NETHOPE CONNECTED

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AI Ethics and Readiness Lab for Egyptian NGOs

Educuality, Egypt

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ABOUT NETHOPE CONNECTED

NetHope Connected is a global community and digital program designed by, for and with nonprofits, to help small to mid-sized organizations strengthen digital capacity at their own pace. It does this through learning resources, peer connection and practical guidance for adopting AI and technology responsibly.

This case study focuses on NetHope Connected's AI grant work, supporting Connectors to explore responsible, purpose-driven AI.

In Egypt, most free AI courses nonprofits can access cover little beyond the basics, offer few practical use cases and give limited focus to ethics. They offer even less in Arabic, since most trusted resources are in English, a language many nonprofit staff do not speak. Paid applied courses exist, but they are often unaffordable and typically require travel to Cairo, the capital city. With support from the NetHope Connected AI grant, Educuality's AI Ethics and Readiness Lab offered a free, practical alternative. Delivered online through ten workshops, it trained 23 nonprofits from ten governorates, seven of them rural, and built ethical use into every topic, from marketing to proposal writing. A closing day in Cairo brought the organizations together to present how they had applied what they learned.



Participants from across the cohort on the closing day in Cairo.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Educuality is an Egyptian organization working on education and capacity building for the nonprofit sector. It designs and delivers training for NGOs across the country, bringing in specialist trainers for subjects outside its own team. This program was its first on artificial intelligence.

EDUCUALITY
Education that creates impact

Ahmed Saad
CEO at Educuality and AI in Education researcher

The problem: practical AI training is out of reach for many Egyptian nonprofits

01

Egypt has around 30,000 NGOs. Educuality identified three gaps that keep many from learning to use AI well.

1 **Cost**

Many Egyptian NGOs cannot afford AI training. The free courses they can access stay at an introductory level and stop short of applying AI to real work.

2 **Location**

The established paid courses are held in person in Cairo. An organization based in another governorate has to send a staff member to the capital for the length of the course, which can run to around a month, and cover their travel and accommodation on top of the fee.

3 **The digital divide**

A wide digital divide separates Egypt's central cities from its rural areas. NGOs working in Upper Egypt face far more difficulty using AI than those in Cairo, Giza or Alexandria.



Ahmed Saad, CEO at Educuality and AI in Education researcher, on the closing day in Cairo.

> *"All of these free courses are so superficial. What is AI, what is the history of AI, but no applications, no use cases, no ethical AI in it."*
>
> Ahmed Saad, CEO at Educuality and AI in Education researcher

How the program answered it

01

Free, and not superficial

The program was free for participants. Educuality paid five established trainers, who normally teach paid courses, to deliver their best material at no cost to the NGOs.

02

Built around real use cases

Applicants were asked what they wanted to use AI for, and the ten workshop topics emerged from their answers, including marketing, human resources, proposal writing, business development and building simple software. Workshops ran twice a week, with a few days between sessions so participants could apply what they learned.

03

Online, with one day in person

Participants came from ten governorates, seven of them rural. All ten workshops ran online. However, the closing day was in person, and Educuality covered the expenses for those who came.

ETHICS IN EVERY WORKSHOP

Every trainer was asked to build ethical use into their own subject. In the marketing workshop, for example, that meant transparency and disclosing when a design has been made with AI, because it affects how people see and choose an organization's services. One workshop was also dedicated to ethical AI, and it worked as a summary of what the other workshops had already covered.

Designing the program

02

The NetHope Connected AI grant funded the program. Educuality designed it iteratively, adjusting it as the workshops progressed, because answers to an application form only show part of what participants need.

Starting from the application form

The call for applications was also used as a needs analysis. Alongside the usual questions, applicants were asked about their level, whether they had used AI before, how many employees they had and what challenges they faced. Around 80 NGOs from more than 15 governorates applied for 23 places, and Educuality used all responses in the design. The trainers reviewed these responses and built their workshops around what applicants said they needed. Ahmed estimates the applications gave the team about 40 percent of what it needed to know. The rest came from listening to participants once the workshops began.

Selecting the cohort

01

Interest

Whether the organization showed genuine interest and motivation to take part.

02

Commitment

The call stated clearly that the program consisted of ten workshops, held every Sunday and Wednesday, so that only organizations able to attend throughout would apply. NGOs dropping out after two sessions would have reduced the program's impact.

03

Reach

Educuality also gave weight, internally rather than in the application form, to NGOs with more employees and more beneficiaries. Training them would reach more people, and their participation would give the program credibility with other NGOs in future cohorts.

