

Understanding the Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Egypt

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Executive Summary

The Egyptian social entrepreneurship landscape can best be characterized as one of growing activity, yet confined to only a select group of institutions with little private sector support and a severe lack of assistance from the media and public sector. This burgeoning field is still maturing and now, at this crucial juncture in the early stages of the post-revolution era, there must be a concerted effort to better understand and localize the concept and fit it to Egypt's development needs.

In the past 5-10 years social entrepreneurship activity has risen notably in Egypt. Institutions such as Ashoka and Synergos have established physical presences in Cairo, while other players such as the Schwab Foundation have extended its services to Egyptian social enterprises. Likewise, social entrepreneurs themselves are cropping up more and more throughout the country, accompanied by events, competitions, an emphasis on sustainable businesses and general buzz around social innovation.

However, the concept and practice of social entrepreneurship is still confined to a select few and faces the challenge of effectively and strategically scaling throughout Egypt. Though support from some areas of the private sector has been a small step-forward, private investment is still minimal and support from the media and public sector is virtually non-existent. The buy-in from these players is critical for developing a robust and dynamic ecosystem.

Further, the lack of agreement on the definition and value-added of social entrepreneurship complicates efforts to establish a clear regulatory system, framework and imperative for supporting social entrepreneurs. Though investment laws for for-profit enterprises are still developing in Egypt, a general consensus on the processes to launch, manage and scale for-profit entities allows investors and other players to intervene and support with confidence. Social enterprises in Egypt lack this structure and organization, even in a basic form, which impinges on efforts to increase impact.

Above all it is essential to make social entrepreneurship a scalable and inclusive practice in the country. Moving forward, incorporating more stakeholders and leveraging resources to scale impact must become top priorities. There is a growing pool of Egyptian practitioners and patrons of social entrepreneurship, and though the global concept of social innovation has impressed certain models and schools of thoughts on the sector in Egypt, the utility of this field needs to be defined and nurtured by the local community. Youth will play an indelible role in this process, and must be given the opportunity to learn first-hand the value and practices of social entrepreneurs and to also receive the space to experiment with their own social ventures. Integrating young people into this field will contribute to its sustainability by creating an idea and talent pipeline for the future. Competitions run by a few of the ecosystem players have already proven to be a successful breeding grounds for experimentation and must be replicated to enlist more young people.

Sustainable and strategic growth of social entrepreneurship in Egypt largely relies on the ability of local players to come to a consensus on how to best work together. Closer collaboration with the government, private sector and media and integrating social enterprises into existing value-chains will be critical for the field's longevity. The private sector can play a role in providing technical support to existing social enterprises, help them build sustainable business models and even experiment with hybrid social businesses. In terms of public sector involvement, social entrepreneurship's immense potential will be realized only if it is comprehensively incorporated into a national development strategy. Within this context social entrepreneurship practices will be based around Egypt's own socio-economic demands. A framework with clearly defined roles will not only give players a structure in which they can operate, but also a national relevance for social entrepreneurship.

Effective communication with stakeholders throughout this process cannot be underestimated. Current social enterprises and other players in the ecosystem must take steps to educate the media and help them better understand the social innovation space, its challenges and opportunities. This approach must also be applied for the donor community to communicate their value-proposition. The private sector too could interact with social entrepreneurs on a similar level, which could provide a foundation for helping social enterprises evolve towards more sustainable operations – an interaction that rests on communication and collaboration rather than just funding.

As communication channels are strengthened, carving out an identity for social entrepreneurship and boosting its capacity in Egypt will follow. The sector's recent growth is a testament to the country's pool of socially innovative ideas, yet scaling these ideas will come only with greater capacity, collaboration and inclusion of more players.

With greater collaboration between stakeholders, growth opportunities will come to the fore and in effect serve the larger goal of growing social entrepreneurship outside of its current niche. As the field becomes more inclusive, new players and knowledge will enter the picture, in providing a platform to solve lingering challenges such as finding technical support, impact assessments and research.

In the wake of the Egyptian Revolution, civil society's role has been magnified. With the country in a state of political and economic flux, there is increasing pressure on the private sector and non-governmental organizations to shoulder the burden of social change. This responsibility may not fall solely on social entrepreneurs', but they indeed have a large role to play. Just as Egypt has played a critical regional role in the Arab Spring, its ability to leverage and mobilize social entrepreneurs in the revolution's aftermath can provide a sound model for neighboring countries to follow.

Introduction:

The aim of this report is to present a situational analysis of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Egypt.

The report is comprised of four sections; the first section is a literature review of research on social entrepreneurship and business entrepreneurship in Egypt and the Arab World. The second section shares the results of in-depth interviews with players in the field of social entrepreneurship and business entrepreneurship, shedding light on specific cases by way of example. Concluding remarks presents recommendations on possible courses of action that would complement missing or scarce elements in the ecosystem; recommendations are also highlighted throughout the second section.

Note on terminology:

The term social entrepreneurship denotes activities of social innovation which result in system changing solutions and social impact (as specified by the Alliance organizations Ashoka and Synergos).

According to Muhammad Yunus, Economist and founder of the Grameen Bank, the term social enterprise or social business defines a venture combining income generating activities/cost recovery and social impact, and where at least 50% of the profit is reinvested in the organization.

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I. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will consider the different elements of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem by drawing parallels with the business entrepreneurship ecosystem and by shedding light on the state of social innovation in Egypt.

Defining the Ecosystem:

“Biological ecosystems are made up of complex webs of interrelated **organisms, or players**, each of which has a role. A flowering plant, for example, relies on certain birds and insects to spread its pollen. The birds and insects, in turn, receive nutrition from the plant. Other birds and insects might feed on the flowering plant, and competing plants might rob the flowering plant of needed sunlight, water, and nutrients.

Biological ecosystems are made up not only of organisms, but also of **environmental conditions** like soil, weather, sunlight, and water. These environmental conditions have a significant impact on the type of organisms that can exist, as well as on their relationships with one another. And so environmental conditions determine what types of organisms will live and which will die.”

“We have adapted those for social entrepreneurs”

(Bloom and Dees 2008)

Bloom and Dees divide **organisms or players** into six categories:

- **resource providers & intermediaries:** providing financial, human, knowledge, networking, and technological resources
- **competitors:** organizations that compete with the social entrepreneurs' organization for resources and those that compete to serve the same beneficiaries
- **complementary organizations and allies:** partners who perform critical steps in the social entrepreneur's theory of change, individuals and organizations supporting the same cause, and people providing important complementary services.
- **beneficiaries and customers:** clients, patients, customers, and others who benefit from social entrepreneurs' activities, whether directly or through an intermediary client
- **opponents and problem makers:** players who contribute to the problems social entrepreneurs are addressing, undermine the ability of the organizations to achieve and sustain their intended impact, or oppose their efforts politically.

- ***affected or influential bystanders***: players who have no direct impact now but might have an impact in the future, for example organizations that could be harmed if the social entrepreneur succeeds, or organizations that incidentally benefit from their success.
- ***neutral parties***: such as members of the media, who could influence (both positively and negatively) the impending or proposed changes.

The interrelationships between players are rather complex, the categories are fluid and not mutually exclusive. Players can take on more than one role at a time, they can switch roles over time, and new players can enter. The same organization can be both a competitor when it comes to vying for limited resources, and an ally when it comes to working together to expand the resource pool (i.e. advocate for legislation).

Bloom and Dees divide **environmental conditions** into four categories:

- ***politics and administrative structures***: rules and regulations along with the political structures in which social entrepreneurs operate, as well as processes and procedures affecting these rules, including levels of corruption among politicians and enforcement officials.
- ***economics and markets***: overall economic health of the regions in which social entrepreneurs operate and seek resources, as well as the region's distribution of wealth and income, economic prospects, levels of entrepreneurial activity, and relevant markets.
- ***geography and infrastructure***: physical terrain and location, as well as the infrastructure that social entrepreneurs count on for transportation, communication, and other operating needs.
- ***culture and social fabric***: norms and values, important subgroups, social networks, and demographic trends of the people living in the area.

Environmental conditions are also complex and cannot be assessed at surface level; while defining these environmental conditions is easiest for social entrepreneurs operating in a single, well-defined geography and political jurisdiction, social entrepreneurs working across many legal, economic, cultural, and geographical environments face a greater challenge. They need to have a robust model that is capable of thriving in different environmental conditions, or they need to choose the different environments carefully to assure a better fit with the model, or they need to adapt their model to accommodate the different environmental conditions.

The Egyptian context:

Abdou et al. define the following as components of the ecosystem as:

- governments
- businesses
- official development assistance organizations
- higher education institutions
- intermediary organizations

The authors also see organizations supporting social entrepreneurs as key players in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Egypt and the Arab World, these include:

- international organizations providing financial capital, networking and technical assistance services
- investment networks
- market facilitators
- incubators

The authors identify four main challenges:

1. policy making and governance
2. the need for greater institutional, operational and financial support
3. the lack of social and cultural awareness and recognition of the social entrepreneurs' work
4. limited access to technical support, including:
 - management consulting services
 - financial and business planning
 - legal counseling
 - impact evaluation
 - marketing and training

The authors conclude with some useful recommendations for governments and businesses. They believe the government has a crucial role in setting a regulatory framework, supporting and developing the ecosystem, as well as in recognition, procurement and partnerships. They also encourage businesses to engage incorporate philanthropy and to take an active role in developing commercially viable and socially inclusive business models (Abdou et al. 2010).

Tayabali describes the Ecosystem for social entrepreneurship as consisting of 5 pieces:

1. Capacity and capability
2. Model or Methodology
3. Technology
4. Policy and laws
5. Finance
6. Logistics and Infrastructure

He stresses the importance of having a supportive ecosystem: "You need to have an ecosystem to support the average Joe, if you only support the exceptional you won't get anywhere."

Building on this research, the report describe the existing technical assistance offered by support organizations to social entrepreneurs, asking specific questions about adequacy of the technical assistance offered and responsiveness to the social entrepreneurs' specific needs, in other words, is the technical assistance offered ineffective or is it tailored to the social entrepreneurs' needs and to local contexts?

The report at hand will not question the selection criteria set by Alliance Partners organizations, but will examine the breadth of the organizations' outreach efforts and ease of access for the target beneficiaries.

Beckner et al. examine Arab youth's interest in social entrepreneurship through an online survey. They detected a strong interest in volunteerism and a sense of social responsibility, finding that more than one in four respondents in the region is active in some form of volunteering. Also a large proportion of survey respondents indicated that if given the choice they would prefer to be self-employed or own a business. The survey, in contrast with other research, indicated that half of respondents across the region were somewhat familiar with the term entrepreneurship -both business and social- and that a significant number of the respondents would like to pursue entrepreneurship as a profession or career path.

The authors see a potential boom in the sector and highlight the need to build more awareness among youth around social entrepreneurship in order to build on the existing energy. The survey also revealed a need for increased infrastructure in the sector, particularly incubators.

Visser (2011) examines social entrepreneurship in Egypt from an anthropological perspective, articulating both the government's understanding and society's understanding of social entrepreneurship and researching whether young social entrepreneurs face opposition or restrictions from government and society. She finds that social entrepreneurship has not been supported by legal infrastructure and that the government actively hinders social entrepreneurs. She also argues that social entrepreneurs face societal disapproval by contradicting common values of choosing a well-defined profession and a career that guarantees a stable income. Additionally, in light of the general mistrust that citizens hold for the social sector and development organizations, social entrepreneurs' families discourage them from joining the sector. She concludes that the combination of governmental control and societal disapproval have a negative impact on resources, networks, and accessible information for young social entrepreneurs.

Visser(2011) highlights the role of umbrella organizations that provide "a way out" by offering resources and support. She highlights that the biggest contribution of such organization lies in the recognition and legitimacy brought by awards naming social entrepreneurs, as those provide a more defined framework within which social entrepreneurs can operate, thereby increasing society's trust. Belonging to an umbrella organization helps social entrepreneurs operate despite impeding rules and restrictions(this is especially true for organizations that incubate social entrepreneurs to ease the legal restrictions they often face). Additionally, being a recognized social entrepreneur brings international credibility and support.

One of the findings of the study indicates little integration and weak collaboration between social entrepreneurs, Visser(2011) finds that "the social issues Egyptian social entrepreneurs address are very different; [consequently] they do not feel [that] they belong to one and the same group."

Building on this research, the report will examine whether cultural acceptance and governmental support vary according to the specific sector or field of work of the social entrepreneur, and whether the degree of resistance varies according to the stage or degree to which the initiatives are established.

Kirby and Ibrahim (2011) examine the awareness of the notion of social entrepreneurship amongst Egyptian students. They find that “although three organizations, Ashoka Arab World, The Schwab Foundation and YES Egypt, do much to support and promote social enterprise in Egypt, students are confused over what a social entrepreneur is or does and are largely unaware of existing Egyptian social entrepreneurs. The majority want a career in a multi-national enterprise but a sizeable number are interested in establishing a social enterprise.”

The authors indicate the need for both greater awareness in terms of information and knowledge, and the need for support and encouragement.

The report will draw a connection between the modest achievements of social entrepreneurship support organizations and the success of entrepreneurship organizations, which have managed to encourage students to pursue a career in business entrepreneurship and start their own ventures. Additionally, this report will further examine the popularity of social entrepreneurship and work in the social sector among youth by shedding light on competitions and campaigns targeting youth in the field of social innovation (which were not thoroughly surveyed in previous research).

