



MEDUP!

Promoting social entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean Region

Mid-Term Evaluation Report

MedUP! Promoting social entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean region

Ref. EuropeAid/155554/DH/ACT/Multi

November 2nd, 2020

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This report was elaborated by Camilla Guasti and Vittoria Vineis (ARCO) with the supervision of Enrico Testi, Carmela Nitti and Marta Russo (ARCO).

Acknowledgements

ARCO is grateful to all MedUp! Consortium partners for their availability and for their transparent and constructive contribution to the evaluation. Our gratefulness extends to all project beneficiaries who have willingly dedicated their time and effort to answer our questions and actively participated to our collective discussions.

ARCO also thanks the project PMUs for their helpful support in the logistics and coordination when carrying out the data collection phase.

A final thanks goes to Lorenzo Paoli, Cristian Bevacqua and Giada Cicognola for their constant support and full availability throughout the entire Mid-term evaluation.

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of ARCO and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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Executive Summary

MedUp! Promoting social entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean region (Ref: EuropeAid/155554/DH/ACT/Multi) is a four-years multi-country project funded by EuropeAid in 2018 and implemented in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.

The general objective of the project is to promote and support an enabling eco-system for social enterprises, which are considered a valuable driver for socio-economic growth.

More specifically, the project aims at improving the inclusiveness of the labour market especially for youth and women. MedUp! intends to pursue three intermediary outcomes:

- 1) To increase the engagement of policy makers and key private and public stakeholders at local, national and regional levels in order to improve legal frameworks for social entrepreneurship as well as youth and gender sensitive policies.
- 2) To improve the quality and the accessibility of the support services provided to SEs by SESOs also strengthening the coordination among the latter.
- 3) To scale up the businesses of existing social enterprises and improve public awareness of their impact.

ARCO research centre is carrying out the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project. In particular, this report showcases the main findings emerging from the first phase of the MTE. The purpose is to provide the project's partnership with comprehensive and detailed insights and learnings about the results achieved by the project in the first 24 months of its implementation. These findings will be discussed by project stakeholder during the upcoming second phase of the MTE. In particular, the latter will encompass participatory discussions aimed at **elaborating recommendations** for the next years of the project implementation.

Given the constraints imposed by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, all the data collection activities were carried out remotely. This choice required a re-calibration of both the Mid-term Evaluation workplan and the data collection strategy. All changes from the original plan have been agreed with MedUp! Consortium and have been designed in such a way to **preserve the original evaluation objectives** as well as the **high quality of data collection and analysis**.

Moreover, the data collection process encountered significant hindrances mainly due to **communication challenges with respondents**. To mitigate negative consequences, ARCO adopted some practical adjustments and integrations to the data collection tools and workplan in order to **preserve the reliability** of data and their adherence to the particular features of the context (see [Annex 1- Methodology & Evaluation Limitations](#)).

The qualitative and quantitative primary data collected have been triangulated with the project documentation sent to ARCO by Oxfam IT in order to develop an **extensive analysis of the early results of the intervention**. Overall, **28 semi-structured individual interviews** with key informants had been carried out, along with **4 Structured Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** and an **online survey** completed by **51 MedUp! Social Enterprises**. The evaluation investigated the three levels targeted by the project:

- At the **MACRO** level, the project aims at promoting policy and advocacy initiatives and public-private dialogue to improve regulatory and policy environments at country and cross-country levels;
- At the **MESO** level, the project aims at supporting SESOs in improving the quality, innovativeness and outreach of their services targeting local SEs;
- At the **MICRO** level, the project aims at assisting social enterprises in targeted countries through tailored financial and technical support as well as the dissemination of promising and successful social enterprises' experiences at national, regional and EU level.

The findings from the mid-term evaluation confirm a **positive overall assessment** of project's contribution to the achievement of its global goal "*promoting an enabling environment in the Southern Mediterranean partner countries for the development of the social entrepreneurship sector as a driver for inclusive growth and job creation*".

Albeit project countries show different levels of SE ecosystem development, **MedUp! actions have found to be effective and significant at all levels**, namely the **MACRO**, **MESO**, and **MICRO** levels. (👉 see [ARCO's Overall Assessment](#)).

The key points summarising the general MTE findings as for the project's **RELEVANCE**, **COHERENCE**, **EFFECTIVENESS**, **EFFICIENCY** and **SUSTAINABILITY** (OECD-DAC criteria) are reported below. More detailed findings are presented in the report.

Relevance


- ✓ The MACRO level objective of the MedUp! project are confirmed to be relevant and needed by MACRO, MESO and MICRO level beneficiaries interviewed during the MTE
- ✓ Priorities identified for the countries' SE ecosystem in MedUp! SESOs Needs Assessment were confirmed by SESOs' representatives during the MTE with minor exceptions
- ✓ The MICRO level beneficiaries' actual needs have been properly identified and tackled by MedUp! thanks to its financial and technical support
- ✓ The selection process of beneficiary SEs was considered inclusive, with regards to geographical and gender representativity in all project countries
- ✓ The project addressed the new needs emerging from the Covid-19 global pandemic with flexibility and adaptability

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- 🔔 MTE results pointed out a lack of stable commitment on the part of SESOs towards the project activities. Respondents identified different reasons for this issue and advanced several incentives which MedUp! should offer in order to be more relevant for SESOs
- 🔔 Some minor limitations were mentioned as for the selection process of beneficiary SEs, such as the lack of Arabic translation in the application process

Coherence

- ✓ A well aligned Project Consortium: all core elements of partners' vision and mission are aligned and coherent to MedUp! objectives
- ✓ MedUp!: a good/potential fit for local synergies. Current MENA region projects and initiatives are working in synergy with MedUp! and/or offer potential for further synergy
- ✓ Not all MedUp! countries explicitly encompass SENT in their national agendas. Where present (i.e in Tunisia and Morocco), the project shows to be fully consistent with national policies framework on SEs. Moreover, albeit not specifically addressing all the countries' strategic pillars, MedUp! alignment with national strategies is confirmed
- ✓ MedUp! further develops the EU cooperation strategy in the MENA region by strengthening relations between the EU and its southern neighbours and by fostering social entrepreneurship as a key strategy to respond to social and economic challenges.
- ✓ MedUp! project is both directly and indirectly contributing to the achievement of SDGs. While directly promoting SDG 8 – "Decent Work and Economic Growth", SDG 5 – "Gender Equality", SDG 10 – "Reduced Inequalities" and SDG 17- "Partnership for the Goals", the project is indirectly contributing to a larger set of goals pursued by the supported SEs




Effectiveness

- ✓ MTE results confirm the effectiveness of the project at MACRO level. Albeit project countries show different levels of SE ecosystem development, interviewed policy-level beneficiaries have benefitted from MedUp! project activities to the extent that they had the opportunity to learn from their peers' best practices and experiences, they have increased their awareness on Social Entrepreneurship and they now have examples to follow when discussing on policy strategies and developing the SE sector
- ✓ SESOs' average evaluation of MESO level project activities is, overall, positive. However, MTE representativeness of MESO level beneficiaries is lower in some MedUp! countries
- ✓ The financial and technical support provided by MedUp! is helping SEs in expanding their business and their social/environmental impact. Moreover, MedUp! has given SEs the opportunity to widen and enhance their business networks and to increase the number and quality of relationships with their stakeholders. However, it is too early to evaluate at this stage of the project, even more so given the negative impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic which jeopardizes their sustainability
- ✓ Given that SEs have required a greater-than-expected grant amounts, the project chose to focus on fewer SEs which demonstrated to have a capacity to scale-up and to generate a positive and sustainable impact.
- ✓ An overall positive feedback emerges as for the effectiveness of the project in improving gender-related aspects of SEs' activities and generated effects

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- 🔔 MTE results highlighted a low visibility and a weak project "marketing" to the extent that it had not properly or sufficiently communicated its objective and results. However, since the hiring of a Project Assistant/Communication officer, this aspect was said to be decisively improved
- 🔔 MTE results point out at an unclear implementing strategy to mainstream gender across project's activities. Moreover, respondents highlighted an untapped gender expertise which should inform the project's activities



Efficiency

- ✓ Despite external constraints, the project has been timely reaching its results so far. Minor delays have been attributed to difficulties in engaging local stakeholders in project activities
- ✓ Participative budget design: allocation of financial resources is perceived to be equitable and well-balanced across countries by almost all the key implementors involved in the project
- ✓ Effective coordinating role and high responsiveness by Oxfam IT
- ✓ MedUp! managed to set up a remarkable governance structure aiming at ensuring both efficiency and inclusiveness of decision-making processes
- ✓ Cooperation within countries' PMUs is efficient, smooth and based on effective mutual support
- ✓ Overall smooth collaboration among project partners
- ✓ Diversity and complementarity of partners' expertise are perceived as key factors in pursuing project objectives

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- 🔔 Unbalanced allocation of human resources with respect to the actual workload and the high staff turnover have been reported as two issues concerning human resources
- 🔔 Structural budget limitation was recognized as a constraining factor in the pursuance of MedUp! ambitious objectives and targets.
- 🔔 Minor delays have been attributed to difficulties in engaging local stakeholders in project activities
- 🔔 Oxfam central management is generally perceived to be very responsive to partners' requests and inputs
- 🔔 The risk of excessive compartmentalization of partners' tasks still needs to be tackled, in some respondents' opinion
- 🔔 Multi-country rather than a regional project: the regional dimension is indeed a potential leverage of the project, but not currently fully exploited. Respondents, in fact, sensed an intermittent connection and dialogue among project countries
- 🔔 Good and complementary overall consortium expertise but single partners' expertise not fully exploited



- ✓ Good premises for long-lasting benefits: the project has been found to be properly addressing all the five dimensions of sustainability by putting in place concrete actions at all levels
- ✓ MICRO-level beneficiaries provided evidence on project long-lasting impact potentials. Technical and social sustainability appear to be the most developed components of SEs' sustainability
- ✓ A tailored selection of the most promising SEs where sustainability was identified as a selection criterion is a premise also for their future sustainability
- ✓ The systemic and intersectional project approach targeting multiple levels of the countries' SE ecosystem places the foundations for future sustainability

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- 🔔 Allowing for a multi-level dialogue and synergy across SE ecosystem levels
- 🔔 Stimulating the creation of both strategic and operational partnerships and networks at national and international levels
- 🔔 Boosting local stakeholders' engagement and ownership
- 🔔 Engaging financial players and the private sector in the SE ecosystem
- 🔔 As far as MedUp! partnership is concerned, respondents highlighted the need to move from a micro-management to a more strategic-oriented approach in order to ensure the project's sustainability
- 🔔 More efforts are needed to further boost SEs' financial sustainability

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List of acronyms

ARCO: Action Research for CO-development
ESO: Entrepreneurial Support Organization
EU: European Union
HR: Human Resources
MENA: Middle East and North Africa
MTE: Mid-Term Evaluation
PMUs: Project Management Units
RPM: Regional Project Manager
SC: Steering Committee
SFGD: Structured Focus Group Discussion
SENT: Social Entrepreneurship
SEs: Social Enterprises
SESOs: Social Enterprises Support Organizations
ToR: Terms of Reference
KII: Key Informant Interview

ARCO

ARCO is a research centre founded in 2008 at *PIN S.c.r.l. Servizi didattici e scientifici per l'Università di Firenze*. The centre's experts have excellent knowledge and proficiency in social impact assessment, impact evaluation, social enterprise development and assessment. ARCO researchers are organized in five strategic unit: Social Economy, Impact Evaluation, Local Development, Inclusive development and Circular Innovation and Sustainable Commodities. ARCO's mission is to offer scientific and strategic support to organizations engaged in projects with positive social impact.

In particular, the present study will be jointly carried out by the **Social Economy Unit**, having an extensive understanding in research, implementation and evaluation of enabling eco-systems for social enterprises, the **Impact Evaluation Unit** having a broad experience in evaluating development project/programs worldwide, and the **Inclusive Development Unit**, widely proficient in gender-sensitive impact evaluations.

Evaluation team

Table 1 – ARCO evaluation team

Name	Short bio	Role in the evaluation
Enrico Testi (Ph.D)	Enrico is the executive director of ARCO since 2009. He is a specialist in social enterprise, social innovation and evaluation of programs on these topics. His Ph.D. thesis was focused on enabling eco-system for social enterprises.	Scientific coordinator
Marco Bellucci (Ph.D.)	Marco is Assistant Professor in Accounting at the University of Florence and teaches Planning and Control. His research interests include social and environmental accounting, stakeholder engagement, social entrepreneurship, and non-profit organizations.	Social Economy Senior researcher
Carmela Nitti	Carmela is researcher in ARCO since 2014 and she is the Coordinator of the research unit on Social Economy. Her field of expertise is on social economy, social enterprises and social impact assessment. In the last years she was involved in several researches and consultancies on social enterprises assessment in developing countries.	Social Economy expert
Marta Russo	Marta is the coordinator of the research unit on M&E and Impact evaluation. She is responsible for the Monitoring and Evaluation process of development projects. Her main research interests include evaluation methodologies, education, vocational training, and youth employment.	M&E expert
Caterina Arciprete (Ph.D)	Caterina is a senior researcher in ARCO's inclusive development unit. She holds a Ph.D in Development Economics from the	Gender expert

	University of Florence and was a visiting scholar at Oxford University Her field of expertise is the assessment of inclusiveness of policies and projects with a gender-sensitive lens.	
Tommaso Iannelli	Tommaso is M&E officer in ARCO's M&E and Impact evaluation Unit. His field of expertise is the Monitoring and Evaluation process of development projects and the data management and analysis. His main areas of interest are youth employment and microcredit.	Data analyst
Vittoria Vineis	Vittoria is a research assistant in the Social Economy Unit of ARCO. She has a specific background on international cooperation, having mainly worked with NGOs in the past few years. She has recently carried out a political economy field research on "Enabling Social Enterprise Ecosystem" in Palestine, in cooperation with the Yunus Social Business Centre of Bethlehem.	Research Assistant
Camilla Guasti	Camilla is a research assistant in ARCO's Social Economy Unit. Her field of expertise is social economy, social business design, participatory methods and social innovation. Her master thesis was on the creation of an evaluation framework for social innovation and social economy.	Research Assistant
Safaa Mataich	Safaa's mother tongues are Italian and English. She has experiences in interpreting and linguistic mediation. She was in charge of administering SEs entrepreneurs to non-English speaking entrepreneurs.	Arab speaking consultant

1. Introduction

1.1 MedUp! project

MedUp! is based on EU regional strategic view conceiving Social Entrepreneurship (SENT) as a fundamental tool in generating positive social and environmental impact for local communities, while laying the foundations for the effective empowerment of women and youth (➡ see [Section Coherence](#)). Against this backdrop, MedUp! aims at tackling the following four main challenges present in the MENA Region:

- **Regulatory framework and policy environment in MENA region countries are restrictive and hamper the smooth development of SEs;**
- **Social Entrepreneurship Support Organizations (SESOs) are not fully able to provide adapted and innovative technical support services**, mainly due to a lack of skills, tools and effective high quality support (financial and technical) tailored to SEs' needs. In addition, they often struggle to reach SEs in rural areas;
- **Communities are not properly informed and sensitized on the positive effects** that SEs can generate in terms of economic development and of social inclusion. This is often due to a lack of a common definition and understanding of SE, its characteristics and potentialities. Moreover, communities are not fully aware of the impact that social norms and institutional barriers have in limiting gender equitable participation to the labour-force;
- **Key stakeholders at macro, meso and micro levels appear disconnected** from each other and communication flows are not smooth;
- **Women in the MENA region face tougher barriers to enter the labour-force** than in any other region globally, also due to entrenched gender norms and institutional barriers.

For all these reasons and thanks to the strong cooperation among diversified European and Southern Mediterranean partners, MedUp! project aims at ***promoting an enabling environment in the Southern Mediterranean partner countries for the development of the social entrepreneurship sector as a driver for inclusive growth and job creation (global objective)***.

