

Oberlin College
TEDxYouth@ABIS
Osama Abdelrahman '23
Cairo, Egypt

Contribution to Peace

Over the last decade, the political situation in Egypt has been nothing short of unrest. In 2011, a country-wide revolution took place, which ended up toppling the president at the time. This revolution ignited in me — and thousands of other youths — a purpose for living: to make a change, improve our country, and ultimately make the world a better place. We were full of hope, looking to be from those leading the change in the future. However, a couple of years later, a military coup took place, turning Egypt into a dictatorship to this day. The coup resulted in a massacre, in which more than a thousand protesters were killed and injured. Following this, anyone who protested was either imprisoned or killed.

I have seen firsthand the impact these circumstances have had on my generation. The hope you would see in the eyes of youths vanished. The dreams of improving the country turned into dreams of fleeing the country. Nevertheless, I choose to look at the situation through a different lens — I believe that out of adversity comes opportunity. Therefore, this is exactly the time Egypt needs its youths the most. Egypt needs capable leaders who will lead change in their communities and move the country forward. Here comes TEDxYouth@ABIS's role. We aim to develop the leaders of tomorrow. We provide high-potential students with training and workshops to equip them with the skills and exposure they need to lead change and make a difference in their communities.

The Problem

In Egypt, academic achievement is the sole factor considered for college admissions. Consequently, extracurricular activities do not exist in many high schools. This creates a generation of youth who only care about academics and getting the highest grades, paying little to no attention to interpersonal skills and making an impact in society. Due to this mindset, many students in Egypt lack self-awareness as they do not get the opportunity to discover their passions and strengths.

Organization Description

TEDxYouth@ABIS aims to solve this problem. With the theme of “Pop the Bubble,” I started the organization to encourage high school students to step out of their comfort zones and engage in activities beyond their academics. Although I started it in my high school — as the school's first-ever student organization — I encouraged students outside my school to join the organization and attend our events. My vision was to create an entity that could help all Egyptian high school students unleash their full potential as they develop their interpersonal skills and explore their talents.

Since its founding in 2018, TEDxYouth@ABIS has had 150+ team members, 70+ speakers and performers, 30+ sponsors, 7+ fundraising events, and more. Recently, for the third year in a row, we were the only TEDx organization invited to take part in Traverse 2021, the biggest high school summit in the Middle East.

Project Description

When I started TEDxYouth@ABIS, I had no funds or support from my school — I only had a vision, a dream to help high school students in Egypt unleash their full potential. Fast forward today, four years after it started, TEDxYouth@ABIS reaches thousands of students through its events, making it one of the most popular TEDx organizations among high schoolers in Egypt.

Now, we want to expand the impact to reach even more high school students. Therefore, this summer, we plan to extend the scope of our activities. The goals we want to achieve are as follows:

1. *Connect high schoolers with student clubs and organizations.*

❖ **Overview:** Even if a student in Egypt is aware of the importance of extracurricular activities, they will still find it extremely difficult to join one, since student organizations do not exist in almost all high schools. Therefore, we plan to work with a programmer to create an online platform that will host a database of all the extracurricular activities available for high schoolers. This way, a student could simply visit the website, add their interests, and find a suitable organization to join.

❖ **Details:**

- We will partner with Traverse — the biggest high school summit in the Middle East — to invite student organizations and students, who participate in their summit, to join our platform. (30-50 organizations & 4000+ students.)
- We will partner with 5 high schools all over Cairo. Through these partnerships, we will get students to join our platform. (2000-3000 students in total.) If this model works, we will replicate it with 10 more high schools.
- We have a community of 150+ alumni, all of whom are active in their communities and are part of many student organizations and NGOs. We will ask our alumni to reach out to the organizations they have been part of and invite them to join our platform. (100+ organizations.)

2. *Help guide high school students through their transition to college.*

❖ **Overview:** We will hold multiple events and workshops — at least once per month — over the summer to provide training and mentorship for high schoolers. The training sessions will cover a range of topics, such as career exploration, public speaking, leadership skills, teamwork, entrepreneurship, and more.

❖ **Details:**

- We will make the events open to everyone. However, our marketing efforts will be focused on getting students from the schools our team members go to. This way, each TEDx team member could market the event in their school and encourage their peers to attend. (estimation of 1000 attendees per event.)
- We will invite career coaches, professionals from top companies, and trainers to lead the workshops.

Reflecting back on the past few years of my life, extracurricular activities have played a big role in shaping who I am today. They helped me discover my interests and passions, meet people from diverse backgrounds, create new friendships, develop my skills, and much more. With the support of the Kathryn W. Davis Foundation, we can replicate my experience for thousands of high school students in Egypt. Our long-term goal is to make all Egyptian high schoolers aware of the importance of extracurricular activities and have access to them.

Name: Osama Abdelrahman
Project Name: TEDxYouth@ABIS
School: Oberlin College and Conservatory

Projects for Peace grant: \$	10,000.00
Additional Funding, if any:	
Total funding available: \$	10,000.00

Student Expenses				
Airfare)	Lodging	Communications	Food (Biweekly)	Miscellaneous
1500			1000	
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -

Total Student Expenses: \$	2,500.00
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Note: all funds in US dollars.

TOTAL FUNDS REMAINING:	
\$	-

TOTAL EXPENDITURES:	
\$	10,000.00

Project Expenses				
and Lodging	Supplies	Support	Staffing Costs	Miscellaneous
1500		1,500	4500	
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 4,500.00	\$ -

Total Project Expenses:	\$ 7,500.00
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