El Dahshan et. al (2010) examine the business entrepreneurship ecosystem in the Egyptian context with a focus on initiatives and organizations that support business entrepreneurs, raising the question of whether the support provided is sufficient, and whether it builds synergies among the different parts of the ecosystem.

They find that existing support organizations lack in coordination, and often exhibit a duplication in the tasks conducted, factors that “lead to inefficiency and prevent specialization and scalability”. Moreover, the authors describe the current support system as a linear process, one comprised of a succession of tasks and of support organizations that fulfill a set of requirements “until the economic venture is on its feet”. Under the same model, each organization focuses on ventures and entrepreneurs at a different stage and at varying degree of maturity. The authors recommend an alternative model where the different parts of the ecosystem interact dynamically, namely support organizations, innovation networks and academic institutions.

Drawing parallels with the business entrepreneurship ecosystem, the report will examine the interrelationships between the different organization and entities serving social entrepreneurs; examining whether there is coordination of efforts, division of tasks, and synergies in the sector.

Existing theory around business entrepreneurship ecosystems stresses that a sound and healthy ecosystem is one where individuals are encouraged to start their own ventures by society, culture and the media and are not discouraged by fear of failure. Naqvi in his address at the recent Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Istanbul highlights the importance of a shift in culture in the Arab World towards one that encourages innovation, creativity, the arts, freedom of speech and expression, cultural openness, respect for radically innovative ideas and nonconformity, as well as acceptance of failure. He stresses on the importance of sharing knowledge and best practices, the availability of a mentoring framework as well as government support.

Our research will focus on the elements of the ecosystem as identified by Bloom and Dees (shedding light on subcategories and giving priority to some elements over others as per the scope of the report, and taking into consideration areas covered by existing research –published and to be published)

Organisms / Players

- **resource providers & intermediaries** →fundraising, human resources and organizational development, availability of a knowledge base in the sector
- **competitors** →collaboration, scaling and replication in the sector
- **complementary organizations and allies** →advocacy
- **beneficiaries and customers** →will not tackle this category here as the search and selection criteria of Alliance Partners' organizations specify that social entrepreneurs follow participatory planning methods and engage stakeholders
- **opponents and problem makers + affected or influential bystanders**→ government and businesses, we will explore whether social entrepreneurs find support from the government and businesses
- **neutral parties** → we will assess media and cultural understanding of social entrepreneurship

Environmental Conditions

- **politics and administrative structures** →we will investigate whether available legal frameworks enable the work of social entrepreneurs, and touch upon the role of incubators and umbrella organizations in overcoming initial hurdles and providing legal assistance
- **economics and markets** →we will investigate different types of funding and we will also highlight the potential for social enterprises and income generating activities
- **geography and infrastructure** →we will focus on the accessibility of existing networks and on the search and selection process
- **culture and social fabric:** since other studies have focused on cultural acceptance of social entrepreneurship in general,instead we will concentrate this section of the report on the availability of role models, educational programs, and a mentorship framework and other factors that might encourage young people to pursue a career in the social sector

Rising interest in social entrepreneurship: media, government and businesses

The past couple of years have witnessed an interest in social entrepreneurship from the media and the business sector in the region, particularly in the aftermath of President Barack Obama's Cairo speech "A New Beginning":

"On economic development, we will create a new corps of business volunteers to partner with counterparts in Muslim-majority countries. And I will host a Summit on Entrepreneurship this year to identify how we can deepen ties between business leaders, foundations and social entrepreneurs in the United States and Muslim communities around the world."

Events like the Global Entrepreneurship Week (in Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon) and ArabNet added social entrepreneurship to their agendas. This year's ArabNet invitation stated that "the conference will address the current Egyptian issues specifically the role of social entrepreneurship in building a new social, economic and political environment."

Nevertheless, social entrepreneurship is still a concept of secondary importance in such events. It is worth noting that Egypt is witnessing a rise in green entrepreneurship and aspects of sustainability for businesses, as the recent Global Entrepreneurship Week had a series of green events, among them the Green Entrepreneurship workshop.

As for the media's understanding of the concept, coverage of social entrepreneurship activities does not surpass the publishing of press releases and standard reporting on events. In the Egyptian media there have been very few feature articles and reportages that delve into the topic and profile social entrepreneurs, and those were mainly in English speaking media.

As for the availability of online interactive media that simplifies the concept for the general Arab audience, we have only come across a video from Aramram website in Jordan where locally recognized social entrepreneurs are explaining the concept in Arabic with footage from their work in the field. Also Ashoka Arab World has released a video in its early years of operation featuring the organizations' director explaining the concept and each of the social entrepreneurs (i.e. Ashoka fellows) talking about their innovations.

The social sector has yet to witness an equivalent of Wamda in the field of business entrepreneurship, as the renowned media platform has created animated movies featuring a character (Antar the Mini-Entrepreneur) explaining the notions of entrepreneurship in an engaging and humorous way in Arabic. In Wamda's words, the mini-entrepreneur's lessons are applicable to any sector, and can also be used for social entrepreneurship.

In some Arab countries, the work of international organizations promoting social entrepreneurship has been picked up by the government which later on designed awards and competitions around social innovation (most notable the King Abdullah Award in Jordan and the King Khaled Foundation's competitions in Saudi Arabia). Unfortunately, Egypt has seen no such developments.

Spreading a culture of social entrepreneurship among youth

Many student activities and competitions started including social entrepreneurship on their agendas (i.e. Youth Social Entrepreneurship Programme YSEP with particular emphasis on spreading a culture of social innovation and not necessarily social entrepreneurship as defined by organizations like Ashoka and Synergos. Meanwhile, business entrepreneurship competitions have included special awards to start up ventures and business plans that include a green, eco or social dimension in the business (i.e. Injaz, SIFE, the MIT Business Plan competition for the Arab World, and Google Ebd2 *Start with Google*). Though there have been efforts by the Ashoka Cairo office in expanding their outreach of global competitions such as Changemakers and integrating Egyptian youth via social media, these attempts have remained limited in scope as only one of the competitions was presented in Arabic. Most notable in this field is the Yahoo/Maktoob-Nahdet El Mahrousa competition titled "Social Innovation Starts with You" which offered seed funding, incubation, legal registration and technical assistance to 9 start-up ventures.

In addition to the Nahdet El Mahrousa incubator for innovative development ideas, which is currently incubating close to 15 start-up ventures, there have been efforts to establish models of shared co-working space for social entrepreneurs such as The Hub - Cairo (now Rasheed 22) and Al Mesaha, yet these efforts have remained limited in scope and restricting accessibility to a certain group/network of friends.

Despite the recognition and activity in Egypt, traditional for-profit start-ups get more attention than their counterpart in the social sector. Business startups have access to higher media visibility, more funding, and most importantly, the attention of high level established entrepreneurs which sit on the boards of the organizations, help in fundraising and provide mentoring and technical assistance to the start-up ventures. The ecosystem and value-chain for these entrepreneurs is much better defined as well. Recently established business incubators include Flat 6 for technological startups, as well as the Injaz company program whereby teams that win the student competition become incubated at established companies working in the same field. Venture Capital investors, are an established and growing force, with entities such as Idevelopers and Sawari Ventures as some of the more notable practitioners. Endeavor, NGO supporting more mature and high-growth enterprises, has an internship program for youth, which consists of a competition to solve technical problems that an Endeavor Entrepreneur's company faces, followed by an internship program at the company.

Moreover, Egyptian university students have access to formal training and education in business entrepreneurship, while there are no academic programs concerned with social entrepreneurship.

Existing knowledge base

An adequate knowledge base is one where indigenous knowledge is shared and international knowledge is localized. In the context of social entrepreneurship in Egypt, one can confidently say that there is a clear gap in the sector. Save for David Borenstein's book "How to Change the World" which has been translated to Arabic and EhaabAbdou's "Practitioner's Guide for Social Entrepreneurs in Egypt and the Arab Region" there is little knowledge that Egyptian social entrepreneurs can use.

Throughout our research, we try to track efforts that social entrepreneurs themselves or that support organizations on their behalf undertake to document best practices and provide a shared local knowledge base. It is worth noting that generally, local forums and the development of efficient practices and procedures are lacking in the social sector in Egypt, with the exception of few job boards and mailing lists.

II. RESEARCH FINDINGS

“there is no Ecosystem you feel you're floating in a vacuum, you don't know which direction your going.”*

“social entrepreneurs squeeze themselves into the business sector ecosystem, and then have to deal with the challenges of both sectors”

“The ecosystem has to be adapted, people take the norms of the business sector which aims at profit maximization, and try to force them on another sector where the mission is unique and where human and social variables come into play”

**some of the interviewees' comments will be kept anonymous*

Defining social entrepreneurship

There is no consensus around the definition of **social entrepreneurship**. The definitions given, range from social innovation and problem solving to efficient social work, while few grasped the notion of system changing solutions. In some cases, interviewees, particularly those from the business sector, confined social entrepreneurship to social enterprise or social business, stressing on the importance of cost recovery and financial sustainability.

The case for Definition:

“both concepts have been around, people have been doing this work without knowing how to label it as entrepreneurship or social entrepreneurship”

“in the absence of clear categories and clear definitions people are projecting their own perceptions and own definitions onto the field”.

“If social entrepreneurship remains undefined, unregulated and hence untrusted, none will consider it as a viable career path –especially in light of the mistrust that NGOs face in Egypt as traitors, agents and recipients of foreign ill intended funding.”

Definitions:

“Social entrepreneurship or social innovation is doing something to serve your society, something new, something that society needs, you shouldn't look at the benefit that you get as much as the benefit that accrues to society”.

When describing social entrepreneurs, most focused on the spirit and ethics of the entrepreneur and his/her persistence and devotion to the cause, while few stress the skills and abilities needed.

“They’re innovators, risk takers, they make connections that nobody else sees, they do things, they don’t just talk, they do a lot of research, they look for information everywhere.”

“Social entrepreneurs are honest and committed, they follow scientific thinking, they work with the community, and they have a track record in their field of work.”

“A social entrepreneur is imagining a reality that does not exist, he is creating a new model, there’s no path for him to follow, and he tries to pave his own way”

“the social entrepreneur has a compass and knows his destination, he tries different routes to get there yet he will never go astray”

In our research, we have encountered some individuals that were skeptical of the term citing that it was used for re-branding or re-labeling of existing practices. While others have acknowledged the concept of social entrepreneurship, they have criticized the sensationalism that surrounds it and/or have questioned support organizations’ selection criteria and the socio-economic impact and contribution of social entrepreneurs to society.

“I feel the term is not meaningful; it’s empty and evasive. I feel organizations change the term to fit what they want to define, it’s very nebulous and not well defined.”

“I feel sometimes it is a fancy way of saying that a business has a social responsibility or that an NGO is doing things in an efficient way”

“Anyone who works under tight conditions and limited funding has to exhibit a certain degree of creativity”

“As for the social entrepreneurs or the examples that people and organizations throw out, I feel that they are doing good work but they are not entrepreneurs, their work is not necessarily innovative, and innovation is a core component of entrepreneurship.”

“Some of these innovations are simply re-labeling some existing practices such as fair trade, organic, artisan programs, etc... in such cases social impact needs to be assessed in order to determine the value added of the social entrepreneurship approach and hence providing evidence for the reason of labeling it as such!”

Recommendations:

Support organizations should focus their messaging on clarifying the impact of social entrepreneurs, the importance of their work instead of only emphasizing one aspect— innovation.

Overview of the Social Sector in Egypt

Much of the skepticism and ambiguity surrounding social entrepreneurship stems from a misunderstanding of the social sector in Egypt which has largely been reduced to either charitable organizations which are deemed inefficient and sometimes corrupt, and human rights organizations which are perceived as foreign intervention in Egyptian domestic affairs and a threat to its national sovereignty. One could almost conclude that only those who are closely affiliated with the sustainable development sector understand it. The media has not played a role in transforming, changing and shaping mainstream understanding of the development industry. At best, the media has only purported very superficial descriptions of development in Egypt that purposefully provide Egyptians with little insight and perspective into the sector. In recent events, some media channels echoed government discourse, calling for a crackdown on NGOs that receive foreign funding.

The social sector perspective:

“There are many bad examples out there more than the good examples, and by consequence they harm the reputation or perception of social entrepreneurs in the community.”

“People thought we were making money and enriching ourselves from the NGO, while the truth is that board members are the first donors as they have to pay for the activities if they don’t get funding. Some competitors have reported me to the authorities saying I have millions, but then I was interrogated the charges were dropped.”

“The sector suffers from lack of creativity, inadequate resources, poor governance and management structures, lack of coordination and partnership building, corruption and disregard for sustainability”

“The challenges that the sector faces are: a strict regulatory environment undermining freedom of expression and association, lack of local funding sources, weak organizational capabilities, and weak sustainability ratios for past and existing programs, lack of sharing innovations, best practices and lessons learned”

The business sector perspective:

“My general impression is that NGOs and development organizations are very inefficient, if you look at how much they spend and how much gets done you get really disappointed.”