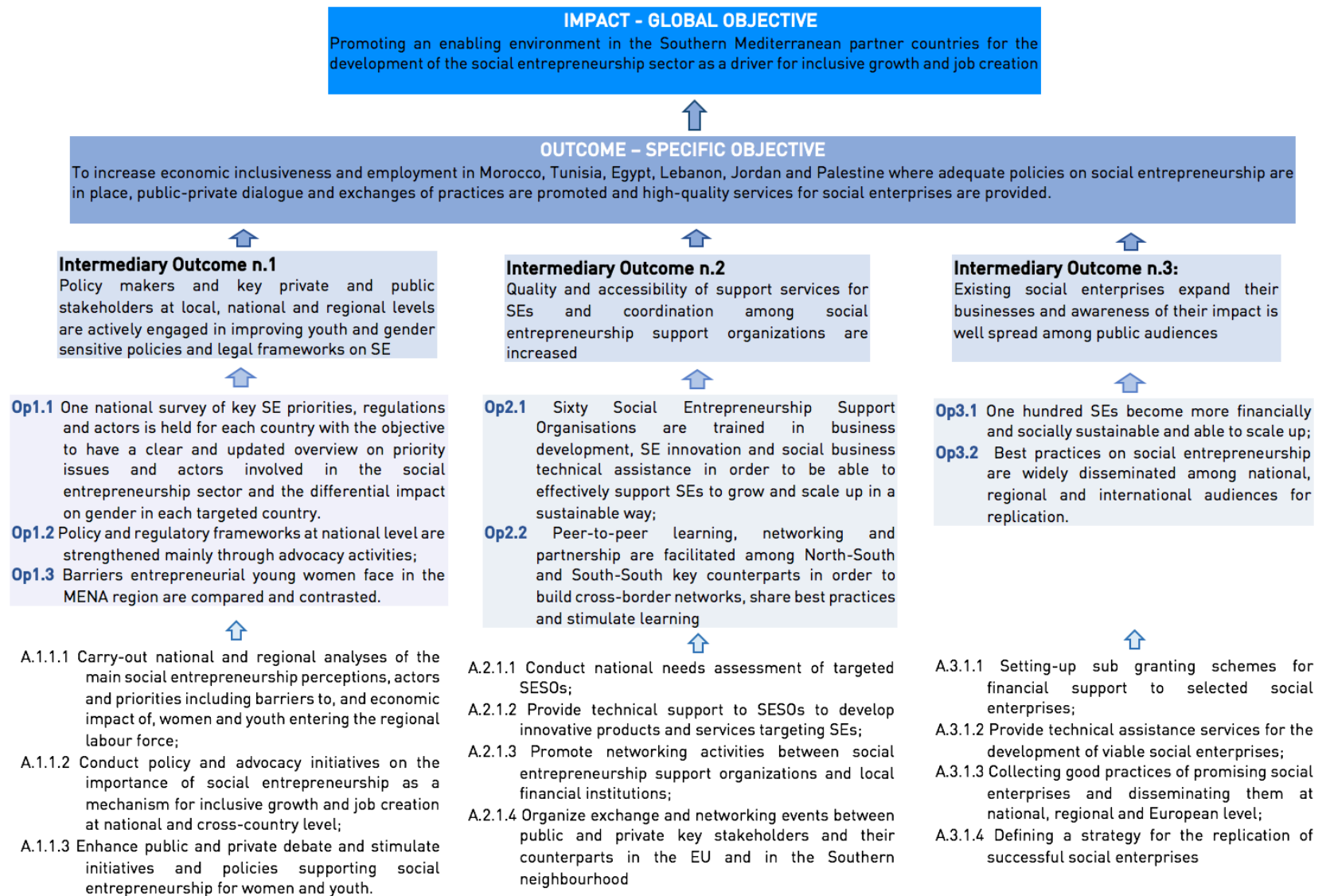
Operationally speaking, this objective is pursued by MedUp! through a tailored set of activities aimed at targeting and supporting **MICRO, MESO** and **MACRO** level stakeholders in six MENA countries, namely in **Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine** and **Tunisia**.

More specifically, MedUp! contribution to the development of enabling social entrepreneurship ecosystem in the above-mentioned targeted country is pursued:

- **at MACRO level**, by promoting policy and advocacy initiatives and public-private dialogue to improve regulatory and policy environments at country and cross-country levels;
- **at MESO level**, by supporting SESOs in improving the quality, innovativeness and outreach of their services targeting local SEs. This is mainly pursued through capacity building programs, support to the creation of strategic alliances with local and international financial institutions, and the organization of exchanges and networking events with counterparts in the Southern Neighbourhood and the EU;
- **at MICRO level**, by assisting social enterprises in targeted countries through tailored financial and technical support as well as the dissemination of promising and successful social enterprises' experiences at national, regional and EU level.

Figure 1 briefly outlines MedUp! Theory of Change for a more detailed understanding of the project.

Figure 1 – MedUp! Theory of Change



Source: Data extracted from project documents

1.2 Scope of the assignment

The evaluation methodology was built coherently with the 11 objectives for the evaluation reported in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project. Moreover, it was designed and carried out building on our evaluation pillars outlined in Box 1.

In particular, the evaluation draws from **four streams of analysis** as follows:

BOX 1: EVALUATION PILLARS

- ✓ Synergies across the entire MedUp! Consortium
- ✓ Key engagement of MedUp! Teams & Partners
- ✓ Data harmonization across countries
- ✓ Cross-validation of findings
- ✓ Micro, Meso, Macro and Regional level analysis
- ✓ Cross-sectional Themes
- ✓ Participatory and self-enforcing Learning Process
- ✓ Listening to Beneficiaries' voices
- ✓ Quick adaptability to actors and circumstances
- ✓ Mutual learning and capitalization

1) OECD-DAC Criteria Analysis:

- Assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project related to contribution to partnerships, accountability, value for money from the perspectives of different stakeholders, capacity to generate long-term impact and development processes that continue after the project duration. This can include the appropriateness and relevance of the beneficiary selection;
- Identify, assess and document the evidence for the achievement of expected and unexpected results of the project towards the intended outcomes following the regional dimensions and the three levels of intervention (**MICRO**, **MESO** and **MACRO**);
- Assess whether the current management and governance structure of the project is fully functional to reach the project's objectives or there is a need to make operational adjustments;
- With particular reference to the sub-granting component of the project, assess the effectiveness of this financial support and elaborate key recommendations.

2) Gender and inclusion analysis

- Apply a strong gender inclusive analysis throughout the evaluation.

3) Swot Analysis and risk management

- Identify external environment challenges and opportunities that have impacted on the project progress.
- Facilitate a participatory process with staff to review, advice and guide the overall project management strategy and its strengths and weaknesses.
- Identify potential risks that can impact on the project due to socio-economic, political and other factors.

4) Learning process and capitalization

- Identify key learnings, lessons, good practices, areas to be strengthened and provide recommendations to inform the revision to the strategies that are currently in use;
- Advise about possible and applicable measures and decisions that can increase the project's capacity to put in place activities at **MICRO**, **MESO** and **MACRO** levels that are sustainable and well anchored to national and regional social entrepreneurship ecosystems;
- Assess the existing strategies for sustaining the project and recommend measures for strengthening the same.

The report presents the findings emerging from the first phase of the MTE. The latter are structured following the five OECD-DAC criteria analysis. Hence, five sections organize our assessment as for the project's Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability. Moreover, the attached Annexes provide additional information and insights.

2. Evaluation Findings

The MTE findings have been organized following the five OECD-DAC Criteria Analysis, hence assessing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project. Each section opens with the evaluation questions we intend to answer following the OECD-DAC Criteria Analysis. In turn, our answers to each evaluation question shape the internal structure of each section.

2.1 Relevance

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- To what extent the project objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' actual needs?
- To what extent the project objectives and design respond to local stakeholders' needs and priorities?
- Was the beneficiaries' selection process designed in such a way to ensure appropriateness and inclusiveness? Was it effectively so?
- Was the project able to adapt its design to new emerging needs of the context, in order to maintain its relevance over time?

❓ To what extent the project objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' actual needs?

❓ To what extent the project objectives and design respond to local stakeholders' needs and priorities?

➡ The **MACRO** level objective of the MedUp! project are confirmed to be relevant and needed by **MACRO**, **MESO** and **MICRO** level beneficiaries interviewed during the MTE.

MACRO
level

MACRO LEVEL NEEDS PROPERLY IDENTIFIED BY MEDUP! PROJECT

All interviewed **MACRO** level beneficiaries, albeit these represented only 4 out of 6 project countries (➡ [Annex 1- Methodology & Evaluation Limitations](#)), confirm that the project objectives are relevant to their national context and, indeed, well needed especially as for the **MACRO** level. These respondents, in fact, expressed that social entrepreneurship is a new concept especially at their government level.

Table 2 below reports which needs stated by **MACRO** level project beneficiaries during the MTE are being addressed by MedUp! **MACRO** level activities.

Table 2 - Stated needs by MACRO level project beneficiaries tackled by MedUp! MACRO activities

Need for...	MedUp! MACRO level activities		
	A.1.1.1 Carry-out national and regional analyses of the main social entrepreneurship perceptions, actors and priorities including barriers to, and economic impact of, women and youth entering the regional labour force	A.1.1.2 Conduct policy and advocacy initiatives on the importance of social entrepreneurship as a mechanism for inclusive growth and job creation at national and cross-country level	A.1.1.3 Enhance public-private debate and stimulate initiatives and policies supporting social entrepreneurship for and including women and youth.
Understanding of SE concept and SE awareness	🎯	🎯	🎯
SENT ecosystem mapping	🎯		
Advocacy for SE legal framework		🎯	🎯
Networking between government and SE ecosystem		🎯	🎯
Peer learning and exchange		🎯	🎯
Government support for SE development	Governments officials and policy decision makers are the project MACRO level target groups		

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from MTE data collection activities

The **MACRO** level objectives of the project, in particular improving a legal framework on social entrepreneurship (iOC1) are confirmed to be relevant and needed also by **MICRO** and **MESO** level beneficiaries as will be discussed in the following sections. In fact, as discussed later in this section, 33% of social enterprises responding to our survey indicated “legal framework and policy” as a main constraint for their development (Figure 5). Moreover, legal framework and registration was indicated by SESO representatives from all project countries as a priority for the development of the SE ecosystem (Table 3). See also Annex 6, Focus: SE Ecosystem .

Albeit MedUp! **MACRO** level activities prove to be relevant, a project stakeholder working in the Egyptian context highlighted the difficulty to engage public officials in the project's activities. To this respect, the reasons identified by the respondents were i) no understanding on the part of public officials of the benefit of participating to the activities and ii) perhaps it was offensive for them to receive invitations to the events which were not written in Arabic language and were not delivered in Arabic language. As Egyptian **MACRO** level respondents did not take part to our Mid-term evaluation, these arguments could not be confirmed by direct beneficiaries. Therefore, it is an open question whether this issue is related to the projects' relevance or, perhaps, to its effectiveness, in terms of not being fully capable of communicating its added value and, therefore, in reaching its intended target.



To what extent the project objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' actual needs?



To what extent the project objectives and design respond to local stakeholders' needs and priorities?



Priorities identified for the countries' SE ecosystem in MedUp! SESOs Needs Assessment were confirmed by SESOs' representatives during the MTE with minor exceptions.

However, MTE results pointed out a lack of stable commitment on the part of SESOs towards the project activities. Respondents identify different reasons for this issue and advance several incentives which MedUp! should offer in order to be more relevant for SESOs.

MESO
level

SE ECOSYSTEM PERCEIVED PRIORITIES BY SESOs MOSTLY IDENTIFIED AND TACKLED BY MEDUP!

We highlight that project activities "A 1.1.1 – Carry-out national and regional analyses of the main social entrepreneurship perceptions, actors and priorities including barriers to, and economic impact of, women and youth entering the regional labour force" and activity "A 2.1.1 – Conduct national needs assessment of targeted SESOs" are well in line with the attempt to guarantee the project's relevance and to identify beneficiaries actual needs, at **ALL LEVELS**.






























In fact, the findings from the national studies and from the cross-country SEs and SESOs' Need Assessment conducted by Euclid (Project Document: "Annex 24, Draft SESO Needs Assessment Report"), albeit still not finalized at this stage of the project, are in line with our findings emerging from **MESO** level beneficiaries' perceptions.

Table 3 and 4 below share findings from KII and FGD with project SESO representatives. For the interpretation of the results presented in this section, we strongly advise to keep in mind our research limitations regarding a low representativity of **MESO** level project beneficiaries (👉 **Annex 1- Methodology & Evaluation Limitations**). Hence, findings referring to **MESO** level beneficiaries' opinion may not be easily generalized to all countries.

Table 3 shows that priorities identified for the SE ecosystem in the SESOs Needs Assessment phase were confirmed by SESOs' representatives during the MTE with minor exceptions. This result was relevant, since during MTE data collection, SESOs were free to brainstorm their opinions and ideas in regard to their SE ecosystem needs; hence, they were not asked to choose between pre-formulated responses. These were later clustered and reformulated under common formulas for the sake of homogeneity of the analysis.

Table 3 – Comparison among priorities for SE ecosystem identified by SESOs during MTE and during MedUp! SESO Needs Assessment

PRIORITIES FOR THE SE ECOSYSTEM IDENTIFIED BY SESOs DURING MTE	Jordan	Lebanon	Morocco	Palestine	Tunisia	Egypt
Creation of a legal framework and formal recognition for SEs						n/a

Increase SEs awareness/visibility						n/a
Encourage a stronger Academia involvement in SENT ecosystem						n/a
Understanding of the concept of social entrepreneurship						n/a
SE actors' access to international markets/networks						n/a
Formalization of the SENT ecosystem: mapping of actors and activities for a holistic vision of the SENT						n/a
Capacity building and know-how for SESOs and SEs						n/a
Government's willingness and commitment to support SENT ecosystem						n/a
Engagement of the private sector						n/a
Scale up funding for SEs						n/a
Sustainable funding for SEs and SESOs						n/a
Framework to measure SEs social impact						n/a
Entrepreneurial culture and mindset						n/a
SENT platforms and hubs						n/a
Map Legend  Identified also by MedUp! SESOs Need Assessment  MedUp! SESOs Need Assessment Limitation: limited number of respondents Lebanon: only three survey respondents and the number of participants in the FGDs is unknown Morocco: only twelve participants to the FGDs and three respondents of the questionnaire						

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from MTE data collection activities

Table 4 below, reports our findings when SESO representatives were asked which needs they considered tackled and which not by the project. Again, respondents were free to brainstorm their opinions.

Table 4 – SESOs perceived needs tackled and not tackled by the project

SESOs NEEDS TACKLED BY THE PROJECT	SESOs NEEDS <u>NOT</u> TACKLED BY THE PROJECT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building and know-how for SESOs services and business • Networking and peer exchange among SESOs • Awareness raising on SENT both for society and large and for SENT actors themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for SESOs • Scale up funding for SEs • Access to business development opportunities (partnerships, grants) • Digitalization empowerment: development of e-programs (especially during Covid-19 pandemic) • Support for SEs in exporting services and goods • Simplified Tools to support new Social Entrepreneurs • Sustainability models • How to be SE mentors

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from MTE data collection activities

In discussing Table 4, we recall once again our research limitations as per SESO representativeness among our evaluation respondents. Moreover, we suspect that respondents also included needs that were addressed by the project, but perhaps not as much as desired by the SESOs, such as “scale up funding for SEs”, or “access to business development opportunities (partnerships, grants)”, “how to be SE mentors” or “simplified tools to support new Social Entrepreneurs” as, indeed, the project offered both capacity building activities and peer exchanges that have the aim and the potential to tackle these needs. Moreover, the first tranche of funding was actually provided to project SEs although it is too early to assess whether the latter will support the scaling-up of SE ideas. The need for more tailored support for SEs to access international markets and export goods/services was pointed out as a potential solution for SEs to circumvent national challenging economic environment by a Lebanese SESO representative. Moreover, offering “digitalization empowerment” to SESO, i.e. development of e-programs to support SEs, was indicated as a needed skill to build resilience even more so in light of the latest global Covid-19 pandemic. As for the need “funding for SESOs”, we refer to the following section.

Finally, respondents confirmed the findings from the SESOs' Need Assessment conducted by Euclid (Project Document: “Annex 24, Draft SESO Needs Assessment Report”) that many enterprise support organizations are not focused only on offering support to SEs. This was explicitly recognized by MedUp! respondents working in the Egyptian and Lebanese contexts and, as for Jordan, no designated SESOs resulted from the assessment. In this case, the latter was geared towards more general Enterprise Support Organisations (ESOs) to see how they could adapt their ESOs offering also to SEs.


























A PARTIAL RESPONSE TO SESO's NEEDS: LOW SESOs' COMMITMENT TO PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Although the project country Need Assessments are in line with perceived priorities needed for SE ecosystems generally identified by SESO representatives in our findings, almost 50% of our KII and FGD respondents (22 out of 45) point out at a lack of stable commitment on the part of SESOs towards the project activities. These respondents include different project stakeholders, i.e. countries' PMUs, technical advisors and partners, respondents from MedUp! regional platform, SESO representatives and countries' local stakeholders from all MedUp! countries. Table 5 and 6 summarise the main reasons which respondents believe to explain SESOs' low engagement and the incentives they suggest. For the purpose of our analysis, we also indicated the project country

MESO level


the stakeholder was referring to. We clarify that these findings were autonomously pointed out by respondents which were therefore not explicitly asked to discuss about this specific issue. To this respect, Moroccan respondents did not comment on the matter as being an issue. We recall, however, that Moroccan SESO respondents participating to our FGD had not benefitted from the project trainings or peer exchanges (👉 [Annex 1- Methodology & Evaluation Limitations](#)).

