

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP, INNOVATION AND EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship studies have shown that over 350 researchers are currently exploring the concept of social entrepreneur and its impact. However, the role of social entrepreneurs in developed nations differs from developing ones like the group of Middle East North Africa (MENA) countries. Policy makers and researchers in Middle Eastern economies are concerned about the distinction between the rich and the poor MENA countries. Firstly, this study aims to explicate the potentials of social entrepreneurship education and explores the overlapping relationships between social entrepreneurship education and sustainable development goals. Our second step in this study is to conduct literature review on social entrepreneurship education in MENA countries toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) within the period of 2000-2019. The study aims to ascertain its contributions to poverty alleviation, fight inequalities, boost financial inclusion, and promote blue sea and green environment to tackle climate change. The study will rely on peer-reviewed literature published on social entrepreneurship education between 2000 and 2019 focusing on social entrepreneurship education within the selected MENA countries. The study documents and categorizes the current social entrepreneur education and provides a few recommendations for future work on the role of social entrepreneur toward SDG among MENA countries.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship Education, Sustainable Development Goal, Innovation, Social Innovation, Middle East, North Africa, MENA Region.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is commonly acknowledged as a significant socio-economic development force in every society. Although, Entrepreneurship is perceived by people differently, it is not limited to trading of buying and selling, it includes several economic development mechanisms such teaching skills, buying and selling, services job etc. (Bahena-Álvarez, 2019). Social enterprise has been gaining prominence in the recent time because of its associated impacts in solving social challenges and possible potential social relief from social illness (Rahim & Mohtar, 2015). However, researchers have observed that diversity in the definition and scope of social entrepreneur is a result of variations in social, cultural, and environmental differences. The common perception of social finance is on non-profit organization (Bahena-Álvarez, 2019). Social entrepreneurship education has been recognized as one of the effective social agents to create and sustain social values. It is a mechanism useful for innovation, learning, adopting and implementation of social plans without being limited by resources. Social entrepreneurship education has been gaining the attention of policy makers and

social workers because of its associated functions. First, it has the potential solution to social challenges. It is also a good agent of innovative and sustainable solutions in alleviating complex social problems such as unemployment, unequal access to social facilities, poverty, crime, and social exclusion (Jack & Anderson, 2002).

Social entrepreneurship education aims to address the growing concern of services not addressed by the public sector on one hand, and were, not attractive to the private sector on the other hand (Ali et al., 2016). Hence, social entrepreneurship education is the middle entity between the public and private sectors, to fill the missing gap of social facility through innovative and sustainable approach (Yesufu & Alajlani, 2019). Thirdly, social workers and researchers have identified the significance of social entrepreneurship education as an active means of creating community wealth and enhancing social wealth across the globe (Raina, 2018). Effective social entrepreneurship education operates within the intersection of public, private and voluntary relationship (Mosher-williams, 2006). Although social entrepreneurship education has received significant acceptance in the recent time, there is a continuous concern about the social entrepreneurship education (Ali et al., 2016). Also, experts of social work and policy makers are concerned about the sustainability of the social entrepreneur institutions in the absence of credible social entrepreneurship education. Nevertheless, Social enterprise is seen today as a global agent of social change and provision of basic social facilities. Entrepreneurship in the MENA region is widely viewed as purely profit based entrepreneurship the concept of social entrepreneurship education is more widely in application in Western Europe and North America (Rahim & Mohtar, 2015).

According to the researchers there has been an exponential increase in the literature on social entrepreneurship in the MENA region over the past decade. Empirical studies indicate that over 350 academic researchers are currently exploring the concept of social entrepreneur and its significant impact in the modern world. Despite the soaring interest in recent years by scholars, the knowledge of social enterprises is still nascent in the MENA region. With the concept of social entrepreneurship education gaining momentum, investors and entrepreneurs are directing their attention in the developing world, MENA region included. Recent years have witnessed a surge in social entrepreneurship education initiatives. However, there is a lack of systematic assessment to determine the impact of such efforts. In comparison with the practice of social research in the region, research in this area still lags far behind. Some researchers observed that social entrepreneurship education is not new to the region but there is little familiarity with the terminology concept. There has been a great proliferation of social enterprises in recent years focusing on education, talent development, and healthcare as well as women empowerment. Factors that facilitate this progress have started to be traced but existing knowledge regarding this topic is still scanty.