The Media

Media, though not the sole determinant, can exert considerable influence in dictating public perceptions and buy-in of entrepreneurship, both traditional and social. Many stressed the importance of reconsidering support organizations’ communication strategies; by broadcasting stories about social entrepreneurs in mainstream media and by providing role models that people can identify with. The interviewees highlighted, that even in cases where role models are provided, those are individuals that the general public cannot identify with, as they are mostly perceived as coming from a their privileged background or having access to quality education. To this end, organizations supporting business entrepreneurship have exerted a real effort in promoting local and traditional entrepreneurs in mainstream media and providing role models that the general public can identify with (self-made business entrepreneurs). A sign that the social entrepreneurship cohort is still maturing and vying for recognition.

There are variations in the extent to which social entrepreneurs interact with the media, depending whether advocacy is a priority for their organizations. Yet most social entrepreneurs interviewed, expressed that the media never understood their work, often wrote inaccurate information, and that in most cases they had to rely on

press releases or help write the articles published. Consequently, for social entrepreneurs, there are reservations and a lack of trust towards the media. This adds another dimension to the complications and challenges that exhibiting and showcasing the contributions of social entrepreneurs and their subsequent impact on society.

“Journalists are not responsive, they only come to us when they are out of topics to write about. They mostly write without interest in the work we do, maybe in all those years, I have met one journalist who really listens and wants to learn.

“Even when we issue press releases for accuracy they are not useful to the reader, we use too much jargon from the development sector, people read it and still don’t understand it, the information needs to be repackaged and this is the role of journalists.”

“The problem with most of these [support] organizations is that they don’t do a proper segmentation of the market nor design their communication material for the different target audiences. Also most of the material produced is in English not in Arabic”

There is a niche in English print media, which has a better grasp of sustainable development, yet its outreach remains limited because of its lack of (linguistic) accessibility. Publications such as Business Today, the Daily News and Egypt Independent (Al Masry Al Youm) often portray entrepreneurs and have sections dedicated to issues of sustainability. Additionally, alternative media platforms such as TEDx, and online portals and blogs promote entrepreneurship and social responsibility, yet those too remain limited in outreach. Events such as Ashoka’s Innovation Challenge (AIN) Nahdet El Mahrousa’s Monthly Mondays and Salons where young people can pitch their ideas for social change, have encouraged many young people to pursue their initiatives further and have linked them to supporters.

Interviewing a number of young people, it became apparent that portraying social entrepreneurs as role models (whether through the media, outreach events or competitions) has successfully introduced the concept to young social entrepreneurs. The interviewees reported that they sometimes thought of similar models but were hesitant to try them out.

Spotlight on

Social Innovation Start with YOU (by Yahoo-Maktoob and Nahdet El Mahrousa)

The competition was advertised on social media platforms and received 2000 applications, out of which 9 were selected to receive a monetary prize of 20-30 thousand dollars, legal assistance to set up the enterprise, as well as mentoring and technical assistance to help the teams revise their business plans and strategies. While advertising for the competition, Nahdet El Mahrousa chose a number of social entrepreneurs, among which Synergos social innovators and Ashoka Fellows, who have financially sustainable models (social enterprise). Seeing the role models made young people think about social entrepreneurship as an alternative career path:

“Before the competition I didn’t know about social entrepreneurship I knew only about entrepreneurship and the conventional career path, the competition made me feel there’s an alternative to being just an engineer. I was a software developer, my client was a bank, I helped them make more money, now that I established Bosletak [a platform for career and education guidance for high school students] I feel that what I do is meaningful because it has an impact on people’s lives” Ahmed El Noshokaty, Bosletak (Your Compass)

“we knew we were entrepreneurs and that we wanted to do something good for our community but we didn’t know if we could do this through a business; we wanted a *combo* of social impact and financial sustainability that seemed hard to reconcile. After being selected through the competition we attended an event organized by Nahdet El Mahrousa where we listened to Dr Iman Bibars and Dr Laila Skandar describe the term social entrepreneurship, with examples from the field. Dr Laila Skandar gave an example that illustrated: how to make money, serve the community, and solve an environmental problem on a grassroots level.” Mohamed Salem Korayem & Amira Salah, Kherna

Spotlight on Ashoka Innovation Challenge (AIN)

The support organization perspective:

“The Ashoka Innovation Challenge aims to introduce social entrepreneurship to young professionals so that they can view it as a viable career choice. It was composed of two phases, the first was an open sessions where Ashoka Fellows talked about their work to young professionals, then we had a Challenge whereby these professionals participated in a competition where they pitched their own social innovation ideas.

Raghda El Ebrashi for the first session gave a presentation to 40 young professionals from HSBC, as a result, many of them expressed interest in volunteering for her organization. Additionally, they said that their session changed their view of the social sector, which they thought was mostly charitable.

Then we organized competitions. We received 25 applications and showcased 5 ideas and then chose 1 initiative. The winner was Educate Me, an initiative by young people who work for Alcatel Lucent, aiming to spread Montessori teaching methods in low income schools. The winners were then connected to Ashoka fellows working in the same field so that they could learn from them by serving as interns in their organizations, giving them ideas and programs to implement in their organizations etc." *Gabriel Manga, Ashoka*

The youth perspective:

"I had read two books that encouraged me to take this path, Leaving Microsoft to Change the World and Three Cups of Tea. A few months after starting I decided to quit my job to focus on the initiative, I felt that selling telecom equipment didn't make sense anymore. It is then that I established Educate Me, to introduce non-formal education modules in public schools and neighborhoods"

"A few months after we started we participated in the Ashoka competition (AIN), winning gave us a reassurance that we were on the right path; it also got us increased media attention which was binding in many ways" *Yasmine Helal, Founder of Educate Me*

Spotlight on Mobaderoon Masr/Pioneers of Egypt a Synergos Program (in partnership with Egyptian civil society institutions).

Over the next two years, Pioneers of Egypt will directly support three distinct groups: 50 Social Innovators leading promising social and economic change initiatives, 200 start-up social entrepreneurs with promising ideas for business or social ventures and 1,000 youth who will access internships and improve their employment potential.

The program has a particular emphasis on youth with the aim to support startup social entrepreneurs as well as established Social Innovators.

The program will also conduct awareness-building initiatives and run social entrepreneurship competitions to increase the visibility of social entrepreneurship, particularly among youth.

Source: Synergos website

Recommendations:

Providing role models that people can identify with.
Capitalizing on the burgeoning sense of activism and social responsibility among youth of the Arab Spring by designing specific programs targeting youth, with a focus on competitions.
Reaching out to alternative media platforms and social media platforms.
Organizing a training and outreach program for journalists.

The state of Business Entrepreneurship in Egypt

The research also found that Egypt does not have an enabling environment conducive for business entrepreneurship¹. While people find it desirable to have their own business, they are reluctant to invest in high-growth companies fearing potential failure due to the sanctions that the government enforces in cases of default. Egypt's entrepreneurship is centered in micro and small enterprises.

While the business entrepreneurship sector has many active support organizations, those mainly work on promoting entrepreneurship, providing seed funding and extending some technical assistance. However, the recent surge of interest in entrepreneurship has not been matched by proportionate support services or efforts to lobby for a more supportive ecosystem and legal and institutional framework. Furthermore, there has been little effort to provide funding for "the missing middle"².

The case for social enterprise and social business

There is a need for **social enterprise** and social business, but it is also obvious that Egypt is still far from convergence between the business sector and the citizen sector/social sector.

There is untapped potential for income generating activities and social business models, yet most organizations have a preference for fundraising rendering limited capacity to build functioning business units. The reliance on donors jeopardizes sustainability of the enterprise and also complicates investor intervention.

¹ Research and interviews around business entrepreneurship in Egypt have been conducted as part of this research, the results of which will not be listed here to keep the focus on social entrepreneurship.

² Developing countries have a large number of microenterprises and some large firms, but far fewer small and medium enterprises.

Consistently looking towards aid causes many social entrepreneurs to remain the object of philanthropy. Though some have functioned well with this business model, chances of gaining the buy-in from the private sector, agreeing on a shared vision and in general scaling social enterprises will be limited by a lack of sustainability.

There are also clear collaboration opportunities between organizations supporting business entrepreneurship and organizations supporting social entrepreneurship. During our interviews business sector organizations expressed interest in partnerships particularly in the area of social enterprise and social business; social

“I discovered that the NGO law does not prohibit NGOs from making an income provided it gets reinvested in the organizations, hence all of our NGOs can have income generating activities, yet none know it”

“startups face a moral and ethical dilemma to conciliate profit making with social impact”

“Society does not understand the social business model, some parents who can afford to pay the school’s tuition fees don’t understand why they need to pay the full tuition. We always direct those who can’t afford to pay the tuition to a support fund.” *MahaHelali, Founder Advance (The Egyptian Society For Developing Skills Of Children with special needs) and Ashoka Fellow*

“There’s always a tradeoff, you either find an NGO that focuses on charity alone and has trouble with financial sustainability or a company that has profit as a main goal and social impact only as a byproduct but not core to the business, the hybrid structure in the middle is a mythical creature.” *Mohamed El Hawary, Founder of Andalusia Financial investment boutique*

“In many countries in the region there is funding for pure non-profits and funding for-profit enterprises, but no channels or funding streams available for social entrepreneurs” *George Khalaf – Director, Middle East and North Africa Region, Synergos*

“CID’s assessment of the ecosystem which we undertook on behalf of Brookings Institute in 2010 demonstrated that there are a lot more NGOs that can be described as having social enterprise potential than for profit businesses having a social impact. Maybe now after the revolution we will see more BOP models, maybe we will see more people investing in creating socially responsible business models. Social Entrepreneurs are abound in Egypt, many people would want to make a difference have profitable business that produces something good for the society, with no excessive profit, but they don’t know that this is ok, and they know they would immediately get labeled as capitalists not as people who are doing good for the community. On the other hand the nonprofits we interviewed didn’t have an understanding of financial sustainability or cost recovery. Only NGOs that have private sector board members know how to get around the law and think like social enterprises that can have income generating activities.” *LailaIskandar founder of CID consulting and Schwab Social Entrepreneur*

“I aimed to help the fellows transform their NGOs into sustainable businesses yet they wanted to stick to fundraising.” *ZiadMokhtar, former McKinsey consultant*

sector organizations, on the other hand, felt that there is little room for collaboration with organizations active in the field of business entrepreneurship.

“From our research we found that the law allows NGOs income generating, yet the problem is that some NGOs prefer fundraising. We once approached an NGO that ran a community center producing crafts, carpentry and baked goods offering them to market their products without getting any fees in exchange, they still preferred fundraising offering us a fundraising consultancy opportunity”
#socentKairo (a platform to promote social enterprise)

Spotlight on

Al Karma Edutainment (using media to deliver educational and inspiring content to promote social change).

“I decided to start my social enterprise when I recognized that the standard of education and knowledge among young Egyptians is deteriorating which affects the ability to make them productive and competitive citizens in the future. The main factors affecting the youth in Egypt are three: Education, Media and Faith issues. Since we are a media company we looked around the world to identify models of social media that can influence, educate and inspire the viewers. We found out that Edutainment, which is combining positive social messages in a high appeal entertaining media format was the best approach for us to ensure a scientific and tested method was used to make our work most effective. [...]

Media is by far the most effective tool to reach the masses, especially in a country with high levels of literacy and a low rate of reading in general. It is also one of the most sustainable forms of development as the content we produce is sold to the broadcasters, which provides revenue that allows us to continue projects for a long time. (Example: AlamSimsim has been produced for the last 12 years with a seed funding from USAID but now with its very high viewership it has become financially sustainable as its revenue is based on TV sales and corporate sponsorships)” *Amr Koura, Founder of Al Karma Edutainment*

Source: Social Innovation Starts With YOU website, where Amr Koura was portrayed as a role model for young social innovators applying for the competition.

Spotlight on Iqraaly (Read to Me)

“I have seen many innovations in the area of tech entrepreneurship that are social enterprises yet they don’t know it. For example I met the guy who started Iqraaly which uses open source software to record audio-books and then people can download them through their phones, his target is housewives who can listen to the books while taking care of the house, or people who have a long commute and can listen to the books while stuck in traffic; catering to blind people did not even cross his mind, if support organizations had promoted the concept of social entrepreneurship this wouldn’t have been the case.”

Recommendations:

Tapping into social business and social enterprise potential by creating specific programs instilling social impact and sustainability values in business entrepreneurs and programs upgrading the skills of NGOs towards financial sustainability.

Educating the media about social enterprise and social business as ways of doing business.

Financial Sustainability of social entrepreneurship initiatives

Hybrid models, social enterprise and social business

As argued throughout this report, the research posits a clear need for increased social awareness, capacity-building that accompanies the institutionalization of a legal framework that promotes and protects the rights and responsibilities for social enterprises, social businesses and other ventures that lie at the crossroads between development (NGOs) and profit-making businesses.

Donor funding

With regards to financial sustainability, social sector organizations were generally described as donor dependent with a notable lack of clear direction and purpose; contrastingly, social entrepreneurs remain faithful and dedicated to their purpose and objective. On the other hand, social entrepreneurs frowned upon donors' preference of investing in controversial causes, mostly relating to human rights, gender and political participation. Another criticism by social entrepreneurs was that donors' favor big numbers of beneficiaries over depth of impact. Many social entrepreneurs urge donor organizations to require their staff to conduct field visits to project sites and to engage more with the local community in order to understand the nature of poverty, its extent and the communities' needs. In addition, many favor hiring local consultants who would be better acquainted with the territory and thus, more inclined and capable to offer adequate solutions.