Table 5 - Main reasons for SESOs' low commitment in respondents' opinion

MAIN REASONS FOR SESOs' LOW COMMITMENT	Jordan	Lebanon	Morocco	Palestine	Tunisia	Egypt
Insufficient project marketing and communication in making clear to SESO the added value of participating to MedUp!: e.g. free training and opportunities to network and to convey their message to the higher policy levels thanks to MedUp						
Hard to guarantee continuity and commitment when distributing the project activities over multiple years . SESOs have not fully understood or were not properly informed on the holistic approach of the project						
The project activities are demanding and requiring availability of time and effort while SESOs' agendas are already full (even more so with Covid-19 pandemic during which all activities switched online)						
Challenge in identifying the target : SESOs not existent in some countries or not offering support exclusively to SEs						
SESO believe to already have appropriate knowledge/know-how , or already attended trainings and Capacity Buildings, or already established big organizations, or diffident towards foreign trainers						
Location for project activities/trainings : too long commuting for some SESOs (too capital-centred in Tunisia, or too distant from ecosystem centre in Egypt)						
Competition among SE ecosystem practitioners which disincentives their dialogue						
Project trainings and activities not innovative and attractive for an already competitive and vibrant market						
Map Legend  Mentioned by respondents involved in MTE activities						

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from MTE data collection activities

Table 6 – Incentives proposed by respondents to increase SESOs' commitment

POTENTIAL INCENTIVES TO INCREASE SESOs' COMMITMENT	Jordan	Lebanon	Morocco	Palestine	Tunisia	Egypt
Access to funding for SESOs	💡			💡		💡
Opportunities for networking : e.g. large-scale national and regional events	💡	💡		💡		💡
Visibility and exposure	💡	💡		💡		💡
Opportunities to reach policy level actors : e.g. invitation to roundtables with public officials/public events						💡
Regional level project activities for SESOs: e.g. webinar at regional level	💡	💡		💡		💡
Support for the creation of SESO partnerships	💡	💡		💡	💡	💡
Accreditation for the attendance to MedUp! activities/trainings: e.g. "certified SE expert/mentor/trainer"				💡		💡
Linkages to international organizations				💡		
Engage also ESO which can potentially become SESOs or add SE support to their services	💡					
Platform for SESOs' real access to market		💡			💡	
Build on connections created by the project to open opportunities for SESOs' export of goods/services		💡				
More tailored/contextualized/specialized training for SESOs				💡	💡	
Trainings involving the entire SESO staff					💡	
Project activities/trainings delivered in more strategic location (more centralized in Egypt, more in inner country in Tunisia)					💡	💡
Access to MedUp! research findings on SE ecosystems/ insight to useful data						💡
Leverage local resources to deliver trainings to mitigate mistrust toward foreign trainers						💡
Map Legend  Suggested by respondents involved in MTE activities						

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from MTE data collection activities



To what extent the project objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' actual needs?



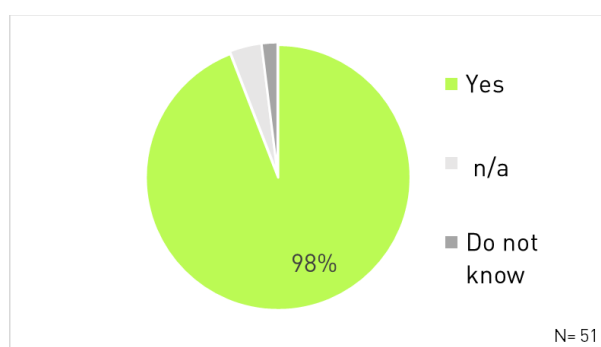
MTE results confirm that the **MICRO** level beneficiaries' actual needs have been properly identified and tackled by MedUp! thanks to its financial and technical support

MICRO
level

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES' NEEDS PROPERLY IDENTIFIED AND ADDRESSED BY MEDUP! PROJECT

Figure 2 highlights that almost all Social Enterprises responding to the online survey (98%) consider their needs to be addressed by the MedUp! project. Hence, the **MICRO** level beneficiaries confirm that the project responds to their actual needs.

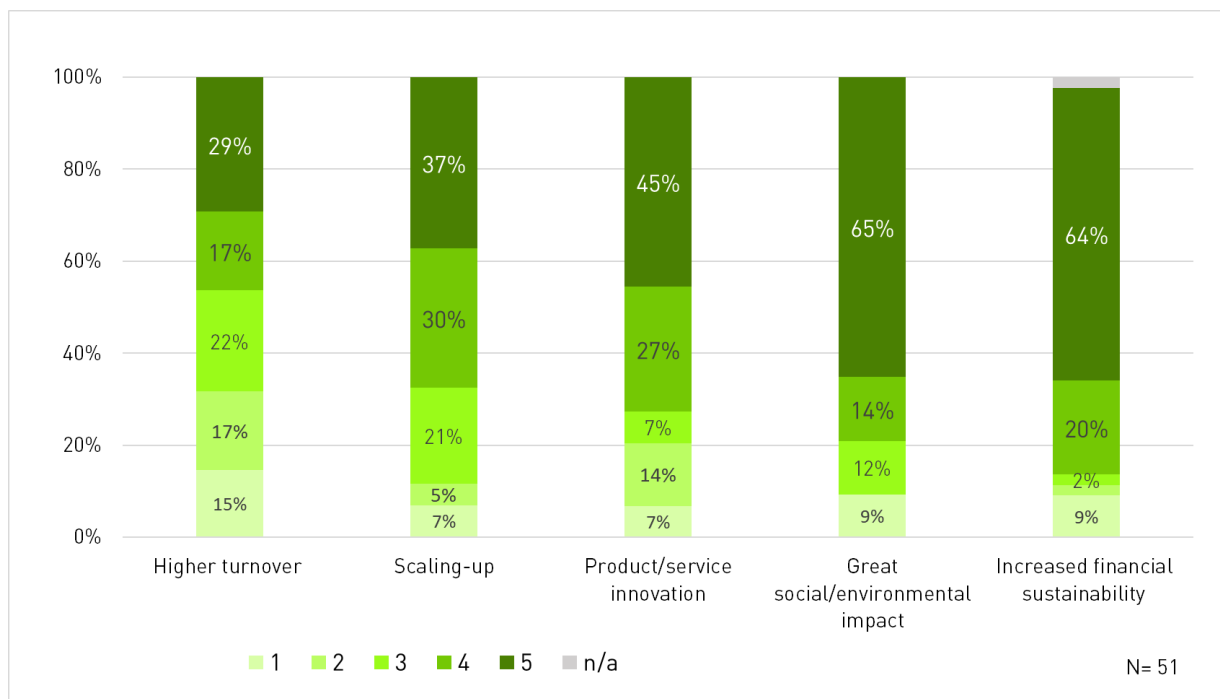
Figure 2 – Respondents' answer to the question: "Do you think that the project has been addressing your real needs?"



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

Moreover, survey respondents confirm that the project's **MICRO** level objective - "Existing social enterprises expand their businesses within the targeted sectors and countries" (iOC3) – and, in particular, its linked output – "100 SEs receive financial and technical support in order to become more financially and socially sustainable and to scale up" (Op 3.1), respond to beneficiaries priorities for the next three years to come, as shown from Figure 3 below. In particular, more than half of survey respondents (65%) indicated having a greater social and environmental impact as top priority for the next years, meaning valued as 5 in a scale from 0 (lowest importance) to 5 (highest importance), followed by increased financial sustainability (64%), innovation of their product/services (37%) and higher turnover (29%).

Figure 3 - Respondents' ranking of their business priorities for the next 3 years (in a scale from 1 – “lowest priority” to 5 – “highest priority”)



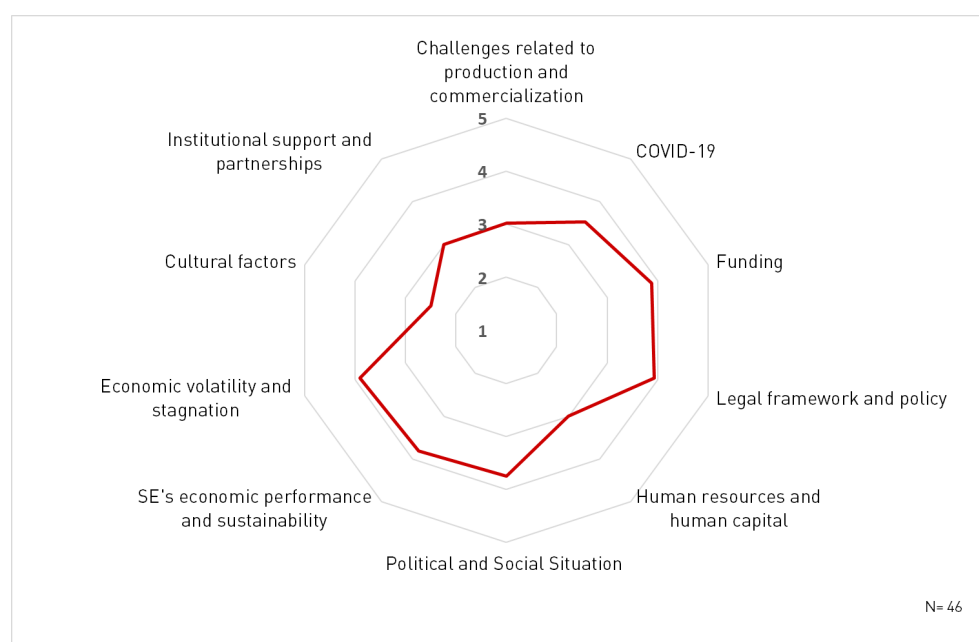
Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

Again, we highlight that project activities A 1.1.1 and A 2.1.1 are well in line with the attempt to guarantee the project's relevance and to identify beneficiaries' actual needs, at **ALL LEVELS**.

In particular, the first findings of the cross-country SEs and SESOs' need assessment conducted by Euclid (Project Document: Annex 24, Draft SESO Needs Assessment Report, paragraph 3.3 “SE Challenges and Support”), albeit still not finalized at this stage of the project, are coherent also with our **MICRO** level results as for social enterprises' main perceived constraints. In particular, similar challenges across countries identified by the Needs Assessment are the following: difficulties in dealing with the national legal framework, in accessing financial means, in networking and team management and business skills, in finding a balance between social objectives and financial sustainability. Moreover, Euclid's findings underline a need to strengthen partnerships and collaboration among SE actors across all six countries.

As for our results, indeed funding, legal framework and policy, social enterprises' economic performance and sustainability are perceived as most important constraints. Other variables were reported as relatively important, such as national economic volatility and stagnation, political and social situation, the latest Covid-19 pandemic, challenges related to production and commercialization and institutional support and partnership (Figure 4). As for data disaggregated by project country, we refer to Annex 6, Focus: SE Ecosystem.

Figure 4 – Average score attributed by SEs respondents when evaluating the relevance of constraints

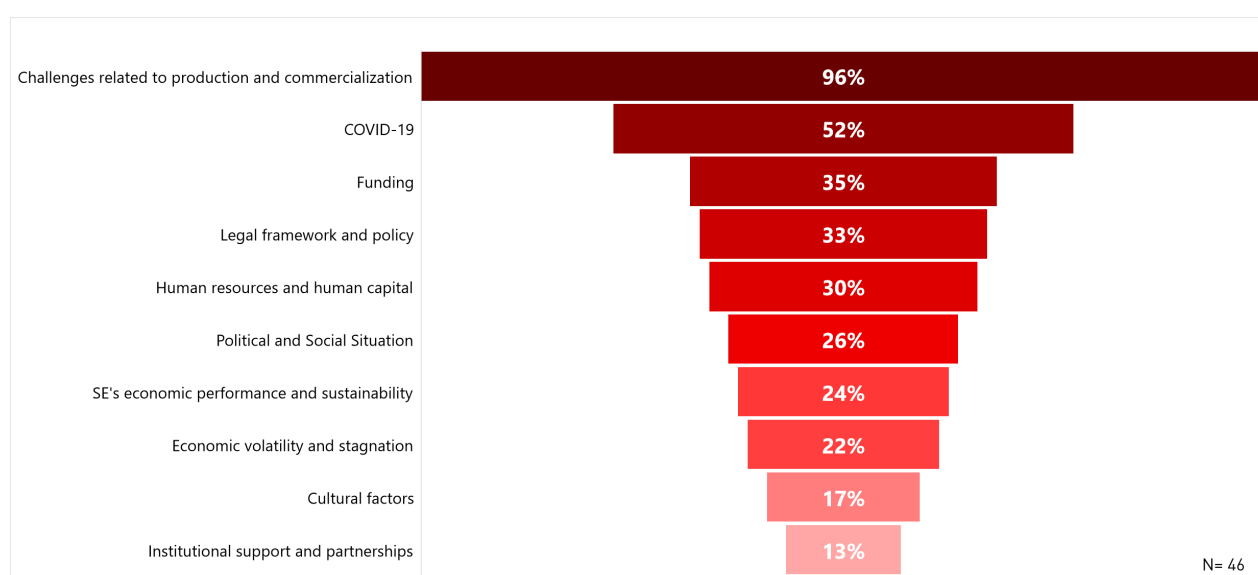


Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

Note: For the purpose of our analysis we have clustered and categorized the constraints that were freely listed by respondents. Moreover, the numerical value from 1 – “very little important ” to 5 – “most important” indicated in Figure 4 is an average resulting from our data elaboration, hence, it must be taken only as an approximate indication of the perceived relevance of the constraints by respondents. The full list of constraints indicated by respondent is available in Annex 4, List of constraints mentioned by respondents.

Looking at how recurrent these constraints were mentioned by respondents (Figure 5), we find that almost all of the latter (98%) indicated challenges related to production and commercialization, more than half (52%) the Covid-19 pandemic, while all other constraints were mentioned by less than 35% of total respondents.

Figure 5 – Percentage of SEs respondents mentioning main constraints hampering business stability/growth



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

Note: For the purpose of our analysis we have clustered and categorized the constraints that were freely listed by respondents. The full list of constraints indicated by respondent is available in Annex 4, List of constraints mentioned by respondents

The relevance of the project as for its capacity to identify and address beneficiaries' needs seems to be confirmed also by other project stakeholder respondents during our KIIs.

In particular, the RPM stated that the needs identified during the project's design phase have revealed to be quite realistic during implementation, albeit some differences among countries due to their different development level of SE ecosystem.

In addition, in accordance with our survey results, two respondents (project implementors) stated in the KIIs to be periodically identifying beneficiaries' needs directly with the beneficiaries themselves and one stated that the project address the true needs of social enterprises and SESOs.

“ MEDUP! is the first national project that touches the three levels of social entrepreneurship, namely the micro, meso and macro levels, and that really works to reach its goals and to address the true needs of social enterprises and SESOs ”

As for another respondent (project implementors), it also emerged that implementors are periodically listening to beneficiaries' actual needs. In particular, in that case, SEs' need for more single consultation/ mentorships with experts to solve their special problems rather than workshops targeting them all together has been satisfied, despite creating some difficulties to align with project indicators.

As for the SEs need for funding, which, to an extent, was indeed tackled by the project, we highlight the greater-than-expected amount of funds requested by the SEs. As for this matter please refer to [Section Effectiveness and Efficiency](#).

? Was the beneficiaries' selection process designed in such a way to ensure appropriateness and inclusiveness? Was it effectively so?

➔ MTE results confirm that the selection process of beneficiary SEs was considered inclusive, with regards to geographical and gender representativity in all project countries. However, some minor limitations were mentioned, such as the lack of Arabic translation in the application process for SEs.

MICRO
level

INCLUSIVE SELECTION PROCESS OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES ALBEIT SOME MINOR DRAWBACKS

The country PMUs were directly involved in the selection process of **MICRO** level project beneficiaries – i.e. 64 social enterprises across six MedUP! countries. No particularly negative issues regarding the SES' selection process emerged from the MTE. In fact, more than half of PMU respondents (7 out of 12 interviewed) expressed satisfaction with the beneficiaries' selection process, especially in regard to geographical and gender representativity in their respective countries.

“ Selection was really inclusive ”

“ It was a great selection ”

However, some minor limitations concerning the selection process were mentioned. In particular, the lack of Arabic translation in the application process for SEs was pointed out by Moroccan, Palestinian, Jordanian and Tunisian project implementors, either during our KII or/and in the National Evaluation Committees Reports. This language gap was believed to have created some confusion in the application process (one respondent), to have limited the applicants' ability to correctly express their ideas (one respondent), to have created some pressure on PMUs (one respondent). Other mentioned limitations during the SEs' application process are systematized in the following table (Table 7). The latter draws from KII with countries' PMUs, from National Evaluation Committees Reports as well as from KII with one project Technical Advisor.

