



A Case Study in Inclusiveness

Focusing on BasharSoft's internal
workplace and external environment for
the Forasna platform

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Amira H. Abdel-Aziz
Aliaa A. Mahmoud
COLLECTIVE ROUTES LLC

This case study is a byproduct of a larger consultancy, YPE-DAPP, implemented by Oxfam to demonstrate the partner organizations' abilities in incorporating the inclusiveness value and other organizational and developmental values on their organizational and/or programmatic levels using the case study approach. The consultancy team applied primary data sources, including interviews, focus groups, and a workshop with the partner organizations' employees and community members, in addition to secondary data sources, which included project reports, relevant documents, and literature.

BasharSoft is a technology company based in Cairo established in 2009 to specialize in developing web-based online employment platforms by providing the business ecosystem with talents and software systems to support employers in business growth, education, mentoring, and career opportunities. BasharSoft provides its online recruitment services through two main platforms, which are Wuzzuf and Forasna for white-collars, and blue-collars/gray-collars respectively. In addition to employability projects, including partnerships with government, donors, and the private sector, BasharSoft's programs and projects have different themes, i.e., youth, women, TVET, start-up support, and persons with disabilities (PWDs).

Inclusiveness is described similarly by several employees at BasharSoft, although the term is not always applied explicitly. The concept is commonly utilized and understood as hiring team members with appropriate skills regardless of their gender, culture, or health abilities and providing a fair chance and a healthy work environment for everyone in order to function, grow, and be included in decision-making.

Decisions in BasharSoft are collaborative; however, the number of employees is nearly 250, but the departments work commonly on a number of programs and projects. Hence, in strategic planning, the leadership team sets the strategy, and then the responsible teams for each department identify their own objectives and key results (OKRs). There is a variety in age and gender between BasharSoft employees, including Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z, with 60% male and 40% female. The selection process's main criteria are qualification and experience; consequently, the HR selects employees based on their skills and expertise, not to achieve a specific quota of including women or persons with disabilities (PWDs), for instance.

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It is people's differences of opinions, gender, culture, nationalities, or health abilities. It is about how to utilize the diversity that exists. So, I can say that I have diversity, but it does not mean that I have inclusiveness, in the sense that it is possible for a company to have different nationalities and religions, but they do not apply inclusiveness and do not treat all people with the same rights, said Asmaa Raheem, HR Manager.

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HR at BasharSoft is responsible for learning and developing, performance management, and building employee relations. There is collaboration among teams and team members for working on common programs and/or projects, and employees feel they are learning every day, either through experience or through mentors and seniors' guidance. There is accessibility among employees regardless of their position, so anyone can easily be reached. The environment is engaging employees and providing them facilities, such as working from home during the COVID-19 period. Employees are well-listened to, appreciated, and feel that they do work for value and impact. Work-life balance is important for BasharSoft to promote employees' well-being and productivity. The company provides vacations to avoid employees' burnout, vacations for marriage, and extra benefits for maternity and paternity leaves. Also, health insurance and transportation allowances are equal for all employees.





The company uses different channels to effectively reach and include its target audience: **Wuzzuf coaching services** through the website or phone number; **Wuzzuf job seekers** through social media channels; and **Forasna job seekers** through launching a call center so that candidates dial a hotline and talk directly to an employee who helps them apply for convenient jobs; as well as **employing ushers** at job fairs, subways, and bus stations in different governorates.

As well as including target audiences in projects, e.g., **partnering with local and international organizations** such as GIZ; getting access to their blue-collar list of data; and Misr El Kheir Foundation; co-building awareness for companies to practically apply the 5% legal quota to employ persons with disabilities (PWDs) in actual jobs.

Inclusiveness was also practiced when the **Youth program** was designed and communicated in Arabic and English to reach both audiences in Forasna and Wuzzuf. Also, any project's content is revised before launch to **avoid gender bias**. For example, **naming the women program "inclusivity"** so that men do not feel unconsciously excluded.

Sometimes **challenges** face BasharSoft in applying inclusiveness **internally**, such as when young candidates show a good performance, but on the personal side they show immaturity in managing situations, which is not related essentially to age but to experiences. Consequently, employees' selection criteria were developed to measure both qualifications, professionally and personally.

Externally, all challenges mentioned were related to **Forasna**, since the platform has 3 million job seekers, of whom 35% are gray collars and 45% are blue collars, who are mostly not familiar with using online platforms in general. For example, the fact that many job seekers do not have access to the internet, or they do not have enough money for transportation or phone credit to call the company and apologize for missing the interviews; accordingly, the team created a partnership with a sponsor to provide incentives for job seekers. In addition, when companies provide irrelevant working conditions, Forasna's team encourages them to improve the working conditions; however, some companies respond and others do not.

Another external challenge to mention was that when users register on the platform and find no available vacancies, s/he used not to login again; therefore, the team adjusted their communication plan to encourage users to update their profiles frequently in order to get exposed to thousands of job offers.

Additional challenges experienced by women included jobs that weren't fit for them due to traveling conditions; consequently, the team formed partnerships with companies in governorates to hire female job seekers in their place of residence. Another challenge is that some women were wary of the platform due to past frauds they encountered when looking for a job, especially since it is a free service. Forasna therefore showcased examples of women in the media, now women are engaging on Forasna's Facebook page encouraging their male relatives to register on the platform.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the Misr El Kheir Foundation to support persons with disabilities (PWDs), 100,000 candidates applied to the platform, but only 50% were active because it was thought that a representative would call them after registration, so the team modified its communication strategy to assist them in taking a step forward .

At the start of COVID-19, BasharSoft employees created a WhatsApp group in order to add contacts of people who had lost their jobs or were looking for work. Team members at Forasna then got in touch with them, set them up a profile on the platform, and linked them to a position.

BasharSoft is a business, **but people do matter**; they employ people or reach individuals based on set criteria respecting people's differences, supporting their learning and growth, and supporting their appropriate employability advantages.





Cairo, Egypt

www.collectiveroutes.org

info@collectiveroutes.org