If social entrepreneurship awards serve one goal, it would be distinguishing agents of change who stick to their missions and causes against a backdrop of organizations chasing donor funds.

Scrambling for donor funds has negatively impacted collaboration in the social sector in general and also among social entrepreneurs, as organizations perceive each other as competitors instead of potential partners, each striving to present a model that is more appealing to the donor.

“When someone works in something controversial, the donors find it sexy, there is a bias, don’t you feel so?”

“The social sector is very donor dependent and the donors have distorted the sector.”

“Nothing pushes organizations to creativity, there’s no challenge, they are all comfortable receiving and channeling funds and are all quite donor dependent.”

“Donors want to impose their own terms.”

“Who decides a national agenda? The vacuum that the government left was filled by the donors who made up an agenda for NGOs to follow, in fact many NGOs have registered just to obtain funding and left when the funding dried up. Serving the community needs a track record, expertise, social capital and specialization in a field, today you have NGOs working in everything irrespective of their missions!”

Private sector funding & Corporate Social Responsibility

There seems to be potential for financing from the private sector, which comes less conditioned than donor organizations’ funding, yet much has to be done both on the investing and the receiving end. Social Entrepreneurs feel that companies focus on the PR & media visibility of their CSR programs rather than on social impact, and would replace them with organizations that would implement the programs at a lesser cost or with a stronger media buzz. Companies wish that social entrepreneurs would benefit from their expertise in addition to funds, and understand that they do not have the ability to provide massive amounts of funding like donor organizations.

The company perspective:

“It was very hard in the beginning to clarify the partnership to NGOs, they were mostly interested in funds, I kept on explaining to them “I’m not a donor institution, I don’t give money and go, I work on a social investment and take part in project design. I meet about 1 NGO per week, so I have met 300 NGOs till now and all they want is funding for projects that will never be financially sustainable.”

“The secret to a good CSR policy is to have a real match, between the core of the company’s business mission and the community’s needs”

“They also need to understand that we don’t have billions and that our ability to provide funds is not our main competitive edge, consumer knowledge is what we’re good at, we have a map of Cairo, consumption habits, spending schemes, etc, and each company has this knowledge in its respective field.”

The NGO perspective:

“Companies would sometimes take your idea and copy it under their CSR program, or would leave you to work with a cheaper NGO [that implements the program at less costs], or one that gives them more PR benefits and visibility”

“CSR departments’ staff in Egypt are mostly untrained and focus on PR instead of value added and social impact.”

“Our experience fundraising from the business sector in Egypt is very favorable; they take us seriously because we follow a social business model and care about financial sustainability”

Recommendations:

Civil society organizations, in partnership with the government need to set a national agenda for sustainable development in Egypt.

Organizations need to better negotiate funding terms and conditions. (These two recommendations don’t seem to go together as written. Spell out the connections – what does negotiation have to do with national agenda?)

Spotlight on The Spirit of Youth Association - Procter & Gamble partnership

“We now have a joint project with the Spirit of Youth Association, it’s a good example of social entrepreneurship, together we started the Moqattam recycling school. The story began when we found there are counterfeits for our products in the market, people use our original packages and refill it and sell it as if it were our product by going to consumers door to door, we found out they got the empty bottles from Moqattam buying them from garbage collectors.

To break the chain we started a mock recycling center in partnership with CID consulting and Spirit of Youth (Lailalskandar and EzzatNaim), through the center, the kids shred the bottle to produce recycled plastic and enroll in a non formal educational system, we give them an incentive fee for each bottle they recycle, and that gets them to count what they earned, so we teach them math, then we teach them to read and write in Arabic and English by telling them to separate the different brands, and we teach them computer by telling them to present an excel sheet on the computer. We follow the Paolo Freire education for the oppressed and community learning modules.

Everybody gains through this model, the company avoids market share loss to counterfeits and achieves high customer satisfaction, and recovery, the kids learn and get income (and according to ILO standards we have moved them from Child Labour to Working Children), the consumer gets a quality product and the environment benefits.

We can apply this model to a zillion things that have child labor, instead of working inadequate hours, being underpaid, working hazardous conditions, not getting access to education, they can “learn and earn” and work in safe conditions in occupations that suit their bodies, and they get non formal education curriculums designed according to their needs.” *RamezFarag, Procter and Gamble*

Human capital

Culture

Many reverted the lack of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship alike to an **educational system** that does not encourage critical thinking, questioning existing conditions, or creativity. This problem is aggravated by a reigning conformist culture that does not encourage innovation, unconventional careers or risk taking. Nevertheless, the widespread philanthropy culture, stemming moral and religious obligation to give back to their community, can be harnessed to spread social entrepreneurship.

It is worth noting that most social entrepreneurs interviewed, whether established or at start-up phase, felt that their families and friends did not take their work seriously, always perceiving it as a side activity.

“When I investigated entrepreneurship I felt that most of the barriers are in the culture and educational system that do not encourage innovation, I guess I could say the same for social entrepreneurship”. HalaHattab, Professor at the British University in Egypt and researcher with the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor

“working in the NGO sector is still viewed as a hobby, not a job you go and commit to everyday, friends would tell me to come for a lunch during working hours and cancel my meetings, they would never suggest that when I was working in a company”

“My family wanted me to take an IBM job in Saudi Arabia, they feel I’m crazy to choose my own social initiative, I would’ve taken 8 to 10 times the salary I’m getting now”

“The volunteer work I did for the NGO affected my life at home, my wife and my children felt it has come at the expenses of their time, however as they follow religious teachings and value serving the community they have come to appreciate and respect these obligations.”

However, this situation is expected to change, as the culture is quickly shifting in light of political and economic transformations underway. There is an increasing affinity and desire for social participation and an increasing sense of social responsibility, which has the potential of spurring social innovation if such energy is harnessed by support organizations. It is worth noting that in India and Kenya, where the field of social entrepreneurship is somewhat young, social enterprise and social business benefit of higher appreciation than pure non-profit models of social innovation; such a path would be very applicable to Egypt.

“I see entrepreneurship becoming a trendy thing, a new career that people consider, it’ll catch on, we are now at a tipping point in our culture, people want to see change and want to see it fast, they don’t want to wait, the younger generation passionate and energetic and doesn’t want to get stuck in corporate conglomerates, they don’t want to become just another part of the big machine” Dina El Mofty, Director, Injaz Egypt

Recommendations:

Portraying role models of professional and efficient citizen sector organizations.

Reexamining communication messages to build on the local culture instead of presenting social entrepreneurship as a foreign or imported concept.

Education

One of the main problems that social entrepreneurs face is finding **capable staff**, especially since qualified, professional young people do not consider social entrepreneurship as a viable career path and are often unaware of opportunities in the social sector. It is worth noting that this phenomenon will soon witness a shift, particularly in the aftermath of the revolution and the consequent surge in civic engagement initiatives. The change is also expected to happen thanks to entrepreneurship competitions that reward projects with a sustainable or green component (such as MIT Arab Business Plan competition, and Google Ebda2/*Start with Google*). It is also worth noting that there are efforts to direct young people towards the social sector, such as the Namaa' Summer School on Sustainable Development and the NGO employment fair. These efforts remain inadequate because of limited outreach and an increasing need for more resources to progress forward and expand.

Spotlight on The British University in Egypt

At the BUE “our students do not recognize the concept of social entrepreneurship”, this was evidenced by research that professor David Kirby did and also was obvious in classes I taught. “However when I gave youth clear and simple examples they can identify with from the region, they understood and appreciated the concept”(Raghda El Ebrashi, RabeeZureikat, Grameen, Kiva). “In the beginning they couldn’t grasp the notion that social good and financial sustainability could be combined, but when I gave them Zikra and its exchange tourism model as an example they understood and admired how people do not receive charity and have something to offer in return for assistance”. “Right after, a group of students came up and talked about their initiative to recycle rice husk into paper products, and asked if this was also an example of social entrepreneurship as it is a business benefiting the environment, I said yes [they didn’t know it]”.

“Education in the field of business entrepreneurship is growing, yet in the field of social entrepreneurship is still very limited” (BUE teaches 5 modules on entrepreneurship yet none of them about social entrepreneurship), “same for competitions and simulations that flourish in the entrepreneurship field I have not seen any in the field of social entrepreneurship” [the interviewee was unaware of the Nahdet El Mahrousa competition at the time]. “While business sector organizations constantly approach us to offer internships to our students, we have not received similar expressions of interest from social entrepreneurs or organizations like Ashoka.”

Spotlight on Namaa' Summer School on Sustainable Development

Namaa' aims at creating a Social Entrepreneur for a good Society. We believe that a Social Entrepreneur is a proactive person who is able to work with others towards having a good social impact on the society. We do this through equipping social entrepreneurs with the adequate knowledge, skills and values that they need to be empowered as social change agents.

The program was initially developed to fill the a gap between the needs of organizations, institutions and NGOs working in development on one hand and the qualifications of young people interested in contributing to developmental efforts in Egypt on the other.

Nama’a reports that program participants became socially motivated and civically engaged, and that some have applied what they’ve learned through initiatives that they were already engaged in and at their workplaces. One of our interviewees who had established a social enterprise reported “I got my social awareness through the Nama’a summer school”

Recommendations:

Designing academic programs around social entrepreneurship.

Building on initiatives that introduce youth to the field of sustainable development by introducing a social entrepreneurship component and presenting social entrepreneurs as role models.

Collaborating with initiatives teaching youth business entrepreneurship, by incorporating a sustainability component.

Offering internships to youth at social entrepreneurs' organizations.

Retaining caliber

A number of social entrepreneurs have expressed difficulty with finding capable staff who are passionate about the cause and understand the essence of the cause, stressing that in social work, capacity alone does not suffice. A few social entrepreneurs mentioned that staff in their organizations had started as volunteers who believed in the cause.

In some cases social entrepreneur lamented having invested in training specialized capable staff (particularly care providers) who were later snatched by other countries (particularly Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Emirates) at higher salaries which they could not provide.

"You can find people who can do the job but don't understand or feel the essence of the project -it's like being a cook, you don't become a cook just because you know how to chop, you also need to have the talent and spirit of cooking"

"we can never find the profile we are looking for; you have one of two options, either to get someone from the business sector who would create distortions because he doesn't understand the human element in the nonprofit sector, or to get someone young and passionate about the cause and build their skills."

Organizational Capacity

Contrary to initial assumptions, most social entrepreneurs interviewed expressed that they have built solid organizations that can run daily activities without depending on them, and most have middle management. However, external parties interviewed have expressed that the social entrepreneurs organizations were not operating in an optimal way and could use enhancement and restructuring.

This opinion could be partially explained by the fact that most social entrepreneurs interviewed remain the main communication and public relations focal points and the sole fundraisers. Support organizations have been heavily criticized by the social entrepreneurs for insisting on the use of “I” as a pronoun, and by promoting one figure to represent the entire organization, thus diluting the ownership and motivation of the entire team. Interviewees stressed that social entrepreneurship by nature is multidisciplinary and requires a mix of talent that no individual alone can possess. This criticism was echoed from others who believed in the importance of solid organizations and felt that supporting the individual without the institutions does not create a lasting social impact. Nevertheless, all agreed on having an ambassador for the cause and a face/name that the media can retain. Again, this challenge stems from a lack of clear communication channels between stakeholders to leverage strengths and solve weaknesses in the sector.

It is worth noting that the business entrepreneurship sector reports the same problem, “most entrepreneurs come from a technical background not from the business sector, they know how to produce something and sell it but don’t know how to make the organization/the business sustainable. Sometimes we need to bring someone else onboard with this expertise, but more often than not, we find resistance as the entrepreneur wouldn’t let go, this goes back to our culture as everybody wants to be The Entrepreneur and remain in the spotlight, and this hinders the business’ growth, unless they have the interest of the company in mind it doesn’t work.” Ahmed Bedawy Acting Managing Director/Entrepreneur Services Manager, Endeavor Egypt.

“Most of these social entrepreneurship support organizations focus on the individual and not on building institutions; I feel that this makes the return very limited for society. When you don’t build organizations it becomes more about the person and less about the cause, and the cause eventually dies as the person disappears or shifts course. In Egypt, we need a culture of distributed ownership and teamwork in order to advance. There is a clear gap in institutionalizing programs and projects.” Ahmed El Dorghamy, Co-Founder The Green Arm and Nahdet El Marhousa Board Member

“I don’t like it when people say X did this or X got this award, everything has to succeed with a team; sometimes the name of the leader is a shorthand for the entire team because the media needs a face and a name, but over emphasis on one person can kill the team spirit.”

“Needless to say the cause needs a champion or changemaker, but we at Nahdet El Mahrousa always ensure that the project can live on without that person afterwards by institutionalizing the innovation”.

“Now social entrepreneurship is a mix of community development and a business model, and this requires multidisciplinary team, no one person can have all those skills.”

“We learned that you would never get a volunteer of the caliber you desire, but if you bring these people onboard as partners they will invest in the project.”

“what we really didn’t like with the Ashoka Fellowship is this insistence on the “I” I did, I worked, I created, they teach you that “We” is bad, though anyone who contributed to your initiative is part of it, you need to build on the collective wisdom; alienating those who supported the initiative is wrong from a leadership perspective”

Collaboration, Replication and Scaling Up

Collaboration among social entrepreneurs

Some social entrepreneurs have admitted being possessive and protective of their ideas, particularly in the early stages of establishment of their organization, and then gradually accepting the idea of replication for the greater good.