It is pertinent to note that social enterprise became more popular in the MENA region after the Arab spring of 2011 which began originally from Tunisia and Egypt with series of anti-government protest demanding for regime change. There was an increase in public consciousness on the state of socio-economic survival of people and how to alleviate unemployment and other social inequality challenges in Arab countries. Therefore, this study aims to ascertain and analyze the contributions of social entrepreneurship education towards poverty alleviation, fight inequalities, boost financial inclusion, and promote blue sea and green environment to tackle climate change. The remaining parts of this study are discussed as follows: Literature review, Conceptual framework, social mission, Social Sustainable education in

MENA Countries, Size of social enterprise research in MENA countries, Findings and Discussion, and Conclusion.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social Entrepreneurship in MENA Region

The uprising of the Arab spring in 2011 catapulted the motivation of many, especially the young people, to change their communities following the myriad of social-economic challenges that were highlighted, facing the MENA region. Among the social challenges, unemployment conspicuously stood out. The revolution sparked a sense of empowerment, and the need to create employment led to a flow of entrepreneurial energy among the youth, which saw the rising of social entrepreneurial ventures to respond to socio-economic issues in areas of health, agriculture, cultural activities, women empowerment, water, and sanitation. The change was motivated by the lack of effectiveness or willingness from traditional players such as the government, to address social, economic, and environmental challenges facing the society. Frustrations forced citizens to devise creative ways to address these challenges. There are many problems in the region calling for sustainable development, which the traditional systems could not keep up with, including poverty, high population growth rates; characterized by increase in youth population, low levels of educational attainment, restrictive gender inequality limiting the potential of women, acute environmental threats, conflict, and political instability, among others. These problems called for innovative strategies to fill the gaps left by traditional actors to mend the dilapidated societal structures. The realization of sustainable development goals would depend on disruptive strategies that are not bent on traditions.

Social entrepreneurship education has recently gained fresh momentum in the MENA region representing emerging countries. This development is credited to several factors notably characterized by technology. There is a significant access to the internet by a considerable 2 billion people, with six billion connected to mobile devices and the numbers are increasing. Thanks to technology, there is democratization of development which has empowered entrepreneurs to become the game changers in area previously monopolized by public actors. Representing the private sector, entrepreneurs are playing the significant role of producing workable solutions for existing social and economic challenges, resulting in a promising future. There is an increasing trend towards social innovations compelled by the realities of widespread unemployment, environmental corrosion, water scarcity, chronic poverty, food insecurity, as well as disenfranchised populations (Yesufu & Alajlani, 2019). The methods applied by social entrepreneurs are grassroots and community driven and not imported from outside and are already effecting changes on the outdated traditional development paradigms, which are the stubborn Arab monopolies; the business of development. However, for sustainability of this space in MENA region, social entrepreneurs are in critical need of support. Much investment is required in the private sector, coupled with reliable tools to measure, and evaluates the progress, to effectively motivate the ambitions of the social entrepreneurs to become the drivers of change (Yesufu, 2018).

As such, there is need for collaboration of social entrepreneurs, the private and public sectors for sustainability as well as scalability of the work. It is encouraging to see partnerships between the private sector and social business but there is a lack of effort to invest in social entrepreneurs to enhance on their commitment, talent, and energy. The private sector is vital as it offers an independent source of investment, knowledge as well as expertise. To understand the

