

## ADEF Overview

The [Arab Digital Expression Foundation \(ADEF\)](#) is a non-profit foundation that builds spaces, fosters environments for expression and learning, enhances skills and develops knowledge tools to support and empower teenagers and youth, groups or individuals, working on the ground to strengthen their practices and engagement with society.

ADEF's **VISION** is to have independent teenagers and youth, individuals and groups, who are active and aware and can express themselves and produce knowledge for the benefit of their society.

ADEF's **MISSION** is promoting creative uses of information technology, and the dissemination of the concepts and practices of **free culture**, and supporting initiatives which aim to produce **free Arabic knowledge using free tools**.

ADEF organizes a set of programs and projects revolving around the use of open-source information technology and the belief in self-expression and knowledge sharing, targeting both young professionals and youngsters. ADEF's work ranges from policy advocacy to on-the-ground implementation of the values we advocate through creating diverse mechanisms for the practice of these values through various programs including:

### 1. ADEF Digital Expression Camps - ADEC

Building on the expertise of its core team members and the wide network of artists, techies, educationalists and activists around the use of information and communication technologies in general and open-source tools in particular; ADEF created and documented a technology-based curriculum through its annual [Digital Expression Camp \(ADEC\)](#) to empower the Arab youth and develop their skills of self-expression and knowledge sharing, encouraging them to create ideas that would reflect their individual and Arab identity, culture and aspirations in a free and constructive environment.

**Nine** successive experiential-based educational and residential **two-week summer camps** were organized to date, hosting an average of **60 youngsters** annually; females & males between the ages of 12 & 15, representing **11 Arab countries** and various social backgrounds. ADEF digital camps presents numerous opportunities of artistic and creative self-expression for both youngsters and trainers.

For trainers who join each year, the process of individual track development (there are usually 8-9 tracks in each camp) as well as overall camp program development (which is collaborative), develops over six months prior to the event. Trainers are exposed to various training and tools to use in the development of the camp. The process is empowering and the team learns about the essence of



collaboration, knowledge production and sharing and working with teenagers. All content is developed on ADEF's wiki, which is our open knowledge sharing platform.

During the camp, male and female youngsters are exposed - in a free and constructive environment - to a broad spectrum of artistic incentives, exploring creative self-expression tools, developing their skills within the context of a balanced and rich program that includes both digital (video-making, sound and music production, voice effects and DJ skills, as well as creative applications on the web, blogging, programming, graphics and game design) and physical activities (arts and crafts workshops, dancing, theater, storytelling, public performance, acting, negotiation skills and sports) liberating a sense of mental and physical expression.

The four educational goals of the camps is expression, communication, collaboration and critical thinking.



**ADEC's 10th round** will take place in the summer from **July 21 to August 4, 2016** in "El Morgan Hotel" in Fayed, Egypt.

## 2. ADEF Digital Expression Community Area - DECA

ADEF's [Digital Expression Community Area \(DECA\)](#) is community-based free and safe space for youth, amateurs and professional artists, techies, geeks, writers and researchers that fosters the development of skills, critical thinking and initiative, and encourages and supports creative expression, information exchange and knowledge production encouraging cross-generational collaboration.



DECA aims to cultivate a self-sustainable vibrant Arab digital and self-expression community of young active citizens contributing to the digital world and participating in shaping their lives and futures, through the provision of various trainings and workshops in arts, culture and technology. Few of DECA's workshops are:

- 1) A three-month **filmmaking workshop** was held for the third time, which came in response to a huge demand by young adults seeking to learn the basics of film making but facing a lot of challenges in a relatively closed market;
- 2) A **writing marathon** was also held for the second time, followed by a training of trainers in attempt to empower more participants to spread the idea and practice leading their own marathons in other locations.



Furthermore, DECA's two major regular activities as a cultural and social window for the local community in Mokattam are; **1) Sima DECA** (film screenings), a weekly film screening having a unique theme, such as education, obsession, romance, cartoon, and investigative documentaries. DECA also held films about cinema and movies' industry as [United States Cinema](#), [Romanian Cinema](#) , [Latin America Cinema](#) and [Iranian Cinema](#); and **2) Sahret El Khamis** (artistic and activity nights), a weekly entertaining night presenting a diverse program of musical nights for local bands, poetry reading, karaoke, jamming, open microphone and group activity nights.

**Check out [DECA's Page](#) on Facebook for more information on its activities and events.**

### 3. Youth Digital Empowerment Project

**Youth Digital Empowerment Project** is a three-year project, funded by [Drosos Foundation](#) with the objective to foster the capacity building for teens and youth aged 12-21, in selected areas in Cairo and other governorates to express freely using open source digital tools of expression in order to participate effectively in their community. To reach this objective, the project is developing a three-month program in sound and music, video, visual expression, and computing, based on ADEF's summer camps (ADEC) modules that employ the same methodology. To this effect, ADEF is organizing a three-month summer academy July-September 2016 where 20 specialized trainers (trained by ADEF between April and June 2016) will run the program for 100 teens from partner organizations.

Following the summer training, teens will go back to their communities where ADEF has set up digital expression spaces, replicating its open Digital Expression Community Area (DECA) model. Computer labs, sound studios, editing suites have already been set up in community spaces of selected partners where youth can gain structured access to digital application, music and video libraries and workshops that enhance their capacities to expand their cultural awareness and knowledge in the areas of artistic expression. This project ends in mid 2017. By then, 100 trainers and 500 teens and 10 partner organizations would have benefited from this program.

### 4. Free Culture

ADEF advocates and promotes for open knowledge methodology through the good use and benefits of free licensing, free software, good archival practices and open access, aiming to produce good quality literature on the open source concept, theoretical frameworks, free licensing, the significance of the public domain, and censorship and restrictions on freedom of expression in a variety of forms such as academic research papers, articles in Arabic Wikipedia, blog posts, informational videos and opinion pieces in various media publications.

ADEF continues to develop content on its [wiki](#) which is increasingly becoming known as a reference for good quality information on free licensing, free software, and good archival practices and open access. These include but not limited to : 1) A protocol with [Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights \(EIPR\)](#) outlining a best-practices for **digitizing documents for archival**, as part of a wider project to set up a technical and practical foundation to capture their organizational knowledge in systematic methodology. 2) a MOU between ADEF and [CCAP](#) and funded by the [Swedish Institute](#) to establish a cooperation for the execution of **CLOUD LIBRARY**; a Wiki interactive library by proxy that includes, writes, collects, reads and addresses texts relevant to cultural freedom of expression.

ADEF also succeeded in the implementation and launch of several wiki platforms serving organizations in the field of development, arts and expression; such as [Wiki Gender knowledge-base](#) funded by [Goethe institute](#) and [History Narratives Wiki](#) funded by [Arab Council for Social Sciences \(ACSS\)](#).

Furthermore, ADEF has become an established name for organizations seeking consultancy and support in the fields of open knowledge and culture as well as good governance. 1) ADEF took part in the development of the [Internet Governance Glossary \(IGG\)](#), through its participation in the International Expert Group Meeting, by the [UNESCO](#) and **The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)** in Paris, where they finalized the final version of the Internet Governance Glossary (IGG), which is initiated under the "Promotion of Arabic language on the Internet and in multi-stakeholder processes" project. 2) [Ford Foundation](#) sought out ADEF for consultancy on open licenses due to a change in their policy and the need for Ford Foundation staff to learn more about it so that it is implemented for their grantees.