Many social entrepreneurs felt that their role is confined to providing an innovation, disrupting the system, demonstrating proof of concept and implementing successful pilots, leaving replication and scale to the government or for others to follow in their

footsteps. Most social entrepreneurs stressed that franchise models do not work in the social sector, since social work requires in-depth knowledge of the community and investment in establishing a rapport accumulating social capital.

On the other hand, a few social entrepreneurs viewed their role as mobilizers and leaders in the sector, and gave a high priority to lobbying and advocacy. This group of social entrepreneurs expressed that they desire more back up from support organizations in their advocacy efforts, and reproached support organizations for distancing themselves from the government.

Real collaboration among social entrepreneurs was astonishingly low, as the sector has seen very few joint projects and little collaboration beyond informal exchange of expertise, which is still approached with caution. Interviewees reverted the lack of collaboration to limited support for such an endeavor and to NGOs competing for funding. One interviewee has reverted lack of collaboration to the selection processes where the social entrepreneurs are competing against each other in proving that their initiatives are different or unique –and hence incompatible. Most social entrepreneurs interviewed expressed that in cases of replication, they would like to get due credit for their innovation.

While the reasons may vary, competition for funding is the main reason behind limited collaboration in the sector. In some cases the availability of funding leads to some NGOs to replicate successful models even when the sector is not within their areas of expertise and when they have no history in working with the target population.

“our work is a team effort, this “I” that we were trained to say in Ashoka interviews is quite irritating because it alienates our teams if we do it in daily life. Also this very approach makes people feel they are competitors and this does not encourage collaboration later, while social problems are always big enough for many to work on solving them together”

“We can only revolutionize the sector if we join forces to pressure and lobby the whole society, not only the government”

“The replication and spread of the idea is the only measure of its success”

“In the beginning I was holding on to my idea, I was very possessive and felt that everybody should work according to my own methodology, I would be not happy if someone started a volunteer center without asking me. Over time I learned the importance of letting go, I knew that the idea will develop in a different way but it will still spread, and it will probably spread faster than if I were to work on it myself. It’s important to let go and allow innovation, the replication and spread of the idea are the only measure of its success of the idea.

“In the beginning I felt protective when people took my ideas, but when you grow older you see others who are doing great work on the ground, and you let go of the idea for others to embrace it and improve it.”

“The social entrepreneur is not the government, he can’t solve the entire problem on his own and it is not his responsibility, his role is in finding a solution that the government can later adopt and that other organizations can replicate.”

“After the Revolution we were approached by many groups who were interested in our experience, we invited them to brainstorming meetings, in the end there were no common projects but just sharing of best practices”

“In the beginning the social entrepreneurs displayed a bit of caution in sharing their unique experiences and everyone fears for intellectual property rights, they didn’t say it but we could sense it from questions around who takes credit for the work?” We always answered on the spot, “reassuring them they will take credit for the idea, that the experience will be published in their name”

Collaboration can work between “people who don’t count” people who give expertise and exchange know-how; it only works out when people don’t have their eye on credit or money.

“there is no collaboration as we are competing for the same donors.”

“I can understand if people take a model for replication and scale up in a sector

where they have accumulated expertise, it says there is something being captured and being replicated, but what I don't get is the stealing of ideas by people don't understand the sector, there's a loss of expertise in the process."

Support organizations have facilitated networking and peer learning meetings yet no collaborative projects has been implemented. Ashoka has expressed its plans for the establishment of collaborative platforms to promote collaboration among its fellows and with others in the sector, with documentation of best practices as a byproduct of the process.

Spotlight on Ashoka Collaborative Platforms

We aim to **tip and** change the sector by connecting the fellows who work on the same field among themselves and also to NGOs/CSOs from the sector who can learn from their experiences.

The collaborative platforms follow 4 main steps:

1. mapping sector to identify the gaps
2. documenting the unique experience of the fellows, through a consultant hired by Ashoka
3. organizing meetings for the fellows to exchange expertise and explore areas of collaboration
4. setting a monitoring and evaluation framework

We have 3 collaborative platforms: one aims to enhance street children's livelihood, the second works on labor market integration of people with disability, and the third which we yet have to launch deals with education. Each platform gathers around 5 fellows' organizations and 5 to 7 NGOs from the field. Manuals will be published gathering the unique experiences and best practices, they will be published online and in print and disseminated through the NGOs.

Manal El Samra, Country Representative, Egypt, Ashoka Arab World

Spotlight on the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression

"we couldn't find NGOs willing to embrace our model and the risk it entails, so we decided to operate through a network of lawyers in the different governorates and volunteer coordinators who would document the cases [of violation of freedom of expression] inside the different universities"

Spotlight on Gudran

"The community centers are independent, Gudran is only managing from afar. It took us 3 years to get out of the project at El Max. The art workshops in the area are self-sustaining. We now have an office in downtown (El Mansheya) that acts as the central organization with satellites in the different areas in which we work."

Spotlight on AlwanwaAwtar

"We have trained other NGOs and we are also implementing projects for other NGOs, we are now also developing manuals. Sometimes we have faced problems in operating satellite projects because our culture and values have to be embraced before the activity is replicated.

We are hoping within 5 to 10 years to hand over AlwanwaAwtar to the community and to base ourselves in other communities that need our work."

"

Scaling up

As for scaling up, most interviewees agreed that social entrepreneurs lack the business skills required for scaling up, and could use help with financial sustainability.

Many social entrepreneurs felt that scaling up can also be done in collaboration with the government and blamed support organizations for their alienation from the government. A few social entrepreneurs have reported favorable experiences with some ministries, namely the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Telecommunications and the Ministry of Health to a lesser extent.

“Ashoka has no relation with the government, it does not reach out to government officials whether they are executives or policy makers. I have been working in schools for a long time and I have a lot of policy recommendations that I can give to the Ministry of Education”

Spotlight on SamyGameel founder of Asda'a and Ashoka Fellow

SamyGameel is integrating the deaf and hearing impaired into Egyptian society by equipping them with the tools and training necessary to become competitive in the IT sector. Samy works with educators, employers, government ministries, citizen organizations (COs), and others to ensure the deaf and hearing-impaired have a range of professional opportunities free of discrimination and prejudice.

“We work with the Ministry of Telecommunication, to implement our IT training in youth clubs and community centers in remote areas in Egypt, they hire our trainers and pay them -we are now everywhere in Egypt, in Sinai, MarsaMatrouh, Port Said. Not only have we increased our outreach but this also serves as an income generating activity for the organization.”

Co-working spaces

It is worth noting that Cairo is witnessing the birth of many co-working spaces and that those have given rise to cross sector collaboration.

Recommendations:

Establishing a model that focuses on organizations instead of focusing on individual social entrepreneurs and innovators.

Donors should fund collaboration.

Co-working spaces should be supported and utilized in the search for and selection of social entrepreneurs.

The role of support organizations

Main players in the field

	Ashoka	Synergos	Nahdet El Mahrousa	Taleeda*	#socent Kairo*
Target	Established social entrepreneurs having proof of concept and track record	Established social entrepreneurs having proof of concept and track record	Start-up social entrepreneurs who need incubation – recently focusing on social enterprise	Start-up social entrepreneurs	Social enterprises & social businesses producing goods or services
Legal umbrella			X Incubation & Registration for NGOs & companies alike		
Tech. Assistance	X relying on probono consultants	X through BoozeAllen consultants	X mostly through members and probono consultants		X plans to offer assistance in: product design, optimization of production, pricing and branding
Mentoring				X through dedicated mentors	
Funding	3 year stipend for the social entrepreneurs' living expenses	25 thousand USD over 2 years to be spent on the project (for non-profits, for profit companies and hybrid	X (incubation does not typically involve funding, in	X Plans to offer seed funding	

	(preference for non-profits, if running a for profit company income has to be reinvested in the venture for the next 10 years)	structures)	cases where seed funding is obtained it is directed to the project and can reach 30 thousand USD over 3 years		
Visibility	X in the media and at events	X in the media and at events	X in the media and at events		
Access to office space & facilities			X office space and access to lawyer and accountant		
Marketing of products and services					X through a common brand/stamp and a consumer awareness campaign
Capacity Building	X through probono trainers		X through Nahdetna training program	X soft skills training	
Spreading the culture of Social Entrepreneurship	X AIN Ashoka Innovation Network & other Youth programs yet to be implemented	X MobaderoonMisr/Egypt Pioneers (to be implemented)	X competitions targeting youth		X focus on social enterprise and social business
Collaboration	X through the Ashoka collaborative platforms	X peer to peer learning through retreats in Jordan and Senior Innovator meetings	X peer to peer learning through the Monthly Mondays problem solving sessions		
KnowledgeBase					X English & Arabic knowledgebase capturing international

					and local best practices
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** young organizations less than a year in operation*

Selecting social entrepreneurs

Some of the interviewees suggested improvements geared towards the support organizations for search and selection processes, urging them to exert more effort to tap into other networks and communities; to conduct field visits and in person interviews in the preliminary selection process. Underlying these recommendations is the feeling that there is a bias in favor of development practitioners, people with writing skills, knowledge of the English language, and people who have already obtained awards or media recognition. The same phenomena could be heavily observed in the business entrepreneurship scene.

Younger social entrepreneurs seeking mentorship and incubation felt that incubators needed projects that are “ready” and clearly structured on paper, whereas they still needed support in this conceptualization process. Social entrepreneurs have also felt that support is more readily available to simple and risk free ideas.

"I feel that Ashoka and Synergos target the elite, in a way Ashoka takes people who are already qualified and gives them a stamp that enables them to collect more awards (you know it's like graduating from Harvard opens a lot of doors for you but to get in you have to be really smart already). This causes big frustration to early stage entrepreneurs as they approach Ashoka and find it can't help them in any way."

"Incubators are willing to support you either if your idea is simple and small and risk free, or if you were already established and making money."

"I meet a lot of social entrepreneurs who are not recognized by Ashoka or Synergos, they don't know they are social entrepreneurs. I feel organizations tend to do the easier tasks of looking within their *milieu* and don't do the extra effort of finding those who are not exposed."

"In all honesty, if they have trouble in finding out about social entrepreneurs maybe they are looking in the wrong place, I have seen a lot of people in marginalized neighborhoods do magic! If you stay in the same network you'll get a lot of development professionals who take grants and awards because they are successful in managing projects and writing proposals, but don't necessarily have all the passion and innovation."

"The people I met at StartUp weekend, are the same people I met at ArabNet, and then again at Google Ibda2, there are very few people who are educated and exposed and thus, they tap into these platforms."

"It all boils down to presentation and communication skills. It is all based on paper and applications, an educated person can conceptualize and imagine things and put them on paper without having anything on the ground."

Spotlight on Hanna Fathy

"I met Thomas Culhane the founder of Solar Cities at the recycling school at the Spirit of Youth Association, Thomas was delivering a solar heater to a poor family near the school who didn't even have a bathroom, I saw him carrying pipes and offered to help him.

I started volunteering with Thomas, I couldn't give him money but I said I'll help him with my effort, with Thomas I installed solar heaters in our neighborhood (garbage city Mansheyet Nasser) and El Darb El Ahmar, and also in Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya and Tanzania. When Thomas left, I didn't find anyone to work with.

I continued working on solar heaters I worked on biogas heaters and came to a very efficient formula to produce energy, I assembled and installed some heaters for people but skepticism and also the low price of electricity hindered the expansion of operations.

I later started an Eco Tour of the area (that's how I made my living) to show visitors renewable energy solutions; we also offered visitors the option of making a contribution to the installation of a biogas heater for a poor family.

We approached a donor agency, they were reluctant to finance the project because they felt that the poor did not need hot water, and that it made more sense to install the heaters for the rich who pay high electricity bills.

I also thought of applying to fellowships and awards, but I am not good at filling applications in writing so I didn't carry on with the process, also I get the impression. These organizations shouldn't take projects on paper, I can get someone to write the best projects and they would get accepted, how can they believe things without seeing reality? Someone should visit, make an interview face to face, see the work on the ground instead of reading an application in 2 to 3 hours.

I am now in Sweden to see projects on the ground and learn, because no universities or foundations offering scholarships in Egypt would help me. When I go back to Cairo and have money I will complete the classroom I was building to teach the students who come on the Eco Tour about renewable energy.

Recommendations:

Casting the organizations' network wider and using new channels of communication and outreach.

Improving due diligence processes to include field visits.

Accepting more onsite and in person interviews to minimize reliance on applications, or accepting video recordings in lieu of written applications.

Financial assistance

Social entrepreneurs have affirmed that financial assistance and living stipends have been crucial to their initiatives' survival and growth as it made it feasible for them to their quit day jobs and dedicate their attention to the initiative; without such support their initiatives' growth would've remained slow, and in some cases, their organizations would've remained a side occupation.

In addition to the recognition that awards and fellowships offer, some social entrepreneurs acknowledged the emotional support provided through the organization directly or by conversing and engaging with likeminded individuals. Others differed saying that the label of being a social entrepreneur or Ashoka Fellow was not recognized in Egypt, neither by the community or the media (though recognized abroad), and hence offered no significant value. While a few have recognized benefiting of more credibility from being an Ashoka Fellow, Synergos Social Innovator when dealing with donors and partner organizations, those were mainly organizations outside Egypt.

In the business entrepreneurship sector obtaining an award made the projects more attractive to donors and investors who felt reassured by the due diligence and selection process that have been conducted before granting the award.