sustainability or the lack of it in the MENA region, it is important to draw a distinction between the mineral rich countries and those that do not have them. In this respect, MENA region consists of petrochemical rich states such as Qatar, Iran, Kuwait, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, and Libya, as well as petrochemical poorer states such as Syria, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, and Yemen. This distinction is important as it defines the countries' societies and the interrelationship among the states as well as the rest of the world. Recent years have witnessed remarkable difference in development in terms of wealth and labor market structures between the petrochemical richer and poorer countries. Researchers explained that petrochemical richer states like Qatar, Oman and UAE have long been economic peripherals but recently transformed to significant wealth, economic and infrastructural development. On the other hand, petrochemical poorer states like Yemen and Egypt have witnessed perennial underdevelopment, poverty as well as political unrest. In the recent short-run, petrochemical poorer states can owe their underdevelopment to economic and political problems, as the petrochemical richer states have developed their populations and have enhanced prospects and opportunities for the future generation. This short-term perspective points towards sustainable development for the petrochemical richer states and the lack of it for their poorer counterparts. However, there is a similarity among the MENA countries; both the petrochemical richer and poorer states, that points towards the lack of sustainable development, characterized by the activities of the past and current generations (Yesufu, 2018).

Social Entrepreneurship Framework

The current youth bulge in MENA region, and scarce public and private resources, render traditional development frameworks inadequate to meet the socio-economic needs, calling for paradigm shifts. There is an emerging model of social entrepreneurship education that promises on addressing the challenges that the youth face in the Middle East. Researchers provided an outline of the principles of social entrepreneurship education. Firstly, it results to positive social impact by responding to marginalized communities that have been excluded by existing market and non-market actors. Secondly, it is characterized by non-conventional thinking based on revolutionary transformation of a production pattern to address social challenges. Thirdly, it employs sustainable methods which can achieve financial stability. Fourthly, its education must have adaptability which can be scaled beyond local contexts such that they can be applied on a larger scale to contribute to systemic and disruptive change. In this respect, social entrepreneur is thus innovative, resourceful and results oriented. Researchers explained that in the Middle East, there are programs and policies in place which are promoted to encourage entrepreneurship among the youth through equipping them with relevant skills to create job opportunities. In the MENA region, social entrepreneurship education is significantly driven by technology. There is significant digitization in the Middle East with countries like Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE having 100% against the United States 80% smartphone penetration. The region also has high media usage, ranked the second in the world in terms of daily You Tube video views represented by more than 310 million people. The limitless digitization offers opportunities for education for social entrepreneurship education.

However, the ability of digitization to enhance social entrepreneurship education depends on whether the digital knowledge and skills developed can be used to solve social problems and technologies can enhance the link between suppliers and service recipients. Further, it must guarantee the success of marginalized groups, and creates decentralized networks of knowledge to support information exchange. Also, it must exert pressure on public institutions as policy

makers to act on the demand of the citizens. Researchers observe various challenges in developing social entrepreneurship education using technology. Technological infrastructure in MENA is still centralized, implying monopoly of decisions and relevant data to effect social entrepreneurship education is too expensive to collect, transfer and use. Also, young people lack adequate knowledge on information technology to find jobs they need. Besides, social enterprises do not have the wherewithal to invest in developing digital innovations. According to the public sector in MENA region is to be blamed for deteriorating infrastructure, environmental degradation, vulnerable social services, and a restless younger generation. These challenges have led to the emergence of social entrepreneurs seeking to address the social issues facing the society. However, these social actors encounter various structural obstacles and rigid mind-sets of traditional investors and the government, culminating to a significantly attractive market within a challenging investment environment. While government support is essential to the thriving of the social enterprise, the latter is seen as a competitor to the state, which derails the scale and impact.

These barriers are in terms of legal frameworks, political actions, and non-governmental organizations. It is also difficult for social enterprises to secure the necessary funds to further their causes, as financial institutions are reluctant and avoid impact-driven enterprises. Further, private investors who are instrumental to social enterprises prioritize return on investment over social impact. Lack of performance indicators, limited business plans or plans that sound too iconoclastic for conservative bankers makes it difficult for social entrepreneurs to secure bank loans. Coupled with the harsh penalties associated with defaulting or declaring bankruptcy, bank loans are out of question. In response, social entrepreneurs' resort to international donors whose funding is not sustainable and has a lot of strings attached. Despite these challenges, social entrepreneurship education is gathering momentum in the MENA region.

