hummus, June 2026



Dr. Maha El Attar walks Ms. Khalifeh through Carbonera's pyrolysis unit, Damanhour



Awani's glazed tableware

AWANI · POTTERY

Ziad's workshop in Abu Hummus

Ziad Alaa founded Awani, a heritage pottery business in Abu Hummus, Beheira, that supplies branded tableware to restaurants, cafés and nurseries. Seeded through the Delta Cities Hackathon, Awani has grown its sales since and now sells under its own brand.



On site at Carbonera

CARBONERA · DEEP TECH

Dr. Maha's lab in Damanhour

Carbonera turns farm waste into biochar and activated carbon. Seeded in 2024 through the Sustainability Innovation Award, registered in 2025, and placed third at Shell Egypt's Intilaaqah pitch at EGPES 2026. The visit saw the materials and the research partnerships at first hand.



Ms. Rozan Khalifeh received at ICEALEX, November 2025

“ It was inspiring to interact with the young people and see first hand the energy, creativity and commitment they bring to the programme.”

ROZAN KHALIFEH, COUNTRY DIRECTOR, PLAN INTERNATIONAL EGYPT



IN THE ROOM

Where it all happens.



Top: "From Idea to Impact: Building Startups Beyond the Capital", the opening panel of the Egypt Cities Hackathon Impact Edition, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, October 2026. Middle row: Egypt Cities Hackathon winners at a technological school; a Craft Makers session. Bottom row: pitch day in Assiut; the ICEALEX and Plan International Egypt teams at the Impact Edition launch.

The next chapter needs partners at every level.

The Egypt Cities Hackathon (ECH) Impact Edition 2026 is under way with 200+ founders, ending in a Demo Day at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina on 19 November. Here is how you can be part of what comes next.

FUND Matching pools

Multiply every grant. Co-fund our winners' grants, as a government innovation hub and a business association already do, and extend the runway of strong founders.

INVEST Early

Meet the pipeline early. Investors join juries and Alumni Connect to meet validated founders while they are still raising their first rounds.

MENTOR And judge

Give an hour, change a trajectory. Experts coach founders and sit on our selection panels.

ADOPT A challenge

Bring us your problem. Corporates and ministries set a hackathon challenge and meet the teams that solve it.

HOST A cohort

Open your doors. Universities, hubs and associations host cohorts and extend our map to new governorates.

MEASURE Together

Learn together. Co-design how we track jobs, revenue and follow-on funding, and share what works across programmes.

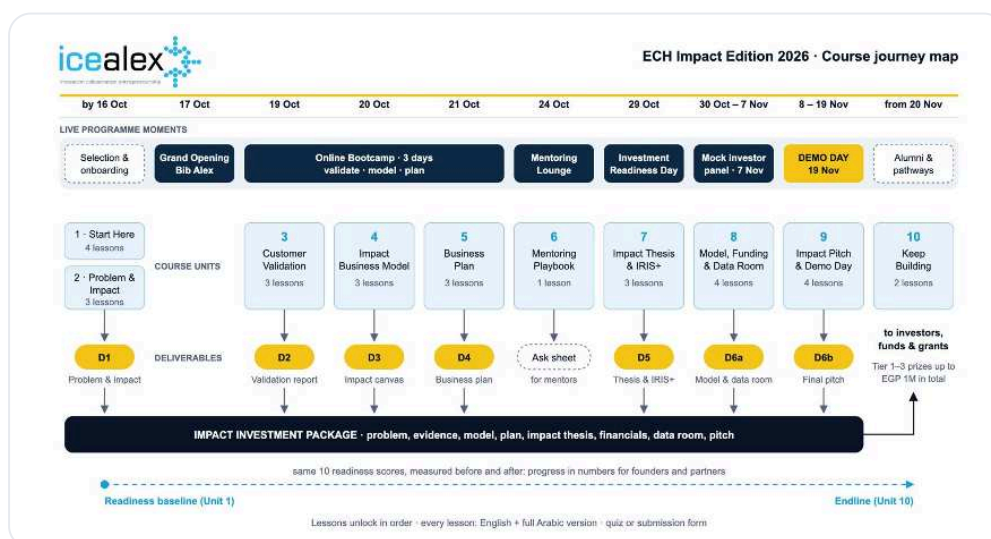
Partner with us on the next 4,000.

We would welcome a conversation about any of the six ways above.

partnerships@icealex.com

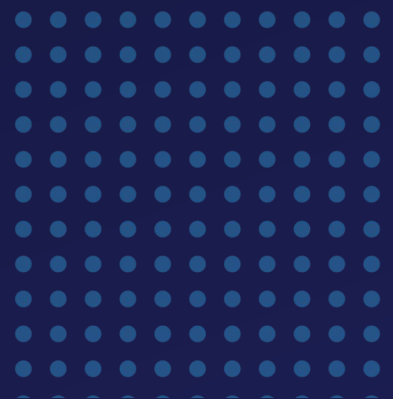
THE IMPACT EDITION JOURNEY, OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER 2026

Ten course units, seven deliverables, one impact investment package



THANK YOU

To every founder who trusted us with an idea; to Plan International Egypt, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs through DAPP, and Dansk Erhverv; to our universities, public hubs, business associations, mentors and jury members; and to the ICEALEX team who made every bootcamp, hackathon and demo day happen.



**Every founder in these pages
started with an idea and a fair
chance.
The idea was theirs. The chance is
what we build, together.**

VISIT

ICEALEX Innovation
Hub
Alexandria, Egypt

PARTNER

partnerships@icealex.com
a.bastawy@icealex.com

ONLINE

icealex.com
linkedin.com/company/icealex



From Idea to Impact: YIEP Founders 2024 to 2026. Published by ICEALEX, Alexandria, October 2026. Figures from YIEP reports, July 2024 to September 2026, and the ICEALEX alumni register; company figures as reported by founders.

YOUTH INCLUSION & EMPLOYMENT PROJECT · DELIVERED WITH