“The value of Ashoka’s support is only the stipend which allowed me to dedicate 3 years to the organization”

“Being an Ashoka fellow is very prestigious in the US, it opens doors, but not here, here I don’t feel it makes a difference because the concept and the brand are not recognized”

“when I applied to my masters degree, being an Ashoka fellow helped, it gave my work credibility and helped me gain a scholarship, it also works when applying for funding.”

“At any conference if I say I’m incubated at Nahdet El Mahrousa, people become more trusting and open to collaboration”

The good thing about Ashoka is that once you are selected, you are trusted, they don’t ask you for your budgets like traditional donors do, and that leaves room for innovation.

Technical assistance

“Social Entrepreneurs are providing the hook, the methodology, the perseverance, but someone needs to help them with the technicalities; we are expecting them to be technical experts, social media experts, financial specialists, which is unrealistic, they should have access to financing to buy all this specialization” RizwanTayabali, Social Enterprise Consultant

With regards to technical assistance, most social entrepreneurs have expressed that the services offered by accelerators and incubators alike, did not match their expectations. There are few exception i.e. the technical assistance offered by Booz Allen via Synergos and in some projects incubated by Nahdet El Mahrousa working with a resident mentor for four months. However, most social entrepreneurs, particularly Ashoka Fellows, had to rely on pro-bono consultants and trainers, brought by the support organization— who couldn’t accommodate for the fellows needs or schedules. When interviewing these consultants, those felt that the process of engagement and follow-up from the support organization was weak and that social entrepreneurs expected them to do the legwork on their behalf and not just provide guidance.

In one organization, some social entrepreneurs felt that technical assistance and fellowship benefits in general are awarded based on arbitrary management decisions.

The response to the type of assistance offered in the past was mixed, while some valued the trainings like proposal writing and communication, others viewed them as too basic, thus highlighting a difference in social entrepreneurs’ capacities and needs. It also cautions against hosting activities and workshops that do not match the requirements and knowledge gap of participants. Many social entrepreneurs

wished the trainings would not be restricting to them as individuals and could be extended to their teams..

Independent of support organizations, many social entrepreneurs (both established and in their early stages) have been able to secure pro bono services through their personal network, and have gathered a group of people who believed in their cause and offered them time and advice.

Many social entrepreneurs felt they were contacted by support organizations only in times for periodical reports. It is also worth noting that some felt that the organizations benefit more from showcasing their innovative ideas than what they as social entrepreneurs get in terms of technical assistance and support beyond the initial award.

Social Entrepreneur perspective:

“We once had consultants brought by Ashoka to help us with our financial sustainability but they weren’t taking the process very seriously”

The consultant’s perspective:

“I aimed to help the Fellows transform their NGOs into sustainable businesses, yet they wanted to stick to fundraising, they also didn’t do their homework or get us the documents requested.

It wasn’t a very success experience as there was little follow up from Ashoka staff.

Endeavor engages mentors in a better way, you can see the outcome very structured and you can have input in the process. For Ashoka, I felt that they wanted to capture the activity and not the outcome: business people sat with our fellows for 10 hours, not the concrete output, like business plans written, strategic plans done etc ”

Mentoring

Nahdet El Mahrousa and Taleeda cater to startup social entrepreneurs and thus, provide mentoring to incubated entrepreneurs. It is worth noting that Taleeda caters to earlier stage social entrepreneurs and that mentoring through Nahdet El Mahrousa is provided on a case by case basis.

“The Nahdet El Mahrousa mentoring process and the work we did with the resident mentor during the first 4 months, such as improving the business plan and putting the administrative infrastructure for the project made our organization stronger, and some of this work (and before it the selection process) enabled us to stand out and get shortlisted for Google Ebd2 which was very competitive”

Spotlight on Taleeda

“I couldn’t find support and guidance when I started Educate Me, I approached Nahdet El Mahrousa, they asked me for business plans and written documents, while I needed help writing those very documents. Educate me was still too premature for incubation”

I then met Mohamed El Hawa, who mentored me and thought of establishing Taleeda. Taleeda now gives coaching, mentoring and capacity building to young social entrepreneurs.

Spotlight on Hisham El Rouby, Founder of Etijah and Synergos Social Innovator

“I am a Synergos Senior Innovator, they choose senior innovators very carefully only 10 each year globally, there is no award or anything just being part of network, we have 2 meetings each year, a global meeting and a regional meeting (African meeting). For each meeting we agree on a theme, each of us can propose a problem that we can work on solving together, there is a lot of peer to peer counseling, people propose solutions, give you experiences from other countries: Canada, Mexico, India, Brazil, it’s an international network, they give you a lot of ideas, especially that the level of discussion is one I can’t find anywhere, I get recharged from these meetings. You can also visit another fellow whose work interests you and spend a week in their organization.”

Spotlight on Sameh El-Halawany, Founder of Gudran and Synergos Social Innovator

“We also got very valuable support from Booze Allen through Synergos, we conducted a strategic planning exercise, putting a plan for the next 3 years, reexamining our vision and mission. We worked with them online 3 hours per week online and on the phone, we would send them our data, and they would call to ask details. We already had experience and had done this process of reflection before, so the process was very smooth with Booze Allen.

Recommendations:

Separating social entrepreneurs according to skills, abilities, room for improvement, in order to assess and respond to their needs and readiness for technical assistance.

Providing technical assistance in a more structured way with adequate needs assessment.

Extending trainings to the social entrepreneurs' organizations and not only to them as individuals

Engaging pro bono consultants and following up on technical assistance offered to social entrepreneurs.

Measuring the impact of technical assistance offered and not just the hours of technical assistance offered (outcomes output)

Having agreements with experts and professionals to provide their services at a lower fee for NGOs.

Upgrading the caliber of staff of support organizations to provide some of the technical assistance directly.

Impact on the sector

Support organizations and incubators tend to measure their success by the numbers and profiles of social entrepreneurs selected, while impact measurement remains elusive.

“The umbrella organization instead of having a direct connection with the problem or the community, subcontracts or outsources its work to a third body, the social entrepreneurs. They are outsourcing the goal to someone; if the goal is to eradicate poverty their benchmark becomes electing social entrepreneurs who do the work instead of poverty reduction. The funders or intermediates don't have a stake in the impact so they never fail, their criteria is how many social entrepreneurs they selected.”

Most social entrepreneurs and support organizations alike rely on perception to measure impact, while few conduct thorough impact measurement through focus groups and surveys.

Spotlight on Synergos

“We collect baseline data about the social innovator’s work (number of beneficiaries, indicators of organizational development, governance, strategy, etc...) and then track the change throughout the program.” *George Khalaf – Director, Middle East and North Africa Region, Synergos*

Recommendations:

Focusing communication and messaging on value added to social entrepreneurs

Measuring the impact of the social entrepreneurs’ work on the community

Other Sources of Support

Many social entrepreneurs have managed to secure support and pro bono assistance through friends and mentors, and in turn, they are supporting younger social entrepreneurs and sometimes incubating their initiatives.

Spotlight on Emad Mubarak Founder Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression and Ashoka Fellow

“I started as a researcher at the Hisham Mubarak Center when I got the idea to establish AFTE, back then I found the support network that helped me with my idea, many lawyers who helped me and gave me technical assistance and even my workplace agreed to incubate AFTE until it could stand on its own two feet.

Today we are also supporting student initiatives that wish to provide training on freedom of expression or start their own initiatives, by offering them space for training and sometimes pro bono trainers.

Collaboration among support organizations

Support organizations can achieve much more through collaboration, whether in the field of social entrepreneurship or between the fields of social entrepreneurship and business entrepreneurship. A healthy competition also means that the field itself is growing and can accommodate many players.

“There is an overlap in the support provided to entrepreneurs, partnerships are important, but not to the extent where all activities are coordinated, the scene could use experimentation by the different organizations and competition among them.” *Ahmed Bedawy, Acting Managing Director/Entrepreneur Services Manager, Endeavor Egypt*

“I don’t think there is a duplication between the work of these organizations, even the start-ups that are already recognized are not successful yet, they get a lot of support but they still need more” *Nina Curley, Editor, Wamda*

“I don’t see a distinction, between entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, I don’t see it as a standalone endeavor, I don’t see why social entrepreneurs would need specific advice”

The Legal Framework

“Social entrepreneurship is not going to really work unless it is embedded within the laws of the country with clear rules and regulations; this was the case with SMEs which only flourished after law 141. Like SMEs, Social Entrepreneurship needs to be defined clearly and described as something of value which is distinct from charities and NGOs. Ashoka should lobby for a clear legal framework for social entrepreneurship.” *HalaHattab - Professor at the British University in Egypt (BUE), Researcher with the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor*

Financers/intermediaries have to push for the change in the regulatory framework or there wouldn’t be any impact. Say for example you give money to 5 people to build houses then the government wouldn’t give them the land, your work then becomes of no value.

The Ministry of Social Solidarity

All confirmed that the Ministry of Social Solidarity stifles NGOs, never acting in good faith and always seeking to control their operations and limit their autonomy, forcing them to decline funds, cancel activities and impede their overall development and stability.

“The ministry is nothing but a front for State Security”

“the Ministry of Social Solidarity cannot be the umbrella institution for social enterprises, it’s a prehistoric and archaic agency it’s one of the most controlling in the country, perhaps the second most controlling after state security, they feel their raison d’être is to control the NGOs.”

“We registered a company so we wouldn’t be harassed by the Ministry of Social Solidarity, it was difficult in the beginning because most donors cannot finance companies and could only work with NGOs, but eventually we got funded and found it was a much better decision to register a company”

“The problem is that the ministry of social solidarity has a set of rules and regulations that requires building a lot of compliance systems and bureaucracy, all this is time consuming and exhausts our resources.”

“some mistakes could be fatal for the NGO, if you sign a wrong check, or issue an inadequate invoice, your NGO can be closed down”

Egypt also lacks legal infrastructure that regulates the operation of social enterprises and social businesses, as the Ministry of Social Solidarity prohibits the establishment of companies for the pursuit of social activities, stressing that NGOs are the only legal form of organization. In two of the cases interviewed, the Ministry of Social Solidarity has forced a social entrepreneur to shut down his company (and any income generating activity) and to establish an NGO instead. While the NGO law in theory allows limited income generating activities in theory, it is still quite restrictive and burdensome requiring countless forms to be filled (one of the NGOs interviewed employed three accountants to fulfill the oversight requirements on income generating activities). It is also worth noting that regulation is quite arbitrary, and is stricter on organizations active in fields such as civic engagement and political participation, youth, human rights and gender issues.

Such a restrictive environment has resulted in confusion and has slowed down the progress of many enterprises that could have been financially sustainable. It has also led some social entrepreneurs to register two separate entities in order to be able to receive funding and also conduct business, or in registering under inadequate and almost illegal frameworks (some NGOs have registered civil companies which are made for independent professionals not for social work, and in the particular case of human rights organizations those have resorted to establishing law firms instead of NGOs in order to escape the control of the Ministry of Social Solidarity). The bureaucracy and strict accounting procedures required in case of income generation have led some to think of indirect ways of obtaining income such as subcontracting, training and consulting. This restrictive environment has resulted in many younger initiatives refraining from registering altogether.

A recent draft law enforcing even more restrictions on non-governmental organizations’ work has caused mixed reactions of fear and uproar in the social

sector. While some refrained from fundraising and designing new activities, others have decided to lobby against the implementation of this new law. The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) is currently working on an alternative to the existing law and refuting the proposed law that it deems harmful for the advancement of the social sector. In addition to the new law, the Supreme Council for the Armed Forces has accused many foreign NGOs operating in Egypt of a conspiracy to divide and destroy the country, which further tarnished public trust in the social sector.

There is research being conducted on behalf of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), in order to propose a suitable legal framework for social enterprises such as Community Interest Companies which are common in the UK or Benefit Corporations in the United States, it remains a mystery whether proposed solutions would be taken into consideration by the government or not.

One of the interviewees has proposed that any potential changes to the law should be under the Ministry of Investment's Center for Entrepreneurship which supports SMEs (small and medium enterprises), deeming the Ministry of Social Solidarity –“an archaic institution”- as unfit to regulate social business and social enterprise. The Ministry of Investment had in the past tried to improve the ease of doing business by simplifying procedures, lowering entry barriers and establishing one-stop-shops for investors.

“Social entrepreneurship is not going to really work unless it is embedded within the laws of the country with clear rules and regulations; this was the case with SMEs which only flourished after law 141. Like SMEs, Social Entrepreneurship needs to be defined clearly and described as something of value which is distinct from charities and NGOs.”

Spotlight on Harassmap

Harassmap is a system for women to report incidences of sexual harassment that they are subjected to via SMS messaging. By mapping these reports online, Harassmap works as an advocacy, prevention, and response tool on the ground.

“We wanted to have company and follow a social enterprise model, whereby the revenue from the SMS messages would cover our administrative costs.

We also preferred registering a company over registering an NGO, because we knew that if we registered an NGO we’d have to get approvals for everything including activities and events, which gives the ministry the right to cancel events which will hurt our credibility and trust with the community.

We tried to establish a limited liability company, we hired a lawyer from a reputable law firm (a friend who agreed to give us pro bono consultancy) Yet even this option was off the table for us because the lawyer advised us that as a company we couldn’t work in social issues, the only alternative was to set up a law firm like most human rights organizations do.