Social entrepreneurs in the MENA region engage in the practice without a true social aspect to the entrepreneurship ventures. As such, it is important to understand social entrepreneurship education in the context of the region. A distinct definition will facilitate the creation of opportunity for policy dialogue that will lead to the design of relevant legal framework and help in the development of adaptable financial mechanisms that can support social enterprises to thrive. As such, social entrepreneurship education in the MENA region has distinct features. First, social entrepreneurial initiatives born out of a culture of solidarity, mostly in rural areas, motivated by the need to foster social support networks to assist the less privileged have always existed but the concept of "social entrepreneurship education" is little known. Secondly, there is no legal framework that defines social enterprises in the market within the region and can thus establish themselves in a variety of legal frameworks such as cooperatives, non-governmental organizations, civil companies, private businesses, or a combination of these. Thirdly, social problems have a wide variation among MENA countries and within states; challenges in the urban and rural areas are different. Social education and business models are developed in response to these problems and thus vary widely. Fourthly, social entrepreneurs are positively disrupting the region by bettering the quality of life during government bureaucracy, red tape, and corruption.

Social Innovation and Sustainability

Social innovation in MENA region: Researchers observed that Social Innovation in the MENA region is conspicuously dominated by interests in poverty reduction, sustainable development, and education. Since unemployment is the main reason for poverty, SI practices whose outcome is to provide more jobs can alleviate poverty. The Arab spring in 2011 saw the

emergence of SI initiatives that address unemployment in terms of social entrepreneurship education (Yesufu & Alajlani, 2019). External influence also played the significant role of reducing poverty through financial investments for employment creation. Researchers concur that sectors that are most represented in education for social entrepreneurship education include education, handicrafts, sustainable development, poverty reduction, environment, agriculture and food, health as well as refugees, respectively.

The Global Innovation Index (GII) which ranks countries around the world in terms of their performance on innovation, indicates a downward trend for MENA countries since 2011. The mediocre performance on innovation in this region can be attributed to a myriad of factors. First, the government offers little support for innovation, science, and technology. The government's support is vital for any innovation plan, the lack of which, existing efforts will be futile. Secondly, the region is governed with weak institutional structures which undermine innovation. Among other factors, it does not protect intellectual property rights and innovation. Thirdly, there is low level investment in knowledge-intensive services as well as knowledge creation, translating to minimal capacity of organizations in MENA region to acquire knowledge and modern technologies. Fourthly, the innovation systems are highly fragmented, as characterized by too many players, high competition, weak connection between the private, public and education sector as well as replication of ideas, among others. Fifthly, innovation inputs are not translated to innovation outputs due to weak performance indicators such as scientific and technical publications, knowledge creation, knowledge diffusion, patents and creative outputs.

Dimensions of social innovation among MENA countries: In 2011 uprisings in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) came about because of socio-economic disparities as well as economic marginalization in the region. National priorities and smart social innovations have the potential to improve fragile states in the MENA region. Two main dimensions of Social Innovation (SI) exist in MENA. These are national priorities (top down) and smart social education (bottom-up). The year 2016 saw the launching of vision 2030 for sustainable development by many Arab countries leading to various social innovation (SI) initiatives as well as community empowerment. However, policy makers at the national level have not established SI policies to address critical societal challenges. As a result, SI is not enforced as a national strategy at the macro-level. Several strategies are initiated from the national and international levels representing a top-down approach to stimulate social innovations. The policies of the Arab states refer from the UN-2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. The League of Arab States facilitates countries in promoting the cross-board development. The Council of Arab Ministers designs a regional sustainable development framework and keeps track of SD implementation. In recent years, the private sector and civil society have significantly recorded increasing participation. SI practices for Sustainable Development (SD) have the potential to alleviate the many challenges faced by the society including political instability and global warming, as they apply innovative solutions. Innovative solutions focus on these challenges and are characterized by multi-dimensional practices with objectives such as employing/empowering youth and women, among other marginalized groups, especially in rural/slum areas, and provision of education and services to these marginalized groups.