Table 7 - Mentioned limitations to the SEs' application process

LIMITATIONS TO SEs' APPLICATION PROCESS	Jordan	Lebanon	Morocco	Palestine	Tunisia	Egypt
Lack of Arabic language	⚠	⚠	⚠	⚠	⚠	
Difficulties on the part of applicants in accessing the application platform					⚠	
Lack of activities to empower applicants to write their proposals					⚠	
Long and complicated procedure for some applicants with too many questions in the full application form	⚠					
Lack of skills to pitch or write proposals for some applicants	⚠					
Not targeting people with disabilities	⚠					
Limited awareness on SE				⚠		
Size of grants prevented from funding bigger ideas				⚠		
Difficulties in reaching SEs in marginalized areas	⚠	⚠	⚠	⚠	⚠	⚠
Map Legend: ⚠ Reported by respondents involved in MTE activities						

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from MTE data collection activities

Note: No particular limitations were mentioned as for the SEs' selection process in Egypt

BOX 2: NEW EMERGING NEEDS: A FLEXIBLE PROJECT RESPONSE TO THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Is the project able to adapt its design to new emerging needs of the context, in order to maintain its relevance over time?



The project Addressed the global pandemic effects with maximum flexibility and adaptability

In light of the current global Covid-19 pandemic, the project regional platform has carried out an updated need assessment in order to understand the new project beneficiaries' emerging needs given the effects of the pandemic and to shape a proper response. As for **MACRO** and **MESO** levels, some project activities have been postponed and/or switched to online platforms, albeit targets have been reached timely.

Three respondents believe the pandemic to have affected mainly the **MICRO** level project beneficiaries, namely the social enterprises which had just received the first funding tranche (February 2020) before the hit of the pandemic and which are now "struggling to survive". Project implementors referred that the project response at the MICRO level was, in the first place, to understand the impact of the pandemic on project social enterprises' business plans, then to allow for more time and a lower co-financing percentage contribution of the SEs' project costs which was originally set at a minimum 35%. Project implementors also underlined that they intend to address the global pandemic effects with maximum flexibility. Moreover, satisfaction was expressed toward the positive and participatory dynamic which emerged between project countries' PMUs and the project regional platform in deciding ad hoc measures to mitigate the Covid-19 pandemic. In total, 9 respondents including country PMUs, technical advisors and technical partners, underline and confirm the flexible project response to the new emerging needs due to the global pandemic and explicit appreciations were referred to Oxfam IT management such as:

"Great management by Oxfam during Covid-19"

"Reaction to pandemic was great"

Out of 15 KI and one FGD during which respondents were asked to carry out a SWOT analysis of the project, Covid-19 pandemic was listed as a project **THREAT** seven times.

However, three respondents, including PMUs and technical partners, have highlighted that the Covid-19 pandemic may well be an **OPPORTUNITY** to speed up the development process of SE ecosystem (one respondent), to create a "budding community where people are more and more connected (...) and peer learning goes far beyond just the project" (one respondent), to highlight and showcase the "good value of social entrepreneurship" (one respondent).

2.2 Coherence

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- Is the project conformed to implementing organizations' vision and mission?
- To what extent is the intervention harmonized with other existing activities?
- Is project in line with MENA region priorities and strategies? (regional level)
- Is project in line with national priorities and strategies? (macro level)
- Is project in line with international priorities and strategies (SDGS)?



Is the project conformed to implementing organizations' vision and mission?



MTE results showcase the conformity of MedUp! project with the vision and mission of all partners' organization.


A WELL-ALIGNED CONSORTIUM

All the representatives of MedUp! Consortium implementing members confirmed their organizations' alignment with MedUp! vision, during the in-depth interviews carried out by ARCO.

This aspect has been further investigated by identifying and analysing the core elements of partners' vision and mission in order to assess their compatibility with MedUp! setup.

Table 8 displays key information about implementing partners' vision and mission extracted from the organizations' official website. As can be seen, all partners show a high degree of alignment with MedUp! vision.

Table 8 - Assessing the coherence of implementing partners' vision and mission with MedUp! set-up

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS' VISION AND MISSION ALIGNED WITH MEDUP!		MedUp! compatibility
	EUCLID NETWORK VISION	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Openness to collaboration across borders, sectors and generations;• Inspirational leadership and collective endeavour;• Innovation and entrepreneurialism for social impact.	
	EUCLID NETWORK MISSION	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create connections between civil society and social enterprise leaders;• Share and produce leadership, professional and entrepreneurial knowhow;• Influence European policy and funding and strengthen members' and network participants' EU engagement;• Raise the visibility and understanding of civil society and social enterprise in business, academia, government and the wider society.	
Information extracted from Euclid Network's official website: https://euclidnetwork.eu/		



IMPACT HUB MISSION

- Build entrepreneurial communities for impact at scale by offering community workspaces, start-ups support co-creation of locally rooted and globally connected programs and events;
- Partner with a range of organizations to pair bottom-up innovation with organizational expertise to shape tangible solutions to on the ground.



Information extracted from Impact Hub's official website: <https://impacthub.net/>



DIESIS MISSION

- Support the development of the social economy, social entrepreneurship and social innovation in Europe and in the world, mainly through the implementation of knowledge-based activities, such as training, project design, consultancy and advisory services, technical assistance and research.



Information extracted from Diesis' official website: <https://www.diesis.coop/>



ENACTUS MISSION

- Create a world where young people, academic and business leaders engage in entrepreneurial action to foster societal progress and shape a better and sustainable world;
- Support students in the implementation of their social entrepreneurship projects, through national and international events, training and competitions.



Information extracted from Enactus' official website: <https://www.enactus-morocco.org/>



TCSE MISSION

- Support economic and social development, to promote social entrepreneurship in Tunisia;
- Work on 4 levels: the macro (public policy, advocacy), meso (working with public and private organizations, NGOs and media), micro (supporting entrepreneurs at various stages of development) and nano (engaging individuals with a focus on youth, women and unemployed persons);
- Reinforce the entrepreneurial ecosystem, providing support to social entrepreneurs from the ideation to the acceleration stage, and other activities that aim to increase social innovation in communities.



Information extracted from TCSE's official website



SEKEM VISION & MISSION are based on 4 pillars:

- HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
- ECOLOGY
- ECONOMIC VALUE CREATION
- SOCIETAL LIFE



In this framework, SEKEM main fields of action, in line with MedUp! are:

- Individual potential unfolding;
- University model for potential unfolding, holistic research and social innovation;
- Circular economy;
- Ethical banking system;
- Sustainable trading models, biodynamic food and sustainable products;
- Sustainable community development;
- Sustainable community life;

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation to climate change;
- Sustainable resource management.

Information extracted from the document "SEKEM Vision and Mission 2057", available at: https://www.sekem.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SEKEM-Vision-2057_20180615-3.pdf



PARC VISION

- Being a pioneer national developmental organization with a regional trend committed to rural and agricultural development, social justice and national liberation.



PARC MISSION

- Develop the agricultural sector, strengthen the resilience of farmers, reach out to the poor and marginalized groups and their CBO's, mobilize and develop the capabilities of rural people to enable them to control their resources, through the work of a distinguished professional teams and a loyal volunteer.

Information extracted from PARC's official website: <http://www.pal-arc.org/>



JOHUD MISSION

- Promote rights-based, sustainable human development in Jordan
- Promote sustainable support that empowers individuals to work with their neighbours, strengthen their communities and secure access to the resources they need to achieve healthy and fulfilled lives.



Information extracted from JOHUD's official website: <https://www.johud.org.jo/>

In line with **Oxfam International Strategy**.



OXFAM VISION & MISSION

"Oxfam's Strategic Plan to 2019 has a vision that sets local communities and the voices of women, men and young people at the centre of change. Through dialogue and pressure on governments and business, and through practical programs that enable human development, dignity and wellbeing, it is those voices that are the best hope for ending discrimination, exclusion and the injustice of poverty."¹



"[...] Critically, we need engagement with business, whether multinational companies or small and medium-sized enterprises. That engagement may take the form of both tougher challenge and of deeper collaboration in order to achieve corporate accountability, with transparency and serious consequences for corporate misconduct; as well as effective partnerships for innovative change involving the state, business and civil society working together in a mutually accountable way."²

Information extracted from Oxfam International's official website: <https://www.oxfam.org/en>

Quotes from "The power of people against poverty: Oxfam Strategic Plan, 2013-2019"

Source: ARCO's elaboration

¹ Oxfam International. The power of people against poverty: Oxfam Strategic Plan, 2013-2019. p.5

² Oxfam International. The power of people against poverty: Oxfam Strategic Plan, 2013-2019. p.9

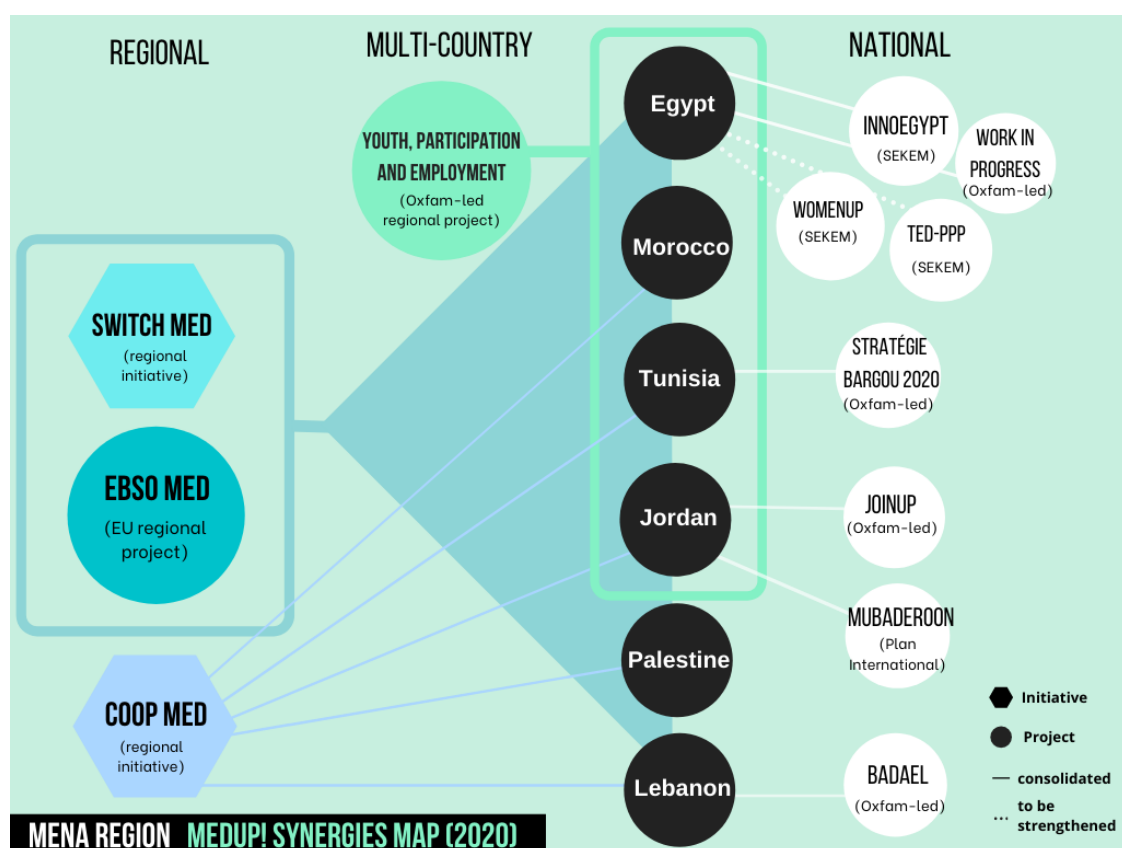
? To what extent is the intervention harmonized with other existing activities?

➔ MTE results confirm that MedUp! is working in synergy with several ongoing projects in MedUp! countries. Local implementing partners have identified also potential synergies to be exploited and are likely to foster new collaborations with other local activities in the future.

A RICH PATTERN OF ONGOING/POTENTIAL LOCAL SYNERGIES

Figure 6 below shows the “MedUp! synergy map” highlighting current MENA region projects and initiatives which were mentioned by respondents as working in synergy with MedUp! or which offer potential for future or stronger synergies.

Figure 6 - MedUp! Current synergies with MENA region project and initiatives, as perceived by respondents



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from project documentation and MTE data collection activities

Table 9 below offers a more detailed overview of these MENA region projects and initiatives.

Table 9 - Overview of MENA region project and initiatives in (potential) synergy with MedUp!

Project/ Initiative	MedUp! Country	Leading MedUp! partner	Main objectives	Implementation period
Switch Med	All	--	Achieving a circular economy in the southern Mediterranean by changing the way goods and services are produced and consumed. In order to achieve this, the initiative provides tools and services directly to the private sector , supports an enabling policy environment , and facilitates exchange of information among partners and key stakeholders.	Ongoing
Coop Med	Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon	--	Supporting the creation of employment and sustainable economic activities by the civil society and promoting green and innovative initiatives by enhancing social entrepreneurship ; it offers subordinated and senior loans to MFIs, local banks and mutual companies.	Ongoing
EbsoMed	All	--	Boosting the Mediterranean business ecosystem promoting inclusive economic growth and job creation , by enhancing the private sector environment and namely the Business Support Organisations in the Southern Neighbourhood countries.	2018-2022
Youth, Participation and Employment	Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan	Oxfam	Promoting employment and supporting young entrepreneurs to set-up their companies	2017-2022
InnoEgypt	Egypt	SEKEM	Supporting more than forty business enterprises and start-ups , 120 new or better paid jobs for Egyptian young entrepreneurs	March 2017 – Sep 2020
Work in Progress	Egypt	Oxfam	Building young people's skills to find paid jobs or set up their own enterprises; accelerating start-ups and offering business development services (BDS) to impact-driven small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); improving the enabling environment for youth and enterprises by influencing actors including government, the private sector and citizens to change policies, laws, practices, attitudes and beliefs concerning youth and work.	Jan 2020 – Dec 2023
WomenUp	Egypt	SEKEM	Incubating more than twenty Egyptian female social entrepreneurs and empowering more than eighty single female-headed households' micro businesses in rural areas in Egypt	Feb 2018 – Apr 2020
TED- PPP	Egypt	SEKEM	Fostering business development environment in Egypt via reviewing legislation and laws supporting MSMEs	Feb 2018- Feb 2020
Stratégie Bargou 2020	Tunisia	Oxfam	Promoting exchanges and mutual learning between Tunisian and Italian enterprises and stakeholders	Nov 2017- Sept 2020
JoinUp	Jordan	Oxfam	Increasing the quality and accessibility of services offered to SEs , with a specific emphasis on SEs led by women ; awarding also grants to promising SEs → same MICRO and MESO level target as MedUp]	Jan 2019- Jun 2021
Mubaderoon	Jordan	--	Strengthening the national social entrepreneurship ecosystem by promoting an enabling legislative framework for SEs and accelerate SEs and SEIs	Aug 2019- ongoing
Badael	Lebanon	Oxfam	Aiming to create an enabling environment for SEs and offering funding and support to tens of local new SEs	Dec 2017- Aug 2020

Source: ARCO's elaboration

? Is the project in line with MENA region priorities and strategies? (regional level)

➔ There is no current common direction and widely accepted agenda for MENA region countries.

LOOKING FOR A (MISSING) COMMON AGENDA FOR MENA REGION

As stated by the European Commission Focal Point for MedUp!, the **MENA region priority is to create inclusive growth and sustainable job opportunities**. However, if, on the one hand, this statement is confirmed by national strategy plans (see Tables 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18) on the other, it must be considered that it seems there are no supranational entities setting a common direction and outlining a widely accepted agenda for MENA region countries. Hence, **MedUp! conformity to MENA region priorities and strategies is mostly assessable by checking the project's compatibility with MedUp! countries national strategies**. This issue will be further developed below.

Nevertheless, MedUp! project shows to be fully aligned with objectives encompassing the creation of inclusive growth and sustainable job opportunities (see Table 10).

This is testified by the project genesis in itself. MedUp! in fact arises from the EU Commission's strategic vision identifying **Social entrepreneurship as the one of the key vectors to pursue inclusive and sustainable growth in MENA region³**.

“ As drivers of stability, inclusive growth and social well-being, social economy and entrepreneurship can offer significant opportunities for Mediterranean countries. Social enterprises in particular are increasingly becoming important drivers for inclusive growth and play a key role in tackling current economic and environmental challenges. They create jobs in a sustainable manner, mostly locally. Moreover, social enterprises have often a strong focus on social innovation and respond to needs that are otherwise not met, or not met in an optimal manner by public authorities and/or market players ”

From “Enhancing Social Entrepreneurship and Inclusive Growth in the Southern Neighbourhood – Guidelines for grant applicants ”

³ See “European Commission. 2016. Enhancing Social Entrepreneurship and Inclusive Growth in the Southern Neighbourhood – Guidelines for grant applicants, EuropeAid/155554/DH/ACT/Multi”



Is project in line with MENA region priorities and strategies? (regional level)



Albeit there is no current common agenda for MENA region countries, MTE results confirm that MedUp! is conformed to the EU cooperation strategy in the MENA region. The latter sees SENT as playing a crucial role in responding to social and economic challenges.