Designing in Arabic

Almost all trusted AI material online is in English, a language many participants did not work in. Educuality addressed this by providing resources in both Arabic and English, and by having the trainers, all Egyptian, teach from real Egyptian cases.

Working in Arabic also exposed a limit the program could not fix. Trainers had participants run the same exercises in both languages to compare the results, and the comparison was telling: translation was weak in some tools, one AI assistant gave different answers depending on the language of the prompt and, by the trainers' assessment, most tools are still noticeably less accurate in Arabic overall. Ahmed sees this as a gap for the companies building these tools to close.

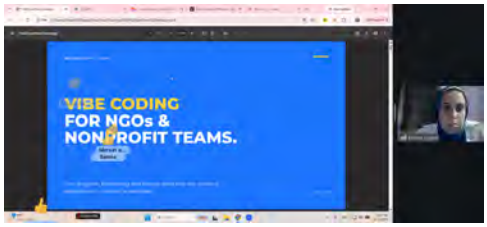
The ethical AI canvas

COMPLETED BY ALL 23 ORGANIZATIONS

Organization snapshot	Purpose	AI use cases	Guiding values
What does this organization do, and who does it serve? Mission, communities served and where we work	Why do we use AI to achieve our mission?	Where might AI be used across the organization?	What values guide all AI uses in our organization?
Core commitments	**Key risks to watch**	**Human oversight**	**Privacy and data**
How will we apply our values regarding AI?	What ethical risks should we actively monitor?	What must always remain human?	What information must we protect?
Fairness and inclusion	**Transparency**	**Accountability**	**Learning**
How will we identify and reduce bias, exclusion or unfair impact in our use of AI?	When and how should our beneficiaries know that AI was used?	Who should be involved in oversight?	How will we keep improving and advancing our use of AI tools?

Who took part

Each of the 23 NGOs nominated five employees from different departments, with at least one decision maker among them. Without someone able to approve changes, there was no guarantee that what participants learned would change how their organization worked. The decision maker also served as the point of contact, so the coordinator only needed to reach 23 people instead of around 110.



The online workshop on vibe coding for NGOs.

Attendance stayed above 80 percent for the first half of the program and fell to around two thirds in the last few workshops, which Educuality expected in a ten-workshop program. Participants who missed a session could catch up through the recordings and summaries. Sessions only began once at least 20 of the 23 organizations were represented, so nearly every NGO was present each time, even when not all five of its staff could attend.

Adjusting as the program ran

Educuality adjusted the program until the last session based on what participants said in the live workshops. Sessions were planned at two hours and extended to two and a half hours from the third workshop, after participants said the original length was too short. Recordings and written summaries in Arabic were added when participants reported unstable internet connections.

The closing day

The final day was held in person in Cairo. Each organization presented its ethical AI canvas and how it had applied what it learned, and the day closed with a panel discussion on ethical AI and where the technology is heading. Twenty of the 23 NGOs attended, more than 60 people in total, some travelling six hours each way by train from Upper Egypt. Educuality covered travel and meals for two people per organization, and one organization from Minya hired a bus at its own cost to bring six staff.

The day was also designed for networking. The organizations do similar work in different parts of the country, and the day led to new partnerships among them, as well as between some of them and Educuality.

One participating organization, which offers training opportunities through Erasmus+, provided two fully funded places on an NGO capacity building training in Spain, covering flights, training and meals. The places went to the two organizations that attended the workshops and presented the strongest application of what they had learned. Ahmed arranged this with the organization's CEO during the program, and it gave participants a strong reason to make the journey to Cairo.



Participants and the Educuality team with one of the two learning journey passes awarded on the closing day.

Results and challenges

04

What participants built

Educuality expected organizations to apply AI to their internal work, and many did. Among the participants, one of the oldest NGOs in Egypt, founded in 1957, used what it learned in the program to build an ERP system and an HR system, and another large national organization in the cohort applied the training to its marketing.

Some went further and built tools that others can now use. One participating organization launched a public website to help young people find careers in the development sector. Another used what it learned in the vibe coding workshop to build a system that helps NGOs find funding calls, rates how eligible an organization is for each one and tells it what to strengthen before applying.