Social innovation and sustainable development goals (SDG): The MENA region, like all the countries in the world have adapted to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

outlined by the UN in 2015. Social innovation is vital in attaining the 17 life changing goals. MENA is affected by “multiple crisis” that is featured in the 17 goals of SDGs. Sustainable Development Goals are established to address these challenges for the current as well as future generations by guiding the UN-member states’ policies and activities. The pace of implementation of SDGs varies among MENA countries depending on their specific challenges, capacities as well as preconditions. In some regions such as the Gulf, there has been much progress compared to others like Mashreq sub-regions. Countries in the MENA region have recorded different performance on the achievement of SDGs with the disparity depending on the specific challenges and capacity. Traditional systems have failed to address these issues, calling for innovative solutions. Social education has the potential to solve these problems. As such, it can be said that the capacity for MENA countries to deliver on the SDGs is related with the rate at which social innovations are evolving. A look at each country’s performance on the 17 goals that make up the SDGs will inform on the progress attained in the different areas of innovation.

Sustainable development goals in MENA region: Sustainable development in the MENA region has for a long time been defined by the longevity of petrochemical stocks. While some states like Saudi Arabia and UAE report large reserves to last them for decades, others do not have enough to last them longer. Furthermore, the high rate of population growth and demographic glut of the young people for the richer countries implies that there will be a decrease in exports, thus a lack of sustainable development. The current growth in population and wealth of richer MENA countries is due to the export of environmentally damaging products, directly impacting on environmental sustainability. The realization of high and growing dependence on oil; resource depletion presses the need for innovation and diversification for petrochemical richer states as well. Researchers observed that the Middle East was once rich in entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, financing as well as success but has degraded below the rest of the world due to colonialism and centralized wealth generation. Colonialism has led to bureaucracy and dependency, which have eroded innovation and change, which characterize any form of entrepreneurship. Though governments in MENA countries tell the world that they are encouraging entrepreneurship, disagreed that, most of what is called entrepreneurship in the MENA region is purely profit-making entrepreneurship with little or no social focus.

Social Entrepreneurship Education

Principles of social entrepreneurship education: Social enterprise is the socially based business or company for the purpose of public interest. A social enterprise is a business organization that is based on the maximization of economic, social, and environmental benefits (Kim & Lim, 2017). Social entrepreneurship education is the process of managing a business with the intent of using goods and services as a public benefit or uses the proceeds for social benefits (Ghafar, 2020). Social entrepreneurship education is the business mechanism that is based on not- for profit or partial profit ventures for the benefit of social work (Raina, 2018). Social entrepreneurship education is an innovative business activity based on social objectives either for profit or not-profit business sectors (Ghafar, 2020). Social entrepreneurship education has two basic schools of thought; the social enterprise school of thought and the social innovative school of thought, concern with the application of creative ideas and improvement to address social issues and demands (Petrella & Richez-battesti, 2014). Social entrepreneurship education combines between the application of social business and sustainable innovative ideas

towards social values and public benefits (Ali et al., 2016). A social entrepreneur on the other hand is the person with creative and sustainable education for solving social issues. A social entrepreneur is characterized by an actor with initiative and creative ideas organized in a business form towards solving social challenges (Yesufu & Alajlani, 2019).

The role of a social entrepreneur is significant in the entire enterprise because it acts as non-profit entrepreneur with innovative ideas and programs with sustainable methodology for addressing public issues (Bacq, 2011). The social entrepreneurs are social workers that usually initiate ideas to effect public changes towards alleviating social challenges. The social entrepreneurs are leaders in the social enterprise (Germak & Singh, 2010). Therefore, social entrepreneur is primarily responsible for initiating ideas for sustainable social values and be committed to finding opportunities to serve that mission and continuous implementation of the business motive without being constrained by limited resources. A social entrepreneur should be creative, education agent, opportunist, and resourceful (Zahra et al., 2009).