MEDUPI: A STEP FORWARD IN PURSUING THE EU STRATEGY IN THE MENA REGION

Being designed from a detailed call for proposal setting out the main direction and outlying the main project objectives to be pursued, MedUp! represents a relevant step in the development of EU cooperation strategy in the area.

Relations between the EU and its southern neighbours constitute in fact one of EU's priorities and, in this framework, the social economy and entrepreneurship have been recognized by the Mediterranean Economic and Social Councils as **key players to respond to social and economic challenges**⁴.

In fact, the **European Neighbourhood Policy 2014-2020**, for instance, focuses on promoting fair, equitable and sustainable economic, social and territorial development, identifying the social economy as a tool for promoting social inclusion and alleviating poverty on both sides of the Mediterranean⁵.









In Table 10, the top priorities for the promotion of entrepreneurship and social economy identified during the **Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils (ESCs)** and Similar Institutions held in 2018 are briefly reported. Moreover, it should be noticed that, in 2019, the **Euro-Mediterranean Social Economy Network (ESMED Network)** – the key interlocutor for SE identified in the region by the ESC – declared its support to “the call made by the Ministries for employment in the 43 States of the Union for the Mediterranean in **favour of creating a Euro-Mediterranean ecosystem to unleash the full potential of social economy enterprises and institutions**”⁶. As can be noticed in Table 10, MedUp! project is fully consistent with this framework.

⁴See “Economic and Social Councils. 2018. Definitive Euromed Report on the Social Economy and Entrepreneurship in the euro-mediterranean region. Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils, Plenary Session, 19 September 2018”

⁵Ivi, p. 59

⁶ESMED Network, Towards an ecosystem to foster the social economy in the Mediterranean, ESMED declaration after the 4th UfM Ministerial Meeting on Employment and Labour, Cascais (Portugal), 2nd and 3rd April 2019

Table 10 - Top priorities identified during the 2018 Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils

Top priorities for the promotion of entrepreneurship and social economy identified during for the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils (ESCs), 2018	MedUp! coherence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improving the quality of the institutions and establishing adequate regulatory framework; ➤ Ensuring the presence of adequate insolvency framework in order to facilitate entrepreneurship and the development of the business fabric; ➤ Provide social entrepreneurs with the proper access to sufficient financial resources for launching enterprise at a reasonable price and ensuring their continuity and consolidation. [...]; fostering diversification of the sources of funding; ➤ Guaranteeing access to adequate transport, communications, energy and water infrastructures for the development of economic activity; ➤ Ensuring that new entrepreneurs have the right education and business profile and the technical knowledge sufficient for managing and organising their companies, accessing funding and planning their potential foreign expansion; promoting quality education and training which are fundamental for driving forward the productivity and the dynamism of the economy, facilitating innovation and adaptation to changes, as well as the capacity to create jobs; ➤ Overcoming the barriers to trade inside the Mediterranean region which act to undermine the region's competitiveness and supporting the creation of innovation ecosystems. 	     
Directly targeted  Indirectly targeted/coherent 	

Source: ARCO's elaboration from "Definitive Euromed Report on the Social Economy and Entrepreneurship in the Euro-Mediterranean region"

Moreover, it is well-aligned and can be placed in a natural continuum with the meaningful EU-founded previous intervention, called **SEED EURO-MED (2014-2017)**, a piloting project focused on supporting the development of social entrepreneurship across Europe and the Mediterranean.

Is the project in line with national priorities and strategies? (macro level)

➔ Not all MedUp! countries explicitly encompassed SENT in their national agendas. Where present (i.e in Tunisia and Morocco), the project shows to be fully consistent with national policies framework on SEs. Moreover, albeit not specifically addressing all the countries' strategic pillars, MedUp! alignment with national strategies is confirmed.



WORKING IN HETEROGENOUS SETTINGS: DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM PRIORITIZATION ACROSS MEDUP! COUNTRIES

MedUp! countries display a **great a variety of experiences** and different levels of development concerning the creation and consolidation of enabling ecosystems for social enterprises (see Annex 6, Focus: SE Ecosystem).

Such **heterogenous performances in term of consolidation of national SE ecosystems** is partially related to the **different governments' prioritization of the topic** over other national

priorities. Therefore, we briefly assessed each project country in order to evaluate MedUp! alignment with key national priorities and strategies also concerning the SE ecosystem, if present. Table 11 below summarises single countries' analysis which are presented hereinafter.

Table 11 – Overview of MedUp! alignment with countries' policies and agendas

Country	MedUp! alignment with national agenda on SENT	MedUp! general consistency with key national strategy
Egypt	No official national agenda on SENT	✓
Jordan	No official national agenda on SENT	✓
Lebanon	No official national agenda on SENT	✓
Morocco		✓
Palestine	No official national agenda on SENT	✓
Tunisia		✓





Source: ARCO's elaboration on available countries' available online documents

MOROCCO

Morocco has initiated a **national debate on social entrepreneurship** within the general framework of social and solidarity economy policy. This process began in 2005 with the launch of the National Human Development Initiative (NHDI), mainly aimed at improving socioeconomic conditions in targeted poor areas through a participatory approach to local governance⁷. A **unique case in the pool of MedUp! countries**, Morocco is currently endowed with a **National Strategy on Social and Solidarity Economy**, aimed at providing the general policy guidelines for the creation of an ecosystem which could effectively support the social and solidarity economy actors (mainly identified as cooperatives) in alleviating social exclusion and poverty. Moreover, the Moroccan Government is **currently in the process of drafting a bill on the social and solidarity economy**.

Table 12 below envisages the key objectives and strategic pillars outlined by the Moroccan National Strategy on SSE, while providing a visual check of MedUp! significant alignment with its content.

Table 12 - Core elements of 2010-2020 National Strategy on SSE, Morocco

NATIONAL STRATEGY ON SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY 2010-2020 - Morocco		MedUp! coherence
Objectives		
→	Strengthen and harmonize public action in favour of the social and solidarity economy, both at national and regional level;	
→	Facilitate the emergence of an efficient and structured social and solidarity economy capable of playing fully its role in the fight against poverty, precariousness and exclusion;	
→	Contribute to integrated territorial development based on rational exploitation and enhancement local wealth and potential;	
→	Improve visibility and knowledge of the sector.	

⁷ Global Delivery Initiative. 2020. A Participatory Approach to Building Human Capital: Morocco's National Human Development Initiative. Global Delivery Initiative, Washington, DC. © World Bank.

Key strategic axes	
1. PROMOTE PRODUCTS/SERVICES OF THE SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY;	
2. PROMOTING THE ACCESS OF ESS PRODUCTS TO MARKETS;	
3. STRENGTHEN AND ORGANIZE SSE ACTORS: a. Set up a support and supervision system; b. Encourage and support the emergence of key players in social and solidarity economy; c. Encourage and support the networking of actors in the economy social and solidarity.	
4. ESTABLISH AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ESS INITIATIVES: a. Improve the legal framework for cooperatives; b. Improve the institutional framework; c. Develop financing tools.	
5. PROMOTING THE EMERGENCE OF ESS INITIATIVES IN THE TERRITORIES: a. Carry out participatory territorial diagnostics; b. Develop integrated territorial action programs.	
6. FACILITATE ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES AND SOCIAL SECURITY	
7. DEVELOP M&E TOOLS, STRATEGIC VIEW, COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIP: a. Develop innovation and improve knowledge of the economy social and solidarity; b. Disseminate and promote the practices and values of the economy social and solidarity; Develop cooperation and partnership in the field of the social and solidarity	

Directly targeted



Indirectly targeted



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the 2010-2020 National Strategy on SSE

Similarly, MedUp! project shows to be fully in line also with the Moroccan **2017-2030 National Sustainable Development** strategy, a wider medium-term policy agenda whose core elements are summarized in Table 13 below.

Table 13 - National key priorities and strategies about and beyond the SE ecosystem: Morocco

MOROCCO	<u>National Strategy on SSE:</u> "Stratégie Nationale de l'Économie Sociale et Solidaire 2010-2020"	<p>GENERAL KEY NATIONAL STRATEGIC PILLARS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate sustainable development governance; • Successful transition toward a green economy; • Improving natural resource management and development and strengthening biodiversity conservation; • Accelerate implementation of the national policy concerning the fight against climate change; • Grant special vigilance to sensitive territories; • Promote human development and reduce social and territorial inequalities; • Promote the culture of sustainable development <p><u>Other strategic elements related to the ecosystem:</u> Strengthening of the institutional framework of sustainable development and the role played by the relevant actors; Strengthening of economic and financial instruments and implementation of an environmental taxation policy; Capitalization on the accomplishment of the INDH to fight against poverty</p>
	<u>Ecosystem Regulation:</u> Drafting of a Bill on SSE	

Source: ARCO's elaboration of data extracted from the 2017-2030 NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY MOROCCO

TUNISIA

Together with Morocco, Tunisia is the other MedUp! Country where a national debate on Social Entrepreneurships, even if in the wider framework of SSE, has been concretely converted in ad-hoc policies. In fact, Tunisia has been recently moving a step forwards in the SE ecosystem regulatory process, by adopting a national Law on Social and Solidarity Economy, namely the “**Loi n° 2020-30 du 30 juin 2020, relative à l’économie sociale et solidaire**”. The main aspects regulated by this law concern:

- The Identification criteria and boundaries for an enterprise to be labelled as “entreprise de l’économie sociale et solidaire”;
- The key roles of three institutional structures for the governance and development of the SSE, namely the Supreme Council for Social and Solidarity Economy, the Tunisian Commission for Social and Solidarity Economy and the representative structures of social and solidarity economy organizations;
- The creation of tailored funding mechanisms; the presence of a reserved percentage of public orders and fiscal and financial incentives; the creation of a dedicated guarantee mechanism.

Moreover, the social economy was also included in the country’s **Development Plan for 2016-2020**, being the sector responsible for providing jobs to 1.5% of the total Tunisian working population.

As further testified by its compatibility with general national strategies (see Table 14 below), MedUp! is working in the same direction of the Tunisian policy development on SE ecosystem.

Table 14 - National key priorities and strategies about and beyond the SE ecosystem: Tunisia

TUNISIA	<u>Ecosystem Regulation:</u> “Loi n° 2020-30 du 30 juin 2020, relative à l’économie sociale et solidaire”	GENERAL KEY NATIONAL STRATEGIC PILLARS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing good governance, administrative reform, and anti-corruption; • Accelerating the adoption of crucial reforms to develop a higher value-added economy; • Developing human capital and promoting social inclusion; • reducing regional disparities; • Embracing the green economy as a pillar of sustainable development.

Source – ARCO’s elaboration on data extracted from the 2016-2020 DEVELOPMENT PLAN – TUNISIA

EGYPT

According to the key MedUp! respondents working in the Egyptian context, the concepts of **Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise are “very well understood, respected and needed” in Egypt**. Many organizations show a social and solidarity vocation and private initiatives have emerged to provide a proper response to the most relevant social challenges not addressed by governmental and formal institutions⁸.

According to some scholars⁹, this Egyptian **regulatory vacuum concerning SE** is due also the **lack of prioritization of the sector** by central institutions and a **set of governmental challenges which**

⁸ Forum Euroméditerranéen des Instituts de Sciences Économiques (FEMISE). (2019). FEMISE EuroMed Report 2019 – The private sector in Mediterranean countries: Principal dysfunctions and opportunities for social entrepreneurship

⁹ Seda, A., & Ismail, M. (2019). Challenges facing social entrepreneurship. Review of Economics and Political Science.

are hampering the possibility for the social practise to be converted into an effective institutional framework. However, MedUp! vision and objectives show to be in line both with the national bottom-up debate and **MACRO** level general strategies aimed at fostering economic development, as well as reducing social gaps. Table 15 below outlines the main Egyptian national priorities.

Table 15 - National key priorities and strategies about and beyond the SE ecosystem: Egypt

EGYPT	No specific policies/regulations concerning the SE ecosystem	<p>GENERAL KEY NATIONAL STRATEGIC PILLARS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development; • Energy; • Innovation, Knowledge and Scientific Research; • Transparency and efficient government institutions; • Social justice; • Health; • Education and Training; • Culture; • Environment; • Urban Development <p><u>Other strategic elements related to the ecosystem:</u> Pursuance of Decent and sustainable job creation; need for cross-cutting reforms to the legal environment; reduction of social intergenerational and gender gaps; PPP.</p>
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Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (SDS): EGYPT VISION 2030

LEBANON

Still lacking an ad-hoc legal framework, the SE ecosystem has been developing through a **bottom-up approach in Lebanon**¹⁰. However, as highlighted by MedUp! respondents, the **Prime Minister Office** has recently engaged in a dialogue with key actors in the ecosystem in order to start a process that will lead to a common discussion on the national regulatory frameworks to be designed. A **draft law on Social Entrepreneurship** is currently waiting for its finalization. For these reasons, it can be affirmed that **SE has becoming more and more embedded in national strategies**. Moreover, in addition to its complete adherence to **Lebanese National Strategy on SMEs**, Medup! objectives show to be consistent also with the key priorities outlined in the **National Sustainable Development Strategy** (see Table 16 below).

Table 16- National key priorities and strategies about and beyond the SE ecosystem: Lebanon

LEBANON	No specific policies/regulations concerning the SE ecosystem	<p>GENERAL KEY NATIONAL STRATEGIC PILLARS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing human capital • Strengthening social cohesion • Ensuring the efficient provision of services • Fostering green economic growth • Preserving the natural and cultural heritage • Instilling good governance • Asserting Lebanon's position as an Arab, Mediterranean, and international hub • Supporting SMEs and their ecosystem: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evolving Business Leaders 2. Facilitating the "Right" Funding 3. Improving Access to Markets 4. Enhancing Capabilities and Innovation Capacity 5. Developing a Conducive Business Environment and National Environment 6. Ensuring Coherence and Effective Coordination
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¹⁰ FEMISE, op.cit.

JORDAN

Consistently with what has been affirmed by MedUp! respondents, neither the SE ecosystem can be considered fully shaped, nor a proper legal framework exists in Jordan. However, the existence of the **Law on “organic civic initiatives”** issued in 2010 and giving origin to one of the most suitable legal forms that a social enterprise can choose in Jordanian context, testifies the presence of a governmental interest on the topic. Moreover, in its National Strategy outline (see Table 17 below), Jordanian policymakers directly call for the creation of an **“enabling environment [to implement] new economic and social development models”**¹¹. Thus, MedUp! can be considered coherent with Jordanian **MACRO** level priorities and strategies.

Table 17 - National key priorities and strategies about and beyond the SE ecosystem: Jordan

JORDAN	<u>Regulation:</u> 2010 Law on “organic civic initiatives” (OCI)	GENERAL KEY NATIONAL STRATEGIC PILLARS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active citizens with a sense of belonging • Safe and stable society • Dynamic and globally competitive private sector • Efficient and effective government <p><u>Other strategic elements related to the ecosystem:</u> Focus on Inclusive Growth; key role of PPP, Social Finance, CSR; Creation of an “enabling environment”.</p>

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the JORDAN 2025: A NATIONAL VISION AND STRATEGY

PALESTINE

As emphasised by respondents, there is currently **no policy and regulatory frameworks on SE**, nor a general consensus on the definition and the role that social enterprise may play in the Palestinian context. Since the possibility to register any new social enterprise under the legal umbrella of the **“non-profit company”**¹² was suspended and the 2017 Cooperative Law is currently under amendment, the SE ecosystem remains at an embryonic stage at all levels¹³. However, MedUp! objectives are fully in line with Palestinian national priorities, identifying **sustainable development as a key strategic pillar** (see Table 18, in particular Pillar 3,).

Table 18 - National key priorities and strategies about and beyond the SE ecosystem: Palestine

PALESTINE	<u>Regulation:</u> Ministerial Order regarding Non-Profit Companies Regulation No (3) for the year of 2010 (currently suspended)	GENERAL KEY NATIONAL STRATEGIC PILLARS
		<p>Pillar 1- Path to independence</p> <p>Pillar 2 – Government reform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Citizen-Centred Government 2.2 Effective government <p>Pillar 3 – Sustainable development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Economic Independence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Palestine's Future Economy ▪ Creating Job Opportunities ▪ Improving Palestine's Business Environment

¹¹ Government of Jordan. (2014). Jordan 2025: A National Vision and Strategy. p. 67

¹² For more information on this legal form, see the “Ministerial Order regarding Non-Profit Companies Regulation No 3, 2010”

¹³ Akella, D., & Eid, N. (2018). Social enterprises in Palestine: a critical analysis. Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promoting Palestinian Industry 3.2 Social Justice and Rule of Law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Escaping Poverty ▪ Strengthening Social Protection ▪ Improving Access to Justice ▪ Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment ▪ Our Youth; Our Future 3.3 Quality Education for All 3.4 Quality healthcare for all 3.5 Resilient communities
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Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the *STATE OF PALESTINE – NATIONAL POLICY AGENDA 2017-2022*



Is project in line with international priorities and strategies (SDGs)?



