

## **Vodafone signs MoU with Microsoft to launch Begin Platform to Develop Youth's Digital Skills in Egypt**

**Cairo, Egypt - Aug 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021:** With the goal of developing youth's digital skills in Egypt, Vodafone Egypt signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Microsoft. This partnership combines the efforts of Vodafone through Begin platform and Microsoft initiative Tawar w Ghayar to support entrepreneurs, startups and freelancers find work opportunities and source talents online, particularly after the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Begin platform serves as a link between entrepreneurs in the Egyptian labor market and SMEs owners to find work and source talent, all while working fully online. The importance of this platform, at this crucial time amidst the spread of COVID-19, is to create more job opportunities for youth, and enable collaboration between business owners, freelancers and independent professionals.

This MoU aims at establishing cooperation between the two parties to support youth in finding work opportunities and acquiring the necessary digital skills to succeed in today's labor market. This in turn, will, advance the digital economy and accelerate the growth of a digital society, enabling youth to develop their skills and talents and using it in their society. The MoU also provides freelance opportunities for recent graduates, university students, unemployed citizens, women, and Persons with Disabilities.

**Mirna Arif, Country General Manager for Microsoft Egypt** stated: "Microsoft believes in the importance of building youth skills and enhancing their digital capabilities in the competitive labor market, to accelerate digital transformation in Egypt towards a knowledge based digital economy. Technology is an integral part of the workplace today, and businesses need employees who can increasingly work with new technologies.

Arif affirmed: "Freelance work is becoming very popular among youth as a means to gain employment with greater flexibility and advantages, especially post COVID-19. It is also playing a key role in promoting the country's economic development, with freelancers finding work opportunities online and collaborating with businesses remotely. Microsoft Egypt is significantly contributing to this movement by entering into partnerships with the government and private sector companies to support youth and equip them with the necessary skills to compete in today's job market."

Through Microsoft's Tawar w Ghayar initiative, it aims to build strategic partnerships in Egypt to empower youth with digital skills to increase their employability and enable them to innovate



and create using technology. Microsoft launched the *Begin* platform initiative in 2013 in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, to provide a comprehensive program, including training, capacity building and employment opportunities, to fill the gap between the needs of the labor market and youth skills.

**Mohamed Abdallah, CEO of Vodafone Egypt stated:** “Vodafone Egypt is keen on providing job opportunities for youth and SMEs. We believe that they are the cornerstone of economic growth and the main driver behind promoting digital transformation in Egypt. We, therefore launched *Begin* platform to support youth who represent more than 3,000 freelancers on the platform, and to further develop their digital skills and create unique work opportunities for them. In order to encourage and support startups and young business owners, Vodafone offers 50% discount on *Begin* for the first project posted on the platform.”

He added, “We are always looking for new partnerships and collaborations to develop and support Egypt’s digital transformation and achieve its 2030 vision of building a digital Egypt. Microsoft will also promote *Begin* among its graduates and teacher-training courses to support freelancers find work opportunities. Microsoft is also presenting Vodafone and *Begin* as one of the strategic partners in its online e-learning platform *Tawar w Ghayar*, which aims to train youth in digital and freelance skills.”

Moreover, Vodafone Egypt is collaborating with Microsoft to market *Begin* platform as an essential element of the Microsoft initiative for freelance work. It is also involved in all the marketing materials, media coverage, promotional activities and granting Microsoft Community certificates after completing the freelance work contract with Vodafone. These certificates of completion will help freelancers find work with SMEs and start-ups, in addition to providing Vodafone with the necessary reports on the individuals who prepared the courses, the number of courses attended, and the number of graduates.

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