Dimensions of social entrepreneurship education: There are three main different dimensions of social entrepreneurship education: social mission, innovativeness, and revenue model. Social Mission is the underlying ethos upon which a social enterprise is established. The entire social entrepreneurship education is a mechanism and process that has its primary objective as the social mission. Social mission of an enterprise is social value it is committed to address (Zahra et al., 2009). Innovativeness of a social enterprise is not limited to creativity and idea oriented. Rather, it includes ideas that are sustainable business or will guaranteed profit, social benefit, and environmental protection. Innovation education for social enterprise entails the social intent the enterprise aims at addressing, the business model and revenue generating model (Zahra et al., 2009). Revenue generation and sustainable income model has been the pivot challenge of social enterprise, since social enterprise is not based on general profit-making business models, there are usually skepticism from the potential financial institutions and individuals on the sustainability of the social enterprise itself. However, revenue model is one of the creative ideas a social entrepreneur should understand (Sarah & Woodside, 2016). The revenue model should entail the purpose of the revenue generation, the methodology used and business innovation behind sustainability of the entire business cycle. Social enterprise flourishes in revenue generation in place where there are laws that promote public financing towards social economy and solidarity-based economy (Sarah & Woodside, 2016). For instance, there are state laws that promote crowd funding platforms to raise funds for social entrepreneurship education programs aimed at specific work integration in the society. A work integration model that focuses on alleviating the challenges of those that are qualified unemployed people at risk of permanent labour exclusion in the society (Bahena-Álvarez, 2019).

Social entrepreneurship education in MENA countries: Social enterprises across the globe including the MENA countries are usually confronted with the issue of social mission, creativity and revenue generation plan. Past literature has focused on the missionary objective and roles of social entrepreneur with little emphasis on the innovativeness and management of the revenue for sustainability of the entire enterprise (Bahena-Álvarez, 2019). Social enterprise is becoming an emerging market since a decade ago especially in the MENA countries because the region has faced serious social challenge since the reawakening of the Arab spring. In the recent time, Individual and organizational efforts have supported SE in MENA countries through international programs, regional incubators to promote SE commercial and social activities (Santos, 2009).

Social workers have suggested that the social enterprise model is the best mechanism to address social problems in the Arab nation. At present, the MENA-based start-ups have promoted several social innovation and education and incubated varying social programs such as: Impact Hub Dubai, Emirates Foundation, Dtec, Turn8, Nabbesh, Teach Me Now and Loujee, and Jusoor Entrepreneurship Competition (Osman, 2016). Reports have shown that despite the efforts of social entrepreneurs within the MENA region and from international organizations, there are limited policies and government regulations guiding the establishment and activities of the social enterprise. There is no guiding the establishment of social enterprise in different sectors within the MENA countries. Social enterprises may not thrive when the actors will have to register their business under regular trade licenses and ordinary commercial companies. Businesses with social mission to address social issues and alleviate social challenges should not be subjected to conventional commercial enterprise procedure to encourage investment in social entrepreneurship education (Santos, 2009). The presence of a robust legal and regulatory framework will open investment opportunities for the MENA-countries especially in financial sector. The MENA region is the place where people recognize and appreciate charity-based activities and businesses. However, the rate of awareness about social enterprises in MENA region is still low. People are highly unaware about the social entrepreneur especially among the policy makers and potential investors. According to the report from the Triangle Research on social enterprise development spanned across Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt, SE for MENA region can have better impact through social investment in education, health care and environment (Bahena-Álvarez, 2019).