MedUp! project is both directly and indirectly contributing to the achievement of SDGs. While directly promoting SDG 8 – “Decent Work and Economic Growth”, SDG 5 – “Gender Equality”, SDG 10 – “Reduced Inequalities” and SDG 17- “Partnership for the Goals”, the project is indirectly contributing to a larger set of goals pursued by the supported SEs.

MEDUP! CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs

Being inserted in the framework of an EU-founded programme aimed at “promoting job creation and economic inclusiveness, by supporting and strengthening social economy and social entrepreneurship ecosystems and relevant stakeholders in the Mediterranean countries”¹⁴, the Project is fully consistent with **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

In particular, **MedUp! project is both directly and indirectly contributing to the achievement of SDGs.**

Table 19 reports the main SGD and related targets *directly* addressed by MedUp!, as identified by the respondents and through the analysis of the overall project documentation.

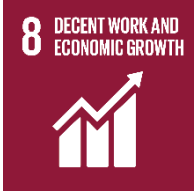



However, it should be noticed that, by using social entrepreneurship as a tool to pursue sustainable development, the range of SDGs that are potentially influenced by the project's activities becomes wider, as emphasised in Medup! Policy Paper “Social Entrepreneurship, Social Protection and Decent Work: Building Gender Transformative Policies for a Post-Covid MENA Economy”¹⁵. In the aforementioned document, in fact, it is mentioned that, besides promoting **SDGs 8, 5, 10 and 17** “supporting women's social enterprises could provide additional platforms to introduce solutions to progress toward [...], basic service provision (**SDGs 6 & 7**), [...] and sustainable communities (**SDG 11**); [...] boosting innovation (**SDG 9**) in terms of opening new markets and offering novel products and services, [...] and achieving universal health coverage (**SDG 3**)”.

Moreover, if we examine the typologies of social/environmental problems that the **MICRO** level social enterprises supported by the project are trying to solve, it can be affirmed that Medup!, by empowering these social entrepreneurs, is indirectly providing a positive contribution in the achievements of all SDGs.

¹⁴ Eu Commission, op.cit. p.6

¹⁵ Annex 13 in Second Year Medup! Project documentation.

Table 19 - Main SDGs and targets addressed by MedUp! project

<p>SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth</p>  <p>“Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”</p>	<p>Target 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.</p> <p>Target 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.</p> <p>Target 8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.</p>
<p>SDG 5 – Gender Equality</p>  <p>“Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”</p>	<p>Target 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.</p> <p>Target 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.</p>
<p>SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities</p>  <p>“Reduce inequality within and among countries”</p>	<p>Target 10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.</p> <p>Target 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.</p> <p>Target 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.</p>
<p>SDG 17- Partnership for the Goals</p>  <p>“Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”</p>	<p>Target 17.16 Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries</p>

Source: ARCO's elaboration

2.3 Effectiveness

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- To what extent the project contributed to macro-level OUTCOME (iOC1), policy makers and key private and public stakeholders at local, national and regional levels are actively engaged in improving youth and gender sensitive policies and legal frameworks on social entrepreneurship?
- To what extent the project contributed to meso-level OUTCOME (iOC2), quality and accessibility of support services for SEs and coordination among social entrepreneurship support organizations are increased?
- To what extent the project contributed to micro-level OUTCOME (iOC3), existing social enterprises expand their businesses within the targeted sectors and countries?
- In case of operational adjustments to the original plan, did any efficiency-effectiveness trade off arise?
- Has a gender sensitive approach been applied, while implementing all the activities?

Premise

When assessing MedUp! project effectiveness we underline that we carried out a mid-term evaluation, hence we acknowledge that the project is halfway from its completion, all results are forcibly still not achieved and true impacts still have a long way to go before being fully and clearly identified and measured. Nonetheless, our evaluation has identified relevant findings which will be discussed hereinafter.

Table 20 below reports the project objective indicators and relative state of progress (in percentage).

Table 20 - Table of overall project objective indicators

			OVERALL targets		EGYPT		JORDAN		LEBANON		MOROCCO		PALESTINE		TUNISIA	
Results chain	Indicators		Targets 2022 by LF approved	Targets 2022 by country forecast	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)
Overall objective (OO)	001	No. of jobs created (disaggregated by gender, age and rural/urban location)	300	214	30	0	50	0	30	0	50	0	35	0	19	0
	002	No. / % of SEs that have increased their revenues/turn over and/or number of employees (disaggregated by location urban/rural, leadership w/m, employees w/m)	70% of SEs supported	70%	70%	0	70%	0	70%	0	70%	0	70%	0	70%	0
	003	No. / % of women social entrepreneurs in targeted firms	20% increase of number of women social entrepreneurs	20%	20%	11	20%	12	20%	14	20%	12	20%	30	20%	9
Outcome (OC)	OC1	No. / % of social enterprises (SEs) in targeted countries reporting that the institutional, technical, social, and economic conditions have improved	70% of targeted SEs report improved conditions	70%	70%	0	70%	0	70%	0	70%	0	70%	0	70%	0
	OC2	No. of young people and women who engage in activities (debates/training/projects etc.) related to social entrepreneurship	650	810	100	60	110	164	100	108	100	121	110	598	290	266
Macro Level Intermediate Outcome (iOC1)	iOC1.1	No. / % of new and/or improved regulations and initiatives advocated/supported/ in place that promote women and youth social entrepreneurship in targeted countries	At least 2 regulations per targeted country are advocated/supported/ in place	9	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	2	0	2	1
Meso Level Intermediate Outcome (iOC2)	iOC2.1	No. of targeted social entrepreneurship support organizations (SESOs) that adopt tailored tools to assist SEs in developing their business	60	63	10	16	10	25	8	26	15	18	10	26	10	15
	iOC2.2	No. of new formal partnerships between SESOs and local or international financial institutions/social investors	- At least 1 new formal partnership among SESOs are available per each targeted country - At least 2 regional partnerships among SESOs exist	6	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
	iOC2.3	N. of SEs provided with tailored services by SESOs (disaggregated for type of service)	35	49	6	0	6	0	4	0	15	0	5	0	13	0
Micro Level Intermediate Outcome (iOC3)	iOC3.1	No. of SEs that have started new activities, launched additional investments, added innovative processes and/or tools with the project support	At least 4 per country	31	3	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	3	0	13	0
	iOC3.2	Average number of linkages established by targeted SEs with other actors in the business sector in targeted countries	At least 5 linkages per country	26	3	0	5	0	5	0	5	0	3	0	5	0

Results chain	Indicators	OVERALL targets		EGYPT		JORDAN		LEBANON		MOROCCO		PALESTINE		TUNISIA	
		Targets 2022 by LF approved	Targets 2022 by country forecast	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)	Country Target	Progress (April 2020)
Op 1.1 (linked to iOC1)	Op 1.1.1	No. Of up-to-date study of actors and regulations is available in each of the 6 countries	1 national study per targeted country is available	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Op 1.1.2	Up-to-date regional inventory of key public and private actors in the field of SE available	1 regional inventory is available	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Op 1.2 (linked to iOC1)	Op 1.2.1	No. of public-private dialogues and meetings on SE organized	25-27	24	3	0	4	1	4	2	3	6	6	1	4
	Op 1.2.2	No. of advocacy and influencing actions for strengthening regulatory frameworks carried out	14	13	1	0	3	0	3	1	1	0	2	2	3
Op 1.3 (linked to iOC1)	Op 1.3.1	No. Of up-to-date analysis of barriers existing in the region to women access to economic activities and recommendations for action are available	1 analysis is available	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Op 2.1 (linked to iOC2)	Op 2.1.1	No. of SESOs trained on capacities building activities and innovative technical tools	60	67	10	4	10	15	12	10	15	8	10	12	10
	Op 2.2.1	No. of SESOs representatives participating in peer to peer learning and networking activities (including organizations from Europe)	60	57	10	2	10	2	10	2	15	2	10	2	2
Op 3.1 (linked to iOC3)	Op 3.1.1	No. of SES having received financial and technical support to their business plan (disaggregated by level, location, leadership gender)	100	91	13	9	20	11	10	10	15	12	20	13	13
	Op 3.1.2	No. of people from targeted SEs trained in financial and technical tools for SEs (disaggregated by age, gender and location rural/urban)	100	98	13	0	20	0	20	0	15	0	20	0	10
Op 3.2 (linked to iOC3)	Op 3.2.1	No. of success stories identified and disseminated	24	21	3	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	1	0	5
	Op 3.2.2	No. of public events to disseminate best practices among national, regional and international audiences	18	12	1	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	3
	Op 3.2.3	No. of regional initiatives (platforms, social media, etc.) used to disseminate best practices	1-6	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data provided by Oxfam IT. Last update: April 2020



To what extent the project contributed to macro-level OUTCOME (iOC1), policy makers and key private and public stakeholders at local, national and regional levels are actively engaged in improving youth and gender sensitive policies and legal frameworks on social entrepreneurship?



MTE results confirm the effectiveness of the project at **MACRO** level. Albeit project countries show different levels of SE ecosystem development, interviewed policy-level beneficiaries have benefitted from MedUp! project activities to the extent that they had the opportunity to learn from their peers' best practices and experiences, they have increased their awareness on Social Entrepreneurship and they now have examples to follow when discussing on policy strategies and developing the SE sector.

MACRO
level

POSITIVE MACRO LEVEL PROJECT EFFECTS ALBEIT AT DIFFERENT PACE ACROSS COUNTRIES

First of all, MedUp! countries show different levels of development concerning the creation and consolidation of enabling ecosystems for social enterprises and this is partly explained by the different governments' prioritization of SE over national strategies. As for this matter, we refer to [Section Coherence](#) for our brief assessment of each project country.

All interviewed **MACRO** level beneficiaries, albeit these represented only 4 out of 6 project countries (see [Annex 1- Methodology & Evaluation Limitations](#)), confirm the effectiveness of the project, even more so given that social entrepreneurship is a new concept at the government level ([Section Relevance](#)). In particular, as Table 21 summarises, almost all interviewed policy-level beneficiaries referred to have benefitted from MedUp! project activities to the extent that they had the opportunity to learn from their peers' best practices and experiences (one did not explicitly mentioned this effect), they have increased their awareness on Social Entrepreneurship and that now have examples to follow when discussing on policy strategies and developing the SE sector.

Table 21 - Macro level beneficiaries' stated effects resulting from MedUp! project activities

POLICY LEVEL PROJECT BENEFICIARIES	LEARNING FROM PEER EXCHANGE	INCREASED SE AWARENESS	INFLUENCED BY PEER EXAMPLES
JORDAN			
PALESTINE			
MOROCCO			
LEBANON	Not explicitly mentioned		
EGYPT	N/A	N/A	N/A
TUNISIA	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the MTE data collection activities

Note: Policy level project beneficiaries from Egypt and Tunisia were not available for the interviews. See Section "Annex 1- Methodology & Evaluation Limitations".

In particular, a **Palestinian** policy-level respondent stated that, thanks to MedUp! project, he was introduced to the Social Entrepreneurship concept and how it is related to the cooperative sector in his country. Moreover, he can benefit from the project to the extent that, while taking part to the drafting of the cooperative sector strategy, he can now take as role models the examples from the experiences from other EU countries. He also stated that he is interest in deepening his understanding of Social Entrepreneurship and how this concept can be operationalized in the cooperative sector.

A **Moroccan** policy-level respondent affirmed that the project has contributed in exchanging other countries' experiences on Social Entrepreneurship and in learning how the SE ecosystem can be developed.

A **Jordanian** policy-level respondent recognized that the project allowed him to learn from realities from other countries, both in terms of knowledge as well as of practical solutions and problem-solving models. Also, the project allowed to open new channels of exchange with other countries. Finally, he added that the project has had a very extensive development impact in particular on rural regions and provided more than one practical tool to assist development.

A **Lebanese** policy -level respondent confirmed that the project allowed for a greater interest and commitment in social entrepreneurship on the part of governmental actors. Moreover, the respondent reported that Lebanon is currently in the process of drafting a law on Social Entrepreneurship also thanks to the project's involvement and support.

Other MTE respondents gave more or less a general and unspecified response when asked about the project's **MACRO**-level effectiveness. Reasons for this may be identified, first of all, being the project halfway from its completion. Secondly, **MACRO**-level indicators are quite vague and/or difficult to attain given that they mainly target public actors whose commitment was reported as being generally difficult to obtain and/or to maintain. In particular, two respondents argued that **MACRO**-level indicators exclusively measure results, while missing to acknowledge ongoing processes triggered by the project.

Nonetheless, we report that:

- a **Tunisian** local stakeholder respondent referred to believe that the Tunisian government has increased its engagement towards Social Entrepreneurship thanks to MedUp! project. Indeed, Tunisia recorded the most visible achievement at macro level compared to the other project countries as the newly Social and Solidarity Economy law n° 2020-30 has been approved by the Parliament last June 30th, 2020 and the Government is now in the process of elaborating the implementation law.

- a respondent working in the **Lebanese** context commented that the process of advancing a SE legal framework is now speeding up and MedUp! has contributed in strengthening important relations with key policy actors. The respondent stated that, indeed, "we are shaping the roles of SE ecosystem actors in Lebanon".

- respondents working in the **Palestinian** and **Jordanian** context underlined that working on the legal framework/regulations needs time and that a first step is needed before that objective, namely raising the awareness on Social Entrepreneurship.

- a respondent working in the **Tunisian** context also confirmed that working on micro and meso levels mainly consist of mobilization, awareness raising activities and fostering dialogue among all levels.

- respondents working in **Moroccan** context, on their part, referred that advocacy initiatives and **MACRO** level activities still have to take off and are now in the preparation phase.

See also [Section: Coherence](#) as for each MedUp! country assessments regarding their heterogeneous performances in term of consolidation of national SE ecosystems which is partially related to the different governments' prioritization of the topic.



To what extent the project contributed to meso-level OUTCOME (iOC2), quality and accessibility of support services for SEs and coordination among social entrepreneurship support organizations are increased?



MTE results show that SESOs' average evaluation of MESO level project activities is, overall, positive. However, MTE representativeness of MESO level beneficiaries is lower in some MedUp! countries.

MESO level

MESO LEVEL EFFECTIVENESS: OVERALL POSITIVE PROJECT EFFECTS IN IMPROVING SESOs SERVICES AND NETWORKING

Table 22 below share findings from KII and FGD with project SESO representatives. When assessing project SESO representatives' opinion we advise to keep well in mind our research limitations which lead to a low representativity of **MESO** level project beneficiaries (see [Annex 1- Methodology & Evaluation Limitations](#)). Hence, findings referring to MESO level beneficiaries' opinion may not be easily generalized.

Table 22 summarises the average score assigned by 11 SESO representatives when asked to evaluate the overall effectiveness of MedUp! support received in a scale from 0 (not effective) to 10 (extremely effective). In particular, each respondent was also asked to evaluate the usefulness of the project in fostering the quality and the accessibility of its services offered to SEs, its coordination with other SESOs and other relevant SE networks. Average scores in all dimensions are positive as well as the overall effectiveness (7,5 out of 10).

Table 22 - Average evaluation of the effectiveness of the project support received by SESO respondents

	OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	Quality of services	Accessibility of services	Coordination with other SESOs	Other relevant networks
Rating	7.5	7.3	6.2	7.9	8
N° of respondents	10	9	6	10	8

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the MTE data collection activities

Note: Moroccan SESO representatives taking part to our FDG referred that they had not benefitted from MedUp! Capacity Building and Peer Exchange activities therefore could not assess their effectiveness. Nonetheless, their input was indeed relevant for us in understanding Moroccan SE ecosystem which respondents appeared to be very well aware of. Egyptian SESO representatives had not taken part to our FDG.

Some respondents preferred not to express a score as for certain dimensions or no evaluation at all. Reasons for this were explained by respondents as being too early to evaluate at this stage of the

project implementation, or because the Covid-19 pandemic came at critical time along with national economic and social constraints (one Lebanese respondent). In some cases, evaluation was not applicable as, for example, the support of MedUp! was said to be not focused on improving accessibility of SESOs' services nor in fostering relevant networks (one Jordanian respondent), or because the SESO's activities were already accessible (one Palestinian respondent).

As for more specific comments on the part of respondents we refer that a **Palestinian** SESO stated that more confidence was gained thanks to MedUp! support and another **Palestinian** SESO confirmed to have benefitted from the information provided by the project activities. Moreover, 6 **Palestinian** and **Lebanese** respondents reported that MedUp! helped them in building connections and collaboration with other SESOs. Moreover, 4 **Palestinian** SESOs stated that the project supported their connections to international organizations and SEs. On a more negative note, two SESO representatives (one **Tunisian** and one **Lebanese** respondent) argued that "there is room for improvement" as for MedUp! support. Another **Lebanese** respondent remarked that 3 days for the Peer Exchange were not sufficient and more time for EN activities would have been desirable.