In the end we didn't register to maintain our ability to act, the upside is we do whatever we want, but it also limits our ability to receive funding and support.

Now because of the donors’ trust we got two small grants that came through my personal bank account and we used the money for print materials and community outreach activities. We then resorted to routing the money through another NGO that agreed to help us. We are now incubated at Nahdet El Mahrousa.” *Rebecca Chiao & EngyGhozlan, co-founders of Harassmap*

Spotlight on Gudran

Gudran’s mission is to preserve culturally-unique and architecturally-distinct places that are threatened by the external forces of industry, urban development, and government seizure in Alexandria, Egypt.

“In 2003 we registered Gudran as a company, state security stopped us because they saw that we received funding from abroad (we knew that that the main reason was that the petroleum companies wanted the land -5 fishermen’s villages had already been displaced). They said we were allowed to be an NGO instead, so we registered Gudran under the Ministry of Social Solidarity. In my opinion, the NGO is the best legal framework because it guarantees that the institution lives on after the founders have left/died, also the rules and regulations with what relates to the change of the board guarantee that there’s new blood, while companies are locked until legal changes happen. The NGO gives the idea and the institution longevity.” *Sameh El-Halawany, Gudran founder and Synergos Social Innovator*

While it seems to social entrepreneurs that the business sector is enjoying a less regulated environment, such assumptions are untrue. Companies are also under a constant threat of being shut down by tax authorities, health authorities, customs authorities and others. Additionally, the risk of default could jeopardize the entrepreneur and not only the company, sending him to jail and shaming him.

Missing components in the Ecosystem

The need for Think Tanks and Idea Banks has emerged in conversations both with social entrepreneurship and business entrepreneurship practitioners. Most interviewees stressed the importance of national strategies to solve social problems and achieve economic growth.

In both types of entrepreneurship, there seems to be excessive focus on startups and the encouragement of innovation without any consideration for the economy or society's needs at the macro level, such as employment creation or other priorities.

On a more basic level, Egypt still lacks an accurate map or directory of NGOs, there were failed governmental initiatives, and after the revolution there are some volunteer efforts to map existing NGOs for local donations and volunteers networks, yet they remain limited in scope.

There is also a need for an indigenous knowledge base containing best practices locally and case studies and information in Arabic, yet no efforts towards building one have been detected.

It is obvious that many established social entrepreneurs are considered the reference and knowledge providers in their field, many have helped create or localize material to guide others in the sector, have pushed Arabic terminology in the field, and some adopt and even incubate youth initiatives serving the same cause. Documentation, however, remains neglected as it is deemed as a time consuming and costly task (as it often requires hiring experts) which donors are not eager to fund, particularly that it does not provide the same visibility as the implementation of new programs.

“ the idea should have a core structure (or recipe) that would allow it to be implemented in different contexts adapted to each.”

“We are all too consumed in grassroots work to document.”

“We still didn’t document our methodology but we train other NGOs to transfer knowledge. We need funding guidance and technical assistance to document our methodology”

“We are pioneers in the sector, NGOs see us as mentors not as competitors.”

“We started the field, we are the field”

“Best practices? We are the best practices!”

“there is no sharing of best practices or lessons learned in the social sector”

“We became a reference point in the field.”

The Egyptian Revolution

“Bread, freedom and social justice were the demands of the revolution, these words resonate with social entrepreneurs who want communities to be more dignified and self-sustained, without depending on charity or on others.”

Media

Under the old regime civil society was stifled, particularly when it came to media visibility. During the revolution, many social entrepreneurs gained access to the media which wanted to portray a positive and optimistic image of Egypt. However, shortly afterwards, there was a raid on NGOs that were accused of receiving foreign funding which resulted in the spread of mistrust vis a vis NGOs.

“Under the old regime success was monopolized by a small group, this goes for the business sector but also for the social sector, which was dominated by initiatives led by Suzanne Mubarak. Other initiatives either ended up not getting their fair share of media or being bluntly hijacked. For example, at the time of the “1000 schools” initiative of Mrs Mubarak no one could speak about other programs in education, the same goes for youth initiatives and Gamal Mubarak’s Future Generation Foundation.”

Also some social entrepreneurs feared the media because if they didn’t want to be in the spotlight because the government made life hard for those that became too popular. This also drove a lot of good people away from the civil sector because they didn’t want trouble.

New initiatives

As a result of the burgeoning sense of hope and ownership, many have started independent social initiatives and the number of registered NGOs witnessed an unprecedented surge. The year 2011 witnessed the registration of 4,500 new NGOs as compared to the usual 800 NGOs each year. Nahdet El Mahrousa has also reported that the number of initiatives requesting incubation has more than doubled in comparison to previous years.

Civic engagement, volunteerism and social investment

Cairo has also witnessed the birth of online platforms encouraging volunteerism and investment in social causes and linking volunteers and philanthropists to NGOs using social media networks.

Existing organizations have also reported an increase in the number of people interested in volunteering and increased donations from individuals, particularly from the Egyptian diaspora.

Needless to say there have been increased political participation and political awareness and civic engagement initiatives, on the national and the local level (municipalities).

Moreover, many youth led organizations have successfully used social media both for advocacy and fundraising.

“I saw a rise in social responsibility in Egypt in the aftermath of the revolution, and social media helped all concerned citizens connect and act together; a great example is the Tweetback event that raised over 1.3 million Egyptian pounds in less than 10 days for EzbetKhairallah (an underprivileged neighborhood in Cairo) all from local donations, channeled through the NGO Kheir wa Baraka”

Spotlight on street clean ups

Before the revolution, Egypt witnessed few youth-led environmental initiatives focusing on street cleanups and anti-littering initiatives (most notable of which Keep Egypt Clean), the volunteers at such events were confined to small groups of environmentally aware individuals that never exceeded 50 individuals. On February 12th 2011, Tahrir square, and consequently main squares in other cities, were full of young people with brooms and trash collection bags, and citizens started collecting donations and installing trash bins in the streets, all the while beautifying the city by painting sidewalks. Most environmental activists (?!? The rest of the sentence)

“People used to throw trash in the streets because they felt the country is not theirs, it belonged to a selected few and they were there as guests, but after the revolution they felt it was their country and they started cleaning the streets”

Education

The American University in Cairo started a new undergraduate course titled “Values Activism and the New Egypt” for students to learn about civic engagement, activism, and values, one of the course requirements is for the students to take part in a community-based initiative on the ground.

Advocacy

Some of the social entrepreneurs interviewed have approached political parties and ministries to put their cause on their agenda and have reported a favorable experience, but most have remained cautious of interaction with the government. In contrast all were fervent supporters of the uprising and have participated actively. It is also worth noting that an Ashoka Fellow is now member of the parliament, and has consulted other Ashoka Fellows to include their concerns and causes in his agenda.

“The social entrepreneur should work on his idea and lobby for it on a national scale, his idea should be adopted at the national level or it will be dead.

“Umbrella organizations should help the systematic change by linking social entrepreneurs to policy, who said that a social entrepreneur can impact the system on his own without anyone’s support? How can he reach the media and the parliament on his own?”

Spotlight on Maha Helali, Founder Advance (The Egyptian Society For Developing Skills Of Children with special needs) and Ashoka Fellow

“In our field we are reaching out to the newly formed political parties to include disability issues on their agendas, and we also met some of the presidential candidates to bring their attention to the issue.

We have high hopes for a new disability laws in Egypt, we have put the draft law online and are getting parties’ contributions to it.

We learned to package our message according to each target group, we can approach inclusion in education and the labor market from a rights based perspective, from an Islamic perspective, from a political perspective.

We are also carrying on with our advocacy efforts with the wider community. We feel that people have changed, they have become more accepting and more inclusive as they saw people with physical disability playing a role in Tahrir and seeking freedom on equal footing.

The road ahead

Though most interviewees welcome the winds of change and are optimistic and hopeful for the democratic process, many are fearful of the domination of Islamic parties in the parliament and their subsequent control might limit the freedom of civil society organizations. Also, a few of the interviewees expressed concerns over increased donor funds channeled to Egypt and consequent distortions to the sector.

“People now want to do something because they feel the country is theirs, they feel they got it back again, though the feeling is still not engrained in everyone.”

“The revolution removed the fear and gave birth to a *can do* attitude, before the government was the only doer and only decision maker”

“During the revolution people learned to work as a collective in a proper way with clear rules, feeling the importance of working as a group, and learning to find the proper mechanisms for collaboration”.

“Under the Emergency Law which had prohibited gatherings and limited freedom of association, the mosque became the only place of congregation, the situation is different now.”

“There is less police control, now we can have events in the streets without anyone harassing us!”

During the revolution there was a lot of volunteer initiatives popping out, people were just expressing their love for Egypt or as a redemption for not having gone to Tahrir, but we were sure it’s a bubble that is going to burst. People love the country and have good will, but also there’s no doing or working culture.

“After the revolution there is a lot creativity and self expression, but we do not know if it is sustainable or if it will be engrained in our genes”

“It was hard to find social entrepreneurs before, there was dust covering them, now young creative persistence people are everywhere, they have to be found and nurtured”

The government is slandering NGOs in the media now and this leads to more mistrust from the community, from investors and also from young people who could consider a career in the field

Concluding Remarks

It is obvious that for any lasting social impact, social entrepreneurship should be promoted beyond *the bubble* of social entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurship support organizations to the general public and the community at wide.

Both social entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship support organizations could have a much more lasting impact, if they invested in existing organizations instead of constantly running after innovation and startups. In the words of one of the interviewees: “The problem is not in new solutions as much as it is in providing constant financing and support to good organizations.”

It is also evident that without collaboration and skill building enabling scale up, social entrepreneurship initiatives will remain mere innovations in limited geographies. Moreover, without collective advocacy for the change of corresponding laws, the solutions provided would be far from solving the underlying problems.

Support organizations, together with social entrepreneurs, need to complete the components of the ecosystem by lobbying for adequate education, a more aware media, and an enabling legal framework that does not stifle the social sector.

The approach that support organizations follow should shift from focusing on the individual to institutionalizing innovation, and away from being elitist, support organizations and social entrepreneurs should engage with mainstream citizen sector organizations and NGOs, who though they may not be as innovative, are still efficient, effective and worthy of respect.

There is also room for convergence with organizations promoting business entrepreneurship and collaboration to promote social enterprise and social business.

The role of the media becomes evident, if enough work is done to ensure adequate communication, many of the blockages in the Ecosystem would immediately dissolve. The role of the media is itself still evolving under the current conditions, though the focus will remain on political conditions for the foreseeable future.

The revolution brings hope mixed with fear, on one hand many of the elements of the ecosystem are coming to life, such as increased civic engagement among youth, on the other hand there is no favorable environment for social entrepreneurship initiatives as the regime continues to make it very difficult for NGOs to operate.

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Visser, A. 2011. All for the love of Egypt, The struggle of social entrepreneurs with governmental control and society's disapproval. Master's thesis Social and Cultural Anthropology. VU University Amsterdam

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Attachment 1 Interview Questions

Interview Questions

The following questions are based on the desk review and on observations from the author's work with social entrepreneurs, as well as conversations with Hisham El Rouby renown social entrepreneur who contributed interview questions and interviewee recommendations.

Qs for recognized social entrepreneurs

1. Social Entrepreneurship, culture and recognition

- a. How do you define social entrepreneurship? How do you explain it to others?
- b. From your viewpoint what is a social entrepreneurs' role? Is it creating a lasting impact and solving a structural problem? Is it disrupting the system/creating a ripple effector or introducing an innovation and proof of concept that others can build on?
- c. How do you describe your mission to others?
- d. Does the media understand social entrepreneurship?
- e. What have support organizations done to promote the concept through the media?
- f. Do people understand your work? How do you communicate it to them?
- g. Did you find support or have you found resistance from family/friends when you first started?
- h. Do you feel you are often prejudged or stereotyped?
- i. Do others know that your initiative is your primary occupation or do they view it as a secondary occupation or hobby/volunteering?
- j. Would you say that people trust the social sector in general?
- k. How do the business sector and the government view social entrepreneurship (respect, support, mistrust)?
- l. Do you feel you're an ambassador for your cause?
- m. How do people in your community view work in the social sector? How do they view social entrepreneurship?
- n. Do you think the field will change in the aftermath of the Revolution? If yes, how?

The story and the cause

- o. Why did you start your initiative? How did you start it?
- p. What is your cause? Has it been constant since you were young or did it change through the years?
- q. Are you still as passionate about your cause as you were when you started?
- r. Do you feel your team members believe in the cause and are connected to it?
- s. Would you say that circumstances (such as availability of funding

opportunities or the general political and economic conditions) made you occasionally take courses of action that do not directly serve your mission?

2. Infrastructure and organizational development

Establishment phase:

- a. Did you face difficulty in registering your organization? How long did it take? Did it require a lot of paperwork?
- b. Are you registered as a company or an NGO? Why?
- c. Did you rent an office when you first started or did you start by working from home or within a host organization/incubator/shared office space?
- d. Do you have an advisory board? If yes how did you choose them?
- e. Did you find the emotional support needed or did friends and family resist at the beginning? If there was resistance, what was the reason behind it?
- f. Did you work in the social sector before starting your initiative? If yes how has this helped? If no, did this present a challenge at first?
- g. Did you have a day job when you started your initiative? Did you quit your day job or were you juggling both at the same time?
- h. How did you acquire the skills needed to manage your organization? Was this your first managerial role? What were the leadership and management challenges you faced at first?

