

## Social entrepreneurs and their motivations behind starting social ventures in the context of developing economies: An explorative study

Seham Ghalwash

Ahmed Tolba

Ayman Ismail

The American University in Cairo

School of Business, Cairo, Egypt

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### Keywords

Social entrepreneurs; developing economies, Egypt

### Abstract

**Purpose:** Social entrepreneurial organizations have gained in awareness and interest among researchers, yet we know relatively little about the individuals who are able to create social and economic values in developing countries. This study examines social entrepreneurs' characteristics, their backgrounds and motivations in starting new social ventures. It addresses social entrepreneurship by empirically examining the phenomenon in the particular context of Egypt.

**Design/methodology/approach:** A qualitative methodological approach was adapted in which a triangulation of data sources was employed. It utilizes an explorative research approach with data gathered from social entrepreneurs, founding team members and other highly placed executives in five social enterprises. In addition, industry experts were also interviewed in order to obtain a more holistic picture of the social entrepreneurship phenomenon in Egypt. This also helped to improve the validity and reliability of the findings.

**Findings:** Analysis of findings of these five social enterprises revealed common characteristics of individuals as well as the motivations behind starting social ventures. Findings suggest that successful social entrepreneurs are risk takers with an entrepreneurial mind-set. They are innovators who seek solving social issues, and they have persistence that helps them to survive the inefficient institutional framework conditions in such developing economies. Thus, the empirical findings revealed that social problems, inspiration and personal experiences are the main drivers for starting social ventures.

**Research limitations:** There is a limitation in the sample size due to the nature of the study. However, it provides a first step towards a more inclusive empirical research agenda in the future.

**Practical implications:** This research contributes to knowledge by offering interesting insights for existing social entrepreneurs to rethink their new businesses, particularly in developing countries. Furthermore, this study contributes to expand future research of social entrepreneurship for other developing countries contexts.

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