Two project stakeholders working in the **Palestinian** context have expressed satisfaction toward the **MESO** level project effects which they believed to be "a great success". In fact, **Palestinian** number of SESOs outreached the target (specifically 120% as for data provided by the project's documentation, MEAL Report). Moreover, most participants have attended both IH trainings and this is believed to have had an effect on fostering networking and creating synergies between SESOs. Respondents also informed us that they are now currently supporting linkages between SESOs and targeted SEs with positive results.

A positive feedback on the connection between **MESO** and **MICRO** level was also provided by a project stakeholder working in the **Tunisian** context.

Conversely, this linkage between SESOs and SEs was pointed out by a respondent working in the **Lebanese** context as being a gap in how the project is designed. Much work was believed to be necessary to understand and plan how should project SESOs support directly SEs. The respondent underlined that this difficulty in linking different levels was encountered among all levels of project intervention.

Positive feedbacks on MESO level activities were also expressed by a respondent working in the **Moroccan** context.

A respondent working in the **Jordanian** context commented positively on the activities carried out by EN. As for IH trainings, a difficulty was highlighted as for engaging with SESOs and guaranteeing a good level of commitment and participation to all project's activities on their part.

The latter was also strongly remarked by a respondent working in the **Egyptian** context who explained that MedUp! activities are not helpful for Egyptian SESOs (which are more generally ESOs) as they do not offer them the proper incentives. However, as Egyptian SESO representatives were not available for MTE interviews and SFGDs, the issue could not be further investigated with these project beneficiaries.

We recall that SESOs' general low commitment to MedUp! project activities was highlighted from respondents from all six project countries. We therefore refer to **Section Relevance** and, in particular to Tables 5 and 6.



To what extent the project contributed to micro-level OUTCOME (iOC3), existing social enterprises expand their businesses within the targeted sectors and countries?



MTE results confirm that the financial and technical support provided by MedUp! is helping SEs in expanding their business and their social/environmental impact. Moreover, MedUp! has given SEs the opportunity to widen and enhance their business networks and to increase the number and quality of relationships with their stakeholders. However, it is too early to evaluate at this stage of the project, even more so given the negative impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic which jeopardizes their sustainability.

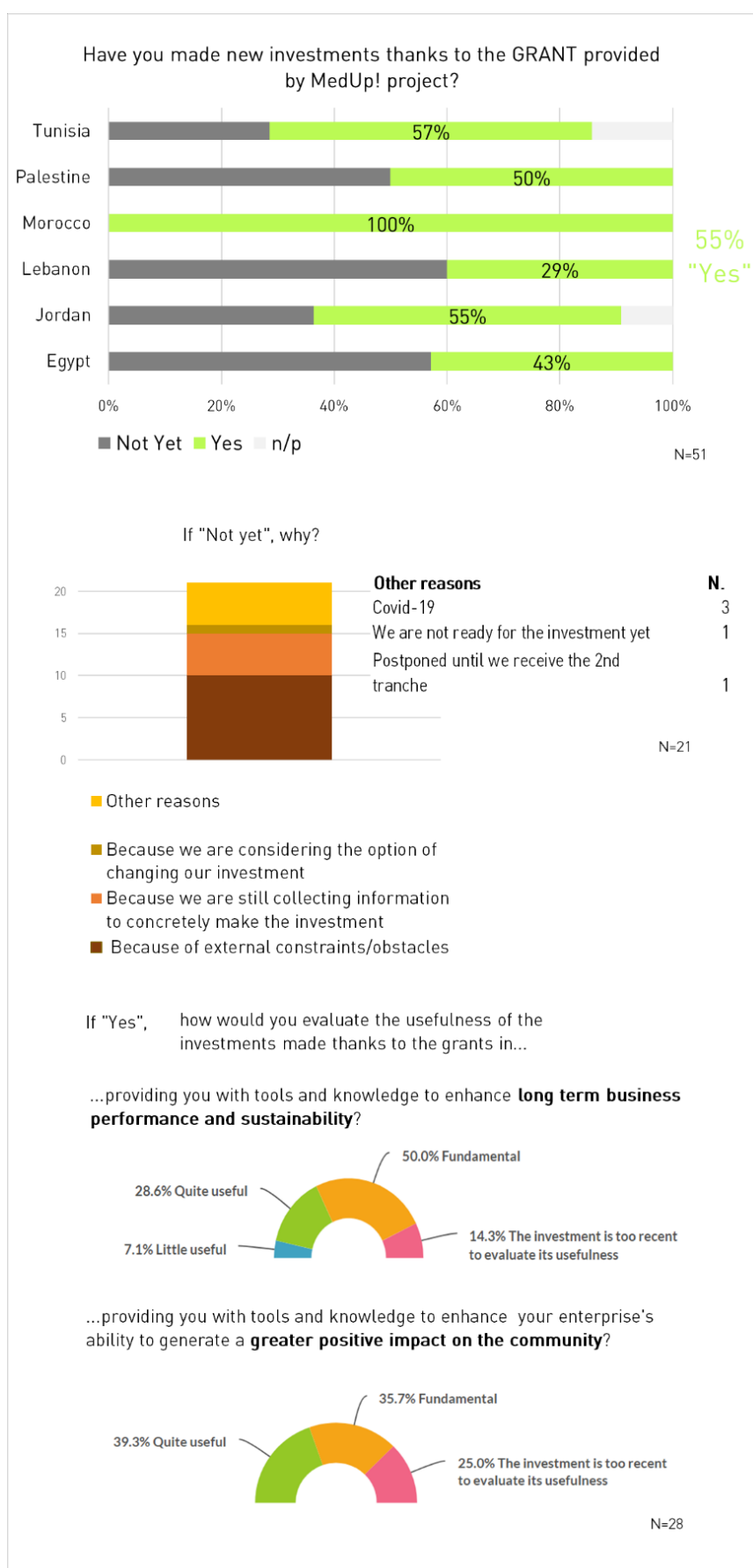
MICRO
level

THE PROJECT IS SUPPORTING SEs IN EXPANDING THEIR BUSINESS AND THEIR SOCIAL/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Figures below draw from an online survey completed by 51 out of 64 SEs involved in the project. Figure 7 shows that 55% of overall respondents stated that the grant provided by MedUp! supported new investments. Moreover, overall MedUp! grant was considered to be “fundamental” (50%) or “quite useful” (around 30%) in providing SEs with tools and knowledge to enhance **long term business performance and sustainability**. Also, the grant is believed to have contributed to enhance SEs’ ability to generate a **positive impact on the community** either considerably (almost 40% indicated “quite useful”) or decisively (almost 36% indicated “fundamental”).

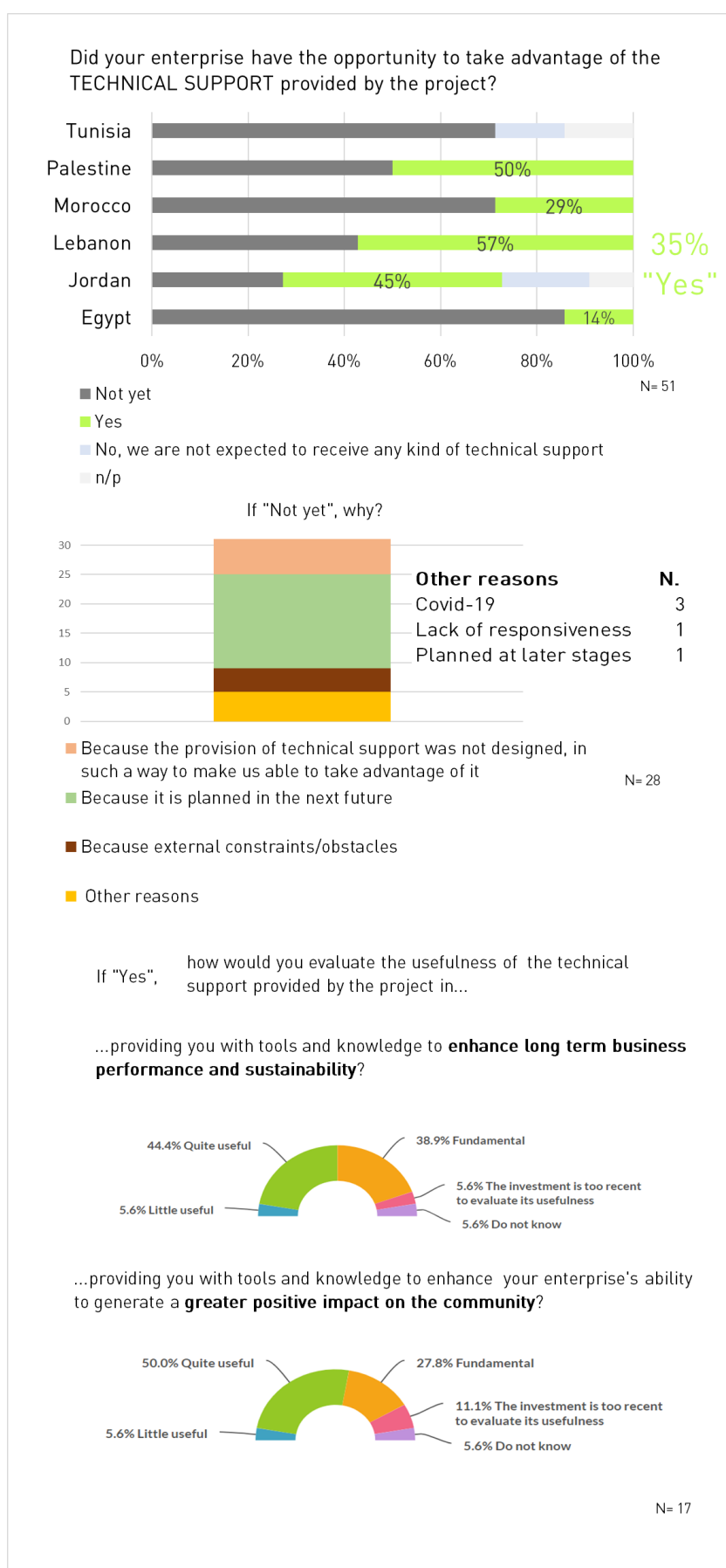
As for the technical support, which was said to be received only by 35% of overall respondents at this stage, it was considered to be “fundamental” (almost 40% of respondents) or “quite useful” (almost 45% of respondents) in providing SEs with tools and knowledge to enhance **long term business performance and sustainability** (Figure 8). Also, the support is believed to have contributed to enhance the SEs’ ability to generate a **positive impact on the community** either considerably (50% indicated “quite useful”) or decisively (almost 28% indicated “fundamental”).

Figure 7 – SEs' opinion on the effects of the received MedUp! grant



Source - ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

Figure 8 - SEs' opinion on the effects of the received MedUp! technical support

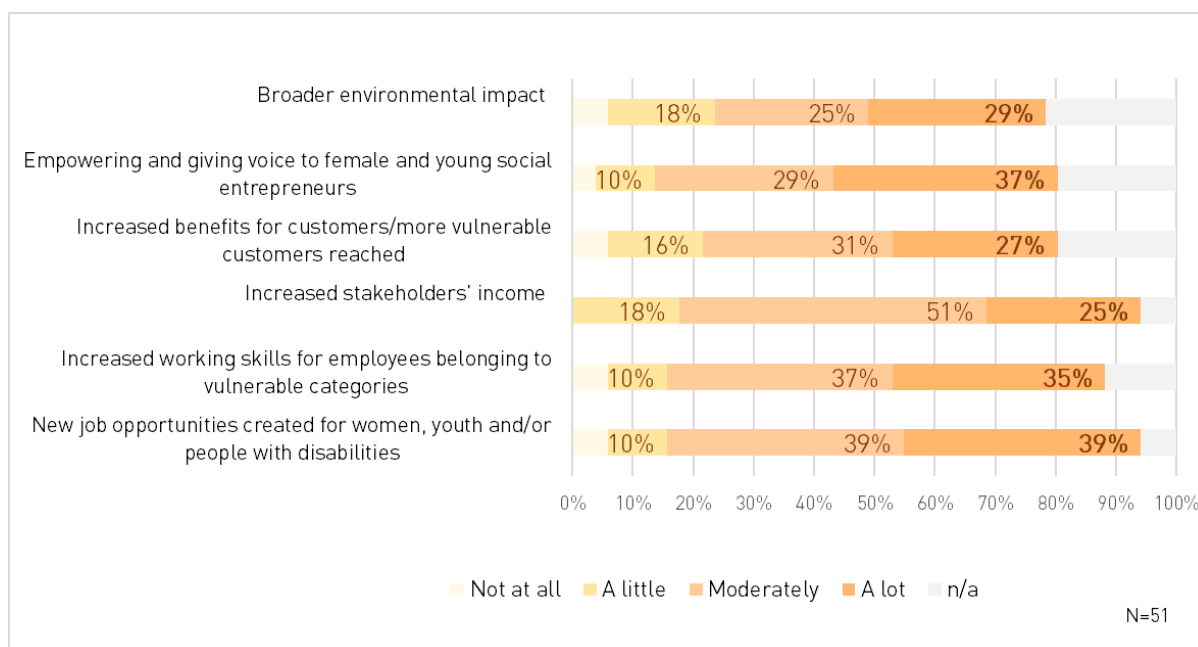


Source - ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

We highlight, however, that the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic has indeed affected MedUp! supported SEs. As for this issue, we refer to [👉 Section: Relevance- Box 2](#)

Figure 9 below highlights MedUp! support to SEs in achieving social and environmental effects. Some specific questions were not answered by all survey respondents albeit the percentage of response rate remains above 92%. Results confirm the project effectiveness in supporting, either decisively or moderately, beneficiary SEs in all social and environmental effects reported in Figure 9. No relevant percentage of respondents considered the project support as not helpful at all.

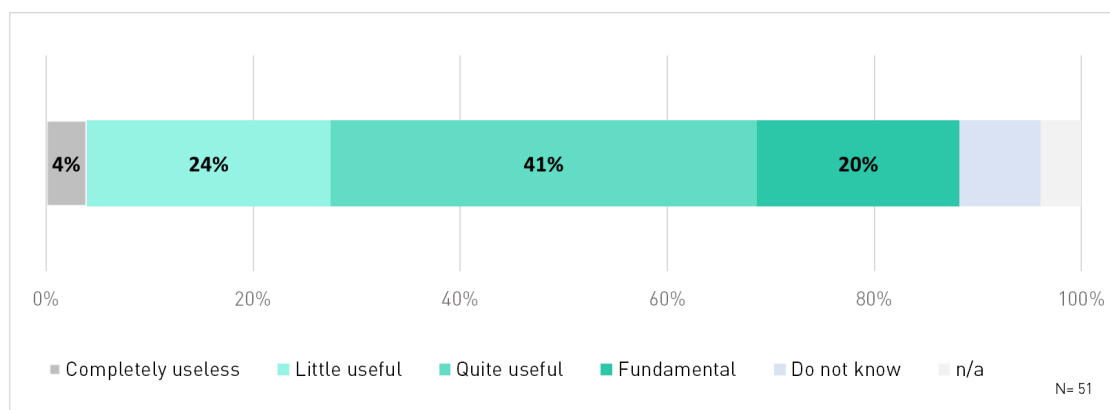
Figure 9 – Respondents' answer to the question "Focusing on the social/environmental effect generated by your business, please indicate how much did the project help you in achieving the following goals"



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

Figure 10 below highlights that more than 60% of respondents confirmed that MedUp! has given SEs the opportunity to widen and enhance their business networks.

Figure 10 - Respondents' answer to the question "How would you evaluate the relevance of networking opportunities (getting in touch with supporting organizations, financial institutions, other social enterprises, new investors, etc) provided by the project in widening and enhancing your business networks?"

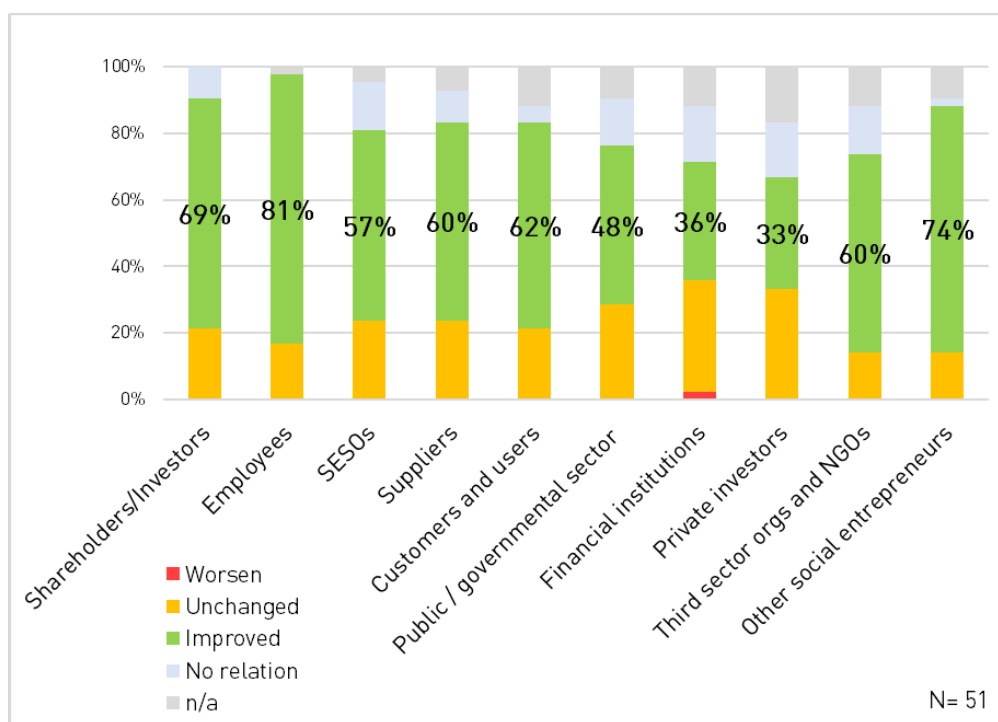


Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

Another relevant effect of MedUp! on SEs which was detected by our survey concerns the number and quality of relationships of SEs with their stakeholders. This aspect is further elaborated in [Section Sustainability](#), where relative tables and figures are presented and commented. 27 out of 39 respondents have reported that the number of their stakeholders has increased as a consequence of the support received by the project (Figure 17a, [Section Sustainability](#)).