Managing the organization:

- a. Which of the following responsibilities do you assume: management, public relations and media, fundraising, all of those functions?
- b. What is your typical working week like?
- c. Do you have a second line of command (ie: a vice president, deputy director)?
- d. What's the profile of your staff (age range, professional experience, academic background)?
- e. Do you worry about the organization when you are away for work or on holiday?
- f. Do you feel your team is exhausted and unmotivated or do you feel they are motivated and productive?
- g. Do you depend on volunteers and interns? To what extent?
- h. As your organization grows, do you feel you're involved in the day-to-day life?
- i. Do you feel everyone internalizes the values and ideologies and mission of the organization?
- j. Do you prefer to work with people who are passionate about the cause or people who implement your strategies well?

3. Financing

- a. How did you get your first funding/seed funding (savings, family contributions, bank loan)?
- b. What percentage of your budget does fundraising cover? How many donors do you have? Have they changed over the years?

- c. How do you fundraise? Do you have an in-house fundraiser? Do you use external consultants? Do donors sometimes approach you?
- d. Do donors give you freedom to experiment with new ideas? Do you find reporting and proposal writing cumbersome?
- e. Do you have income generating activities? How much do they contribute to your budget (%)?
- f. Have you ever pitched a proposal together with another NGO? If you haven't, why not?
- g. Did fundraising become easier after you got an award or recognition as a social entrepreneur?

4. Technical Assistance

- a. What areas of technical assistance and training do you or your organization feel are most important (project management, fundraising, impact measurement, monitoring and evaluation, soft skills)?
- b. Do you get technical assistance and/or training from your support organization?
- c. Do you feel that services are designed to serve your needs and those of other social entrepreneurs or do you feel they are rather adhoc?
- d. Do you feel training is adapted to local culture and needs (available in Arabic, using local cases studies, etc)?

5. Knowledge and networks

- a. Where do you read about recent developments in the sector?
- b. Do you find mentorship or guidance?
- c. Do you have access to a localized knowledge base (mixing international practices with local success stories)?
- d. Do you feel that there are factors that prohibited you from accessing certain networks (skills, knowledge, being from a specific demographic)?
- e. How many awards did you get? What are the benefits that you got from having those awards?

6. Infrastructure

- a. Would you like to have access to shared office space?
- b. Are there services that you often need to subcontract (events, graphic design, copy writing)?
- c. Would you like to share services and/or staff with other organizations (media and marketing, monitoring and evaluation, etc?)

7. Impact (replication, scaling, and collaboration)

- a. How do you measure impact? Why do you measure impact?
- b. Does the community/beneficiaries participate in planning the projects?
- c. Do you collaborate with other social entrepreneurs? Do you take an active role in guiding other NGOs? Do you share best practices? If yes, how?
- d. Are you considering franchising your NGO? If you are already franchised, how many branches do you have and what is your franchising scheme?

- e. Does competition motivate you or does it discourage you?
- f. Do you work in advocacy? (As a main activity or as a secondary activity/byproduct) Are you actively seeking to change laws? Are you part of a national/regional coalition or network?

8. Other

- a. What is the missing component of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Egypt?
- b. What are the biggest obstacles and what are the most encouraging factors?
- c. Do you think social entrepreneurship will be affected by the Egyptian revolution?

Qs for early stage and potential social entrepreneurs

1. Culture

- a. What encouraged you to start your initiative (finding a role model, coming across a problem that needed solving, participating in a competition that provided seed funding, a new sense of hope after the Egyptian revolution) ?
- b. Do you feel intimidated or encouraged by awards and competitions? Did you apply to any? Why?
- c. Did you have other similar initiatives when you were younger (volunteering, starting up a student club with a mission, etc)?
- d. Would you quit your day job if your initiative became financially sustainable?
- e. What obstacles do you worry about? Do you fear establishing a formal organization? If you have a registered organization do you plan to scale up or replicate?
- f. Are you aware of other similar complementary or competing initiatives? Do you see room for collaboration?

Qs for support organizations

1. Social entrepreneurship, culture and recognition

- a. How do you define social entrepreneurship?
- b. From your viewpoint what is a social entrepreneurs' role? Is it creating a lasting impact and solving a structural problem? Is it disrupting the system/creating a ripple effector or introducing an innovation and proof of concept that others can build on?
- c. "there is nothing more powerful than a new idea in the hands of a leading social entrepreneur" Bill Drayton. If you had to chose between person and idea, what would you chose?
- d. What efforts do you do to promote the concept (media outreach, training, events)?
- e. Do you train the social entrepreneurs in your network to promote social entrepreneurship as a concept (elevator pitch training, media training)?

- f. Is social entrepreneurship becoming a profession away from the passion?
- g. Do you often come across serial entrepreneurs who are interested in startups and not growth?

2. Selection of social entrepreneurs

- a. How much of your budget do you spend on search and selection?
- b. Do you conduct site visits?
- c. What is your selection process? How would you do it better? What are its limitations?
- d. Is formal registration of an organization over which the social entrepreneur has full control an important requirement of your selection process? What if the entrepreneur is an employee in a bigger organization, incubated in another organization or not formally registered?
- e. Do you have a monitoring system in place? How do you ensure that the social entrepreneur stays on course serving his/her mission?
- f. Do you ever take back an award or recognition, stop funding or support? When does that happen?

3. Infrastructure and organizational development?

- a. Do you help social entrepreneurs with legal registration?
- b. Do you offer shared office space to social entrepreneurs?
- c. Do you offer services to social entrepreneurs (assistance in grant writing, media strategies, translation)?
- d. What is the ratio of support staff to social entrepreneurs? How does staff support social entrepreneurs? What is the profile of your staff (educational background, professional experience)?

4. Financing

- a. Do you provide seed funding?
- b. Do you help social entrepreneurs in fundraising?

5. Technical Assistance

- a. What type of technical assistance and/or training do you offer? How are they determined (focus groups, surveys, assessments)? Do you do an effort to localize trainings and technical assistance (local trainers/consultants, translation of material to Arabic, compiling local case studies)?
- b. How do you offer media visibility to your social entrepreneurs?
- c. Do you help your social entrepreneurs in fundraising? If yes how?
- d. Do you find volunteers, interns or pro bono consultants for your beneficiaries? (please elaborate)
- e. Do you offer seed funding?
- f. Do you offer office space?
- g. How do you coordinate or synergize with other organizations serving the same constituency?

6. Knowledge and networks

- a. How do you capture the best practices in the sector?
- b. Do you document social entrepreneurs methodologies or encourage them to document them via funding or technical assistance?
- c. Do you hold events for the sector where the social entrepreneurs can share best practices?
- d. Do you have a knowledge reservoir? What sources of the information do you use?

7. Impact (replication, scaling, and collaboration)

- a. From your viewpoint what is a social entrepreneurs' role? Is it creating a lasting impact and solving a structural problem? Is it disrupting the system/creating a ripple effector or introducing an innovation and proof of concept that others can build on?
- b. How do you measure the impact of the social entrepreneurs' initiatives?
- c. Do you have a monitoring and evaluation system in place (criteria, frequency of evaluation, evaluator)?
- d. Do you encourage collaboration among social entrepreneurs? If yes how (networking, retreats, funding, specific programs)?

8. Other

- d. What is the missing component of the social entrepreneurship ecosystem in Egypt?
- e. What are the biggest obstacles and what are the most encouraging factors?
- f. Do you think social entrepreneurship will be affected by the Egyptian revolution?

Qs for the media

1. Coverage

- a. Do you provide coverage of social issues in general? Did you cover social entrepreneurship events or wrote feature articles about social entrepreneurs (profiles, field visits) ?
- b. From your perspective what encourages/deters social entrepreneurship in Egypt?

2. Response

- a. What was the audience's response?
- b. Do you think people are more interested in social issues in general and also social entrepreneurship after the revolution?

Qs for the Business Sector

- a. Are you familiar with social entrepreneurship?
- b. How do you interact with NGOs and the social sector?
- c. Do you have any Corporate Social Responsibility programs? How can the business sector serve the community?
- d. Are you familiar with social investment and/or angel investment?
- e. In your opinion what does the social sector need? What can the social sector learn from the business sector?

f. How do you perceive the role of the government in responding to social issues?

List of Interviewees

Support organizations

George Khalaf – Director, Middle East and North Africa Region, Synergos

Manal Samra – Country Representative, Egypt, Ashoka Arab World

Gabriel Manga - Former Media and Outreach Officer, Ashoka Arab World

Loay El Shawarby - Co-founder Nahdet El Mahrousa

Ahmed Hussein & Irene Boghdadi, Nahdet El Mahrousa Incubator

Ulricke Von Reucker, Founder Rasheed 22, formerly the Hub

Yasmine Helal & Mohamed El Hawa, Founders Taleeda

Marion Schmidt & Inji El Abd Founders #socentKairo

Social Entrepreneurs

Hisham El Rouby - Synergos Senior Fellow, Ashoka fellow, founder of Etijah

Marwa El Daly - Synergos Social Innovator, Ashoka Fellow, Founder Waqfeyet el Maadi

Sameh Halawany - Synergos Social Innovator and founder of Gudran

Ezzat Naem - Synergos Social Innovator, founder Spirit of Youth Association

Emad Mubarak - Ashoka Fellow, Founder Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression

Fairouz Omar - Ashoka Fellow, Founder Qalb Kabir

Hany El Miniawy - Ashoka Fellow, founder of Adapt consulting

Maha Helali - Ashoka fellow, founder of Advance

Samy Gameel - Ashoka Fellow, founder of Asda'a

Laila Skandar - Schwab Social Entrepreneur, founder of CID consulting

Ahmed El Dorghamy - Co-Founder of the Green Arm, incubated at Nahdet El Mahrousa & Nahdet El Mahrousa Board Member

Ahmed El Noshokaty - Founder of Bosletak, incubated at Nahdet El Mahrousa, winner SISWY and finalist for Google Ebda2

Hisham Abdel Wahab - Founder of Egypt Carpoolers, Incubated at Nahdet El Mahrousa

Mahmoud Galal – Founder Dayra, incubated at Nahdet El Mahrousa

Mariam El Qesny – Founder Mashroo' Al Mareekh, Incubated at Nahdet El Mahrousa

Mohamed Raffie, Founder CORD incubated at Nahdet El Mahrousa

Mohamed Zarkani, Manager Young Innovators Award – Incubated at Nahdet El Mahrousa

Mohamed Salem Korayem & Amira Mostafa Salah – Founders Kherna, Incubated at Nahdet El Mahrousa

Ahmed Yahia, cofounder Qabila – independent initiative

Hanna Fathi - Solar Cities, Independent initiative

Mona Rabie - Ma' Ba'd independent initiative

Yasmine Helal, Educate me, Independent initiative

Entrepreneurship support organizations & practitioners from the business sector with exposure to social entrepreneurship

Ahmed Bedawy, Acting Managing Director/Entrepreneur Services Manager, Endeavor Egypt

Dina El Mofty, Director Injaz

Dina El Mofty, Director Injaz

HalaHattab - Professor at the British University in Egypt (BUE), Researcher with the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, Global Entrepreneurship Week and others

Nina Curley - Editor, Wamda

RizwanTayabali, Social Enterprise Consultant

ZiadMokhtar, Ideavelopers, former McKinsey offered Technical Assistance to Ashoka Fellows 86

Mohamed El Hawary, Founder of Andalucia Financial investment boutique, Consultant to Acumen Fund (to identify investment opportunities)88

Social Sector Overview

Dina Sherif, Gerhart Center for Philanthropy and Civic Engagement

Mohamed Kadry, cofounder of The first NGO employment fair and Waseela for Training and Development

RamezFarag - Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Procter and Gamble, Member of the CSR committee at AmCham

Rami Lotfy, Canada Fund for Local Initiatives

Media

Jessica Grey - Business Today & Freelance Journalist

Lawyers

Loay El Shawarby - Lawyer at ZakiHashim

Mohamed Zaree - Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Attachment 3 Press Clippings

Printouts of reading material that could be useful for the roundtable/U process

On the Ecosystem

<http://blogs.worldbank.org/dmblog/node/858>

Social Entrepreneurship and the Revolution

<http://www.socialearth.org/the-egyptian-revolution-an-entrepreneurial-perspective>

<http://beyondprofit.com/the-egyptian-revolution-social-entrepreneurship/>

<http://www.inc.com/articles/201102/suzi-sosa-why-we-need-social-entrepreneurship-in-the-middle-east.html>

<http://www.socialedge.org/blogs/off-the-couch/off-the-couch-into-the-streets-what-can-we-learn-from-egypt>

<http://www.nextbillion.net/blogpost.aspx?blogid=2132>

<http://www.socialearth.org/the-egyptian-revolution-an-entrepreneurial-perspective>

The proposed NGO law:

<http://digital.ahram.org.eg/Community.aspx?Serial=786347>

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies material on a proposed alternative law (upon approval of CIHRS)

The recent raid on NGOs:

<http://www.akhbarelyom.org.eg/issue/detailze.asp?mag=&said=&field=news&id=64419>

<http://www.devex.com/en/blogs/the-development-newswire/egypt-ignores-us-warnings>

<http://www.devex.com/en/news/pm-says-egypt-not-backing-down-on-ngo-case/77452>