



CHANGING ORGANIZATIONAL MIND-SET AROUND COLLECTION AND USE OF ECE DATA

The gap between fledgling social enterprises and their ability to maximize impact is getting smaller thanks to the work of Realizing Innovation through Social Entrepreneurship (RISE) Egypt, an organization that supports entrepreneurial startups that address issues of national importance in Egypt.

Educate Me, which operates a community preschool and primary school in Cairo, is one of the first fellowship recipients to work with RISE Egypt. RISE supported Educate Me to consolidate its school model, learn from global peers in the world of education, and integrate an evidence-based approach to allow scale up. In order to measure the literacy, numeracy, executive function and social emotional learning of the students as compared to a control group of their peers, RISE Egypt looked for open source, reliable, validated, concise tool to measure early childhood development. In 2016 they found IDELA and decided to use it for their study.

In Year 1 data collection, the Educate Me team did not see a big difference in literacy and numeracy IDELA scores between children in the Educate Me program, which was implementing the national Egyptian curriculum, and the government school control group. Because of these findings, Educate Me made changes to its curriculum, while still meeting national standards. It also added support for classroom management and teacher training. It was the first time the organization had focused on an evidence-based approach.

This focus and investment on evidence-based approaches is not the norm for Egyptian entrepreneurship. RISE Egypt encouraged this approach, but it took time to become the norm within Educate Me's staff and planning process. At first, staff wanted to make changes to the curriculum before data was analysed. They sought rapid change and rapid growth in a traditional entrepreneurial mindset. RISE Egypt introduced a more research-based perspective, focused on data, even when the results were not positive.

The strength and nuance of the data began to make an impression on Educate Me. When year 2 results were released in late 2018, the Educate Me team eagerly anticipated the findings. Year 2 results demonstrated that in every domain EM students made significant learning gains compared to the control group. EM staff discussed what aspects of their intervention had worked, what could be changed and how they would present it to their board, all based on the data. RISE Egypt founder, Dr. Mona Mwafi, explained, "That mindset change is a success. We see a startup understanding what it means to take an evidence based approach in a challenging developing context. It makes for a robust conversation and it means they're in a different place than they were two to three years ago." The use of IDELA data for evidence driven decision is putting Educate Me in a better position for future success. They are able to communicate their impact and plans in new and better ways to partners and donors. Recently, they opened lines of communication with the Egyptian Ministry of Education, a relationship that led to an invitation for Educate Me to bring its teacher training model to some Egyptian public schools.

Contact

If you have questions or require further information please contact Frannie Noble (fnoble@savechildren.org).