Most of the countries have achieved on the no poverty SDG apart from Algeria which has reported slight achievement and Libya and Yemen Republic which have stagnated on this SDG. On Zero Hunger, all the countries have reported deteriorating progress. In terms of good health & well-being, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen show decreasing performance, while Algeria, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and UAE have shown stagnation. Bahrain and Qatar have shown slight progress on this SDG. On quality education, Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE, and Yemen show stagnating performance, Iraq and Syria show decreasing performance, Jordan shows slight progress while Libya shows undefined performance. On gender equality, Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Tunisia, and UAE show stagnating performance, while Egypt, Iraq, and Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen show decreasing performance. On clean water and sanitation, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and Syria show stagnating performance, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Yemen show decreasing performance, while Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia report undefined performance. On affordable and clean energy, all the countries reported slight improvement apart from Morocco and Syria which showed stagnating performance and Yemen which showed decreasing performance.

On decent work and economic growth, only Bahrain and UAE reported achievement. Saudi Arabia showed slight achievement. Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, and Qatar showed stagnating performance while all the other countries reported decreasing performance on this SDG. On industry innovation and infrastructure, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen showed decreasing performance while all the other countries reported stagnating performance. On reduced inequalities, Algeria reported slight achievement, Lebanon showed stagnating performance, as Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia reported decreased performance, while all the other countries reported undefined performance. On sustainable cities and communities, all

the countries reported stagnating achievements apart from Syria and Yemen which recorded reduced performance. On responsible consumption and production, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, and Tunisia reported slight performance, as Kuwait, Oman Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE reported reduced performance, while all the other countries reported stagnating performance. On climate action, Syria achieved success. Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, and Yemen reported slight achievement, while Algeria, Iraq and Tunisia showed stagnating performance. The rest of the countries reported decreased achievements. On life below water, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Yemen showed stagnating performance while the other countries reported reducing achievements.

Regarding life on land, Egypt and Morocco reported slight achievements, as Iraq, Jordan and Syria recorded reduced achievements while the rest of the countries showed stagnating performance. On peace, justice and strong institutions, Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia indicated stagnating performance, while Oman and UAE reported slight progress in performance, as the rest of the countries showed decreased achievement. On partnerships for the goals, only UAE achieved success, Libya had undefined achievement, Bahrain, Egypt, and Lebanon reported stagnating achievement while all the other countries reported slight achievement. In table 2, Sustainable development takes the lead, followed by education, transport, health, energy, and environment, respectively. As social entrepreneurship education is associated with innovation, it means that social education is mostly manifested through social enterprises motivated by Sustainable Development. Achievements on the SDGs are strongly related to these areas, pointing to the premise that social innovation has significant impact on the achievement of SDGs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The MENA region consists of the petrochemical rich states and the petrochemical poorer states. The petrochemical richer states have recently recorded increasing wealth while their poorer counterparts still lag. However, the whole MENA region has various social challenges that the traditional systems have not been able to address. The Arab spring of 2011 demonstrated the people's frustrations with the status quo, which saw increased motivation to change their society to become a better place to live. As a result, recent years have seen increased interest towards social entrepreneurship education where citizens device innovative ways to provide solutions to their problems including unemployment and poverty, among others. Though this practice is evident, people have little awareness on the concept of social entrepreneurship education in the MENA region. The region has promised on committing to the UN-SDGs, which can be attained through social education in entrepreneurship. However, there are many challenges that forestall social entrepreneurs from achieving their full potential. The government support is vital in the thriving of social entrepreneurship education, but many obstacles come from this sector in terms of weak regulatory frameworks and bureaucracy, among others. Social entrepreneurship education is the backbone for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is because they are associated with innovative and disruptive strategies that deal with the current social challenges in the world. Countries in the MENA region have pledged their commitment to work on the 17 SDGs.

It is thus important that these states should proactively support social entrepreneurs through the establishment of enabling environments that facilitate the nurturing of ideas through investment in Research and Development programs, developing systematic legal frameworks, and provide financial support for establishment, growth, and sustainability. The private sector

also offers a pivotal role in supporting social enterprises. It is thus important that collaboration is fostered among all the relevant stakeholders. Policy makers also need to ensure that policies that promote social innovations and entrepreneurs are established to make it easier for innovators to actualize their ideas. There is also the need for government agencies to eliminate bureaucracies that discourage innovations.

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