

SUCCESS STORY

Training, adaptation, and new horizons for Egyptian youth in Germany



EU Trust Fund for Africa - North of Africa

T05.969 Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa (THAMM)



EUTF PARTNER:

Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)



COUNTRY:

EGYPT, MOROCCO, TUNISIA



BUDGET:

EUR 8M EUTF
EUR 4.2M BMZ



From **08/2019**
to **08/2023**

Objective of the project

Mobility schemes with selected North African countries – Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia – are established and/ or improved.

Key successes

- > 419 migrants placed in jobs or dual-track vocational training in Germany.
- > 697 potential migrants have strengthened capacities for labor mobility to Germany.
- > 45 European employers of the placed labour migrants have acquired a good knowledge on legal and practical conditions of recruiting qualified employees and trainees from North African countries.

The story of transforming lives

Khaled, Hishman, Nouran and Youssef are among the young Egyptians who took part in the THAMM programme and pursued vocational training in Germany. Their stories reveal the uncertainties of leaving home, the difficulties of settling into a new country, and the opportunities made possible through structured support.

Khaled, 23, after finishing secondary school in Egypt, was determined to acquire an internationally recognised qualification. *“I got my secondary education certificate in Egypt, then I wanted to get high-quality training abroad, outside Egypt so I decided to come to Germany to get my qualifications”*. He learned about the THAMM programme through the German embassy website and applied. What impressed him most was the careful preparation: *“GIZ took care of everything from A to Z, language, the flight, everything. They organised everything really well. The preparation in Egypt was great, in terms of the language and the culture as well”*.

The adjustment, however, was far from simple. Learning German took months of effort and persistence. *“It was quite hard work because at first it takes a lot of time to learn it properly. It doesn't just happen overnight; you learn something every day. My employer helped me find my feet here and he was very patient with me as a trainee. My colleagues also helped me”*. He now rotates between hotel departments, from housekeeping to the front desk. Reception is his favourite: *“You could say it's*



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the heart of the hotel”. Integration also meant finding community outside work. Khaled joined a local football club where he trains three times a week. *“My club means so much to me”*. Over time, his perseverance paid off. He recently completed his apprenticeship and was offered a contract to remain with his employer. Earlier this year, his story was recognised publicly when he was invited by the Federal President of Germany to attend the Citizens' Festival at Bellevue Palace in Berlin.

For Hishman, the dream was to become a chef. *“I wanted to get training as a chef because I love the kitchen. I like the training because I learn new stuff, practice German and make new friends”*. He discovered the THAMM programme through a friend who had seen an advertisement, applied, and was accepted. Before departure he studied German at the Goethe-Institut in Cairo for several months. The first days in



Germany were difficult. *“The first couple of days were a little tough. I couldn’t understand anything. I didn’t get how things here work. The weather here is totally different for me”*. Despite the challenges, he feels more confident each day. His ambition is clear: *“After ten years or something I’d like to open my own restaurant”*.

Nouran is training to be a hotel specialist in Dettelbach. She remembers the linguistic difficulties: *“I had problems with the language at the beginning because people here in Dettelbach or in Bavaria speak a different dialect but things are getting better”*. She recalls her isolation during the first weeks, which changed once she started school. *“In the beginning I had no friends. I didn’t know anyone here then I started going to school and I met friends from Egypt too”*. Meeting regularly with fellow Egyptians, including Hishman and Youssef, has helped her feel part of a community.

Youssef values above all the sense of respect he experiences in Germany. *“What I like about Germany is that people respect you. You’re going to be respected no matter who you are”*. He sees his future in Germany and dreams of bringing his family later on.

Each of these stories captures a different facet of the migration journey. All four recall the doubts and the moments of disorientation, but also the solidarity of peers, employers, and teachers. Their experiences show how structured support, persistence, and human connection can transform uncertainty into stability. As Khaled sums it up: *“I feel at home here. I really feel happy here. I love being here and I’m very grateful that I’m here”*. Although these stories focus on young Egyptians, similar experiences are being lived by Tunisian and Moroccan participants as well, since THAMM is a regional project implemented across North Africa.

How did the EUTF help?

Structured preparation before departure. The THAMM programme ensured that participants were ready for life and work in Germany. Young Egyptians studied German at the Goethe-Institut, received cultural orientation, and were briefed on what to expect. For Khaled, this preparation meant he could start training with more confidence, while for Nouran it helped her gradually overcome language difficulties.

Clear and safe migration pathway. The programme provided secure channels for mobility, contracts, visas, travel arrangements, and guidance on rights and obligations. This allowed participants like Hishman to focus on training as a chef without the risks linked to irregular migration. Employers also benefited from a transparent process that matched their needs with

motivated trainees.

Integration and recognition of skills. Once in Germany, trainees were supported through close cooperation between training centres, companies, and local authorities. The recognition of qualifications was facilitated by tailored workshops, and the monitoring of progress ensured that problems could be addressed quickly. This “triple win” approach – benefiting migrants, employers, and both countries – was central to the design of the scheme.

Keys to Success

Resilience and ambition. Participants showed strong motivation to succeed, enduring months of language learning and the first difficult weeks abroad. Khaled’s perseverance in learning German and Youssef’s appreciation of respect in the workplace show how determination and mindset made a difference.

Employers as partners. German companies did more than providing contracts: they mentored trainees and helped them adapt. Employers underlined how the preparation phase in Egypt ensured that young workers were ready and confident when they arrived.

Strong institutional cooperation. The programme worked because Egyptian and German institutions coordinated closely with European partners. Together they created safe recruitment channels, fair contracts, and common tools to make legal mobility work for both sides.

Building on Success

Expanding safe pathways. The experience of THAMM shows that legal pathways to vocational training and employment can be scaled up. With 419 young people already placed in Germany by 2023, the programme has demonstrated its potential to reduce irregular migration by offering attractive alternatives.

Strengthening links with countries of origin. Many participants maintain ties with their families and communities in Egypt. These links create opportunities for skills transfer, remittances, and future investments once participants return. Migrants themselves often see their stay as a step towards giving back to their country of origin.

Sustaining cooperation. The lessons learned from THAMM underline the importance of long-term cooperation between governments, training institutions, and employers. Regional exchanges between Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, and Germany have strengthened common standards and created lasting structures for regular mobility.

Disclaimer

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