> ***"I didn't expect it. We said they will use it in some use cases in their internal work. But to have this published and working, that was a very surprising moment."***
>
> Ahmed Saad, CEO at Educuality and AI in Education researcher

Results so far

Participants' confidence in using AI rose over the course of the program. In the pre-program test, very few rated themselves fully confident using AI, and the rest placed themselves at 70 percent or lower. By the end, most participants rated their confidence above 70 percent. The pre- and post-program tests also showed knowledge gains, and the closing presentations showed participants applying their skills. All 23 organizations completed the ethical AI canvas, which gave each of them its own ethical AI guidelines. None of them had such guidelines before.



A participating organization receiving its certificate of completion.

Behavior change has not been measured yet, because it cannot be assessed straight after a program. Educuality plans to measure it three months after the program.

CHALLENGES IN ROLLOUT

One coordinator for 23 organizations

The budget covered one coordinator for around 110 participants. Educuality started with two but could not afford to keep the second. Reaching 23 points of contact by phone and WhatsApp for attendance, templates and information was too much for one person, and Educuality plans to add more coordinators for the next cohort.

Keeping participants engaged online

Keeping around 110 participants active online was harder than in a room. Breakout groups were not possible, because breaking out and reporting back would have taken longer than the session itself, and sessions were kept short because trainers were paid by the hour. Trainers used polls and live input tools such as Mentimeter instead.

Concerns about beneficiary data

Some organizations were wary of putting beneficiary data into AI systems, and the program confirmed that sensitive beneficiary data should not be shared with them. Participants learned to include only the information they needed to analyze, replacing names, locations and contact details with codes. In their closing presentations, many reported using the method to analyze large amounts of data without exposing the people it described.

What the team learned

05

> *"We cannot say to our beneficiaries, that was not us, that was AI. No, it is you, because you are accountable for what AI produces."*
>
> Ahmed Saad, CEO at Educuality and AI in Education researcher

What went well

Building ethics into every workshop

Participants met responsible use inside the subjects they work on, such as marketing, HR and software, where they will actually face it. Ethics is easier to apply when it is taught alongside the work it applies to.

Requiring a decision maker

Including someone with authority among each organization's nominees gave what participants learned a better chance of being applied. Training reaches further when the people who can approve change are part of it.

A closing day with several purposes

The presentation gave participants a reason to apply what they learned, the panel discussed the questions they raised about where AI is heading and networking led to new partnerships. An in-person close can turn an online cohort into a network.

What they would do differently

Add mentorship between workshops. The clearest request from participants themselves was for mentorship between workshops. When they ran into technical problems applying what they had learned, they had to wait until the next workshop, led by a different trainer who did not know what had been covered. Short one-to-one sessions with each organization in between would have helped, and Educuality plans to include them in its next budget, since much of the learning happens between sessions too.

Give people more time. Participants also needed more time than the schedule gave them. The program's timeline left only a few days between workshops, which was not enough to apply each one before the next began. Ahmed said that next time he would allow at least a week between sessions, spreading the ten workshops over around two and a half months. As he put it, "If that is the impact of one month, what happens if it is three months?"

Plan for bigger results. The results also outran expectations. Educuality had planned for internal use cases and guidelines, and some organizations built public tools instead, which has led Ahmed to advise others running similar programs not to underestimate what NGOs can do once they understand how to apply AI ethically.

What comes next

SCALING

- Run a second cohort covering all 27 governorates, with a focal NGO in each, once funding is secured. Educuality is already seeking this funding.
- Add a training of trainers element, so that these focal NGOs can pass the program on to smaller NGOs in their governorates. Educuality cannot reach Egypt's 30,000 NGOs directly, but each large NGO can reach hundreds of others.
- Extend the program to the wider MENA region in a third cohort, since the same challenge exists across the region.

MONITORING AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Run a follow-up survey three months after the program to measure behavior change, asking how organizations are using AI, whether they still apply their ethical guidelines and whether someone is accountable for each AI task.
- Offer paid department-specific training to large NGOs that requested it on the closing day, and use that income to help fund the free program.
- Build an open-access Arabic resource and prompt library for NGOs in Egypt, which does not yet exist, once funding is secured.
- Share resources through a partner's online community of around 28,000 NGO staff, so that the program reaches beyond its 23 organizations.

Learn more about NetHope Connected

NetHope Connected is a global community and digital program designed by, for and with nonprofits, to help small to mid-sized organizations strengthen digital capacity at their own pace.

The NetHope Connected AI grant program is one of the programs in the community, where we support grantees like Educuality to design, test and run AI responsibly, and publish the results as case studies like this one.

GET IN TOUCH

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Join NetHope Connected

SCAN TO JOIN

With thanks to Ahmed Saad. Developed with support from the NetHope Connected AI grant program. October 2026.