Moreover, Figure 11 shows that the quality of these relationships is considered to have improved thanks to the project.

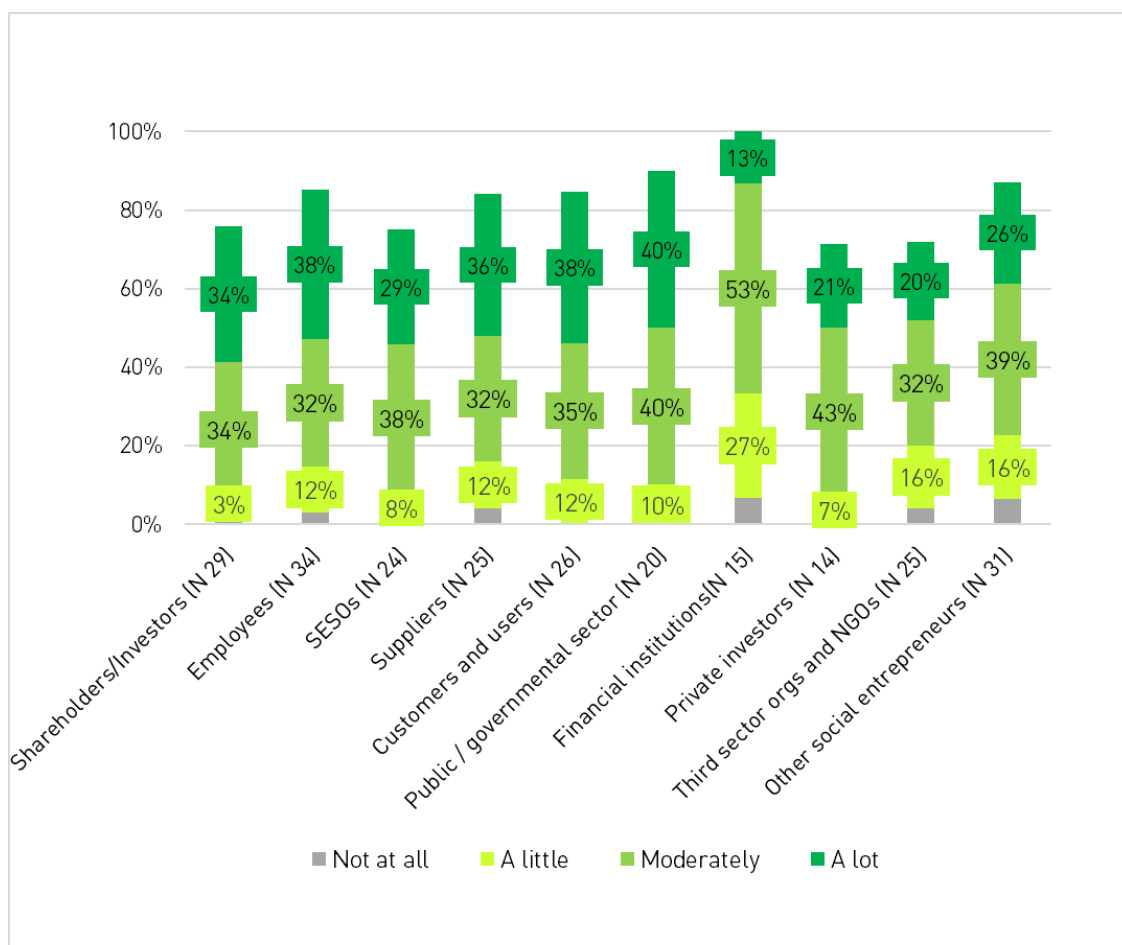
Figure 11 - Respondents' answer to the question "How would you evaluate the quality of the relationship you have with each of your stakeholders now compared to the period before the project?"



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

Figure 12 below shows how much the project contributed to the improvement of these relationships, according to the opinion of those respondents for which the latter have improved (Figure 11).

Figure 12 – Respondents' answer to the question "How much did the project affect the improvement of these relationships?"



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises



In case of operational adjustments to the original plan, did any efficiency-effectiveness trade off arise?





Given that SEs have required a greater-than-expected grant amounts, the project chose to focus on fewer SEs which demonstrated to have a capacity to scale-up and to generate a positive and sustainable impact

FEWER SEs SELECTED WITH AN EXPECTED GREATER CAPACITY TO SCALE-UP

Project SEs have asked for greater-than-expected grant amounts. More specifically an average of 30,000 EUR compared to an expected average of 10,000 EUR each¹⁶. The project response to this unexpected result was to select fewer SEs than originally foreseen (64 instead of 100). Facing this



¹⁶ See Section Efficiency – Table 24- for a synthetic overview on sub-granting.

quantity-quality trade-off, the project opted in favour of the latter and, therefore, to focus on fewer SEs which demonstrated to have a capacity to scale-up and to generate a positive and sustainable impact (see also  [Section: Efficiency](#)).

Despite this issue, seven respondents (project implementors) expressed satisfaction with the beneficiaries' selection process ( [Section: Relevance](#)) and no respondents reported negative feedback on the solution adopted by the project.


BOX 3: INITIAL LOW VISIBILITY AND WEAK PROJECT “MARKETING” (NOW IMPROVING)

Seven respondents have pointed out at a weak initial communication on the part of the project, to the extent that it had not properly or sufficiently communicated its objective and results, nor allowed for a proper visibility. A respondent working in the Palestinian context remarked that there had been no investment in “marketing” the project, in other words, in producing and disseminating communicative materials at the local level. Another Palestinian respondent stated that communicative materials were not sufficiently clear and easily understandable, hence it was necessary to read them “two or three times” in order to have a better idea of what the project was about.

A Moroccan stakeholder highlighted that more information is needed on Oxfam’s ongoing activities in order to better coordinate with local systems’ actors. A technical partner remarked that a stronger communication would allow for a better outreach of project targets, especially with regards to policy-level stakeholders. Another respondent from the project regional platform recognized that project’s results had not been well communicated at the beginning. This issue was believed to possibly and partially explain the low SESOs’ commitment to the project activities, as the added value of taking part to MedUp! perhaps was not properly understood by targeted beneficiaries ( [Section: Relevance](#)). However, since the hiring of a Project Assistant/Communication officer, this aspect was said to be decisively improved. We refer to  [Section: Efficiency](#) for further implications of this aspect.

To conclude, we acknowledge that a new assessment of the communication aspect of the project needs more time to be evaluated given the newly appointed human resource.

BOX 4: A SLOW AND DIFFICULT TAKE-OFF FOR THE PROJECT GENDER COMPONENT

 **Has a gender sensitive approach been applied, while implementing all the activities?**

➔ MTE results point out at an unclear implementing strategy to mainstream gender across project's activities. Moreover, respondents highlighted an untapped gender expertise to inform the project's activities. An overall positive feedback emerges as for the effectiveness of the project in improving gender-related aspects of SEs' activities and generated effects.

- **UNCLEAR IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY FOR THE GENDER COMPONENT OF THE PROJECT:**

The project overall objective (Table 20) highlights that the project intends to have a clear gender focus as a transversal component throughout all three levels of implementation, namely throughout the **MACRO**, **MESO** and **MICRO** levels.

However, our findings point out at a lack of a clear and concrete implementation strategy for the gender component of the project, especially with regards to the **MESO** and **MICRO** levels.

This issue was reported by PMUs, technical partners and advisors and project regional platform respondents during KIIs and FGD.

Specifically, the gender strategy was defined as “not clear” and/or a “weak” or “challenging” project component by 10 respondents.

In particular, one respondent working in the **Jordanian** context stated that there had not been consistency and clarity as for how PMUs' should practically implement the gender component. Hence expectations were placed on PMUs as for this aspect, albeit no clear outlines were provided to them. Moreover, the country budget for gender advocacy was indicated as insufficient. For these reasons, the gender component was said to be a project's “major issue”.

A respondent working in the **Palestinian** context also referred to a weak gender strategy.

Another respondent from the **Tunisian** context underlined the challenge to integrate the gender component into the project's activities and also remarked that the gender topic was starting to be discussed now (at the time of the mid-term evaluation data collection phase), while it should have been mainstreamed since the very beginning of the project.

This point was also underlined by a respondent from the project regional platform who recognized that the gender component had a slow start while it should have strongly taken off immediately.

The fact that there is no clear and shared understanding of how to implement the gender component of the project is confirmed by the fact that, when asked how the inclusive and gender sensitive approach was converted in concrete actions throughout project implementation, 7 respondents referred to the fact that “gender” was “taken into account” while carrying out their activities and did not refer to specific gender-focused actions. In example, respondents said to have been careful in guaranteeing gender representativeness in selecting SEs (**MICRO** level), trainers, trainees and peer exchange beneficiaries, as well as when choosing case studies and topics to be discussed (**MESO** level). Replies suggest that the declination of the gender component into concrete actions is mainly left to project implementors and not following a specific project lead.

Three respondents, in fact, expressed the need and the expectation for a stronger lead and coordination on the part of the gender experts during the project implementation.

At the same time, it was highlighted that the high HR turnover, as well as human resources, time and budget resources were not adequate for a proper gender advisory support. In addition, the governance structure as well as the complexity of the project's implementation are believed to be hindering factors which challenge a proper coordination on the part of the gender experts.

- **THE GENDER COMPONENT ACROSS PROJECTS' IMPLEMENTING LEVELS:**

Respondents seem to have a relatively clearer understanding of the implementation of the gender component at **MACRO** level rather than **MESO** and **MICRO** levels (apart from mainly guaranteeing gender representativeness in beneficiaries' selection process). To this respect, one respondent confirmed that the project focus of the gender component is more on the **MACRO** level, while the **MESO** level gender component implementation was said to be not understood. Another respondent highlighted that, in fact, only **MACRO** level indicators were identified for the gender component and the relation between gender and **MICRO** and **MESO** levels is unclear.

Nonetheless, it was highlighted that the country studies analysing the SE national ecosystems (Op 1.1.1 linked to iOC1), a **MACRO** level project output, are lacking a real gender focus.

An additional **MACRO** level project output, namely the regional research focusing on the gender dimension of social entrepreneurship called "Women and social entrepreneurship: a regional perspective in the Southern Mediterranean countries (Op 1.3.1 linked to iOC1), was said to be not positively received, or at least not by all countries. In particular, one respondent recognized that gender issues were highlighted with a very critical approach and that, perhaps, the latter were "hard to digest" by project countries and, therefore, not appreciated at all when presented in the event in Lebanon and received an almost absent feedback when presented in the event in Tunisia. The advanced supposition perhaps explaining this negative and cold reception of the regional study was said to be, perhaps, a too academic and technical language to be interesting or properly understood. Moreover, doubts were expressed on how the gender regional studies will actually inform concrete actions.

- **UNTAPPED GENDER EXPERTISE:**

The weak gender dimension of the project was explained by some respondents with the very limited knowledge on gender issues and on gender challenges among project partners and implementors. The project was said to be implemented by Oxfam's Economic Justice HR, which, being more focused on market values, were believed to have a more limited awareness and knowledge of social and gender issues.

Moreover, MedUp! was believed not to have drawn from Oxfam position and expertise on gender and other social justice issues. In particular, Oxfam already consolidated approach called "Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights"¹⁷, which was said to tackle precisely women's individual capacity and systemic change, did not inform MedUp! design and strategy. Hence, the latter, being framed in precise project indicators and logical framework, was said to be missing the strategic and transformative approach necessary to address the systemic and structural challenges which hinder women. Some respondents elaborated on this issue, underlying that increasing the number of SEs run by women does not imply a change of the ecosystem. At the **MICRO** level, this was said to entail a support for those SEs not simply managed or owned by women, but those SEs fostering a systemic change for women. At the **MACRO** level, this was said to entail to pursue a policy change "which would change women's lives". As for the latter, some considerable doubts were expressed as for the project's ability to achieve this goal within its ending, as well as for its real usefulness for "women at grass-route level".

Despite the expressed critical note on the gender component of the project, respondents also remarked that, since it had such a slow start, more time should be given to assess the project's gender component. Other respondents stated that the project is now starting to move towards a clearer direction as for gender mainstream. Moreover, Gender National Advocacy Plans have













¹⁷ Kloosterman, J. (2014). *Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights: An Oxfam guide*. Oxfam International.

been recently validated by all project countries which are now working towards implementation phase.

Table 23 below summarizes key points highlighted by respondents when commenting on the project's gender component.

Table 23 - Main arguments on MedUp! Gender component

MAIN ARGUMENTS ON MEDUP! GENDER COMPONENT

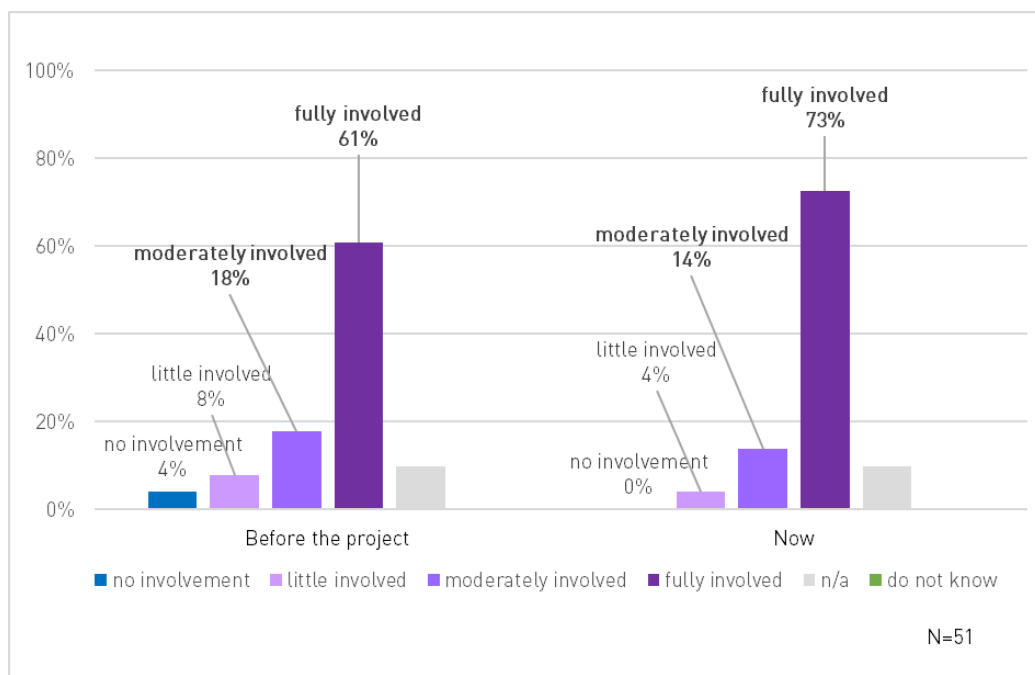
	Lack of a clear and concrete implementation strategy for the gender component of the project
	Lack of consistency and clarity as for how PMUs' should practically implement the gender component
	Insufficient country budget for gender advocacy
	Need and expectation for a stronger lead and coordination on the part of the gender experts during the project implementation
	High HR turnover and HR, time and budget resources not adequate for a proper gender advisory support for the project
	Governance structure and project complexity as hindering factors for a gender strategy
	Project focus of the gender component mainly at MACRO level> only MACRO level indicators identified for the gender component
	Country studies analysing the SE national ecosystems (Op 1.1.1 linked to iOC1) completely lacking a gender focus
	Too academic and technical language of the Regional Gender Study
	"Hard to digest" findings of the Regional Gender Study for project countries
	Limited knowledge and awareness on gender issues and on gender challenges among project partners and implementors
	MedUp! not sufficiently informed by Oxfam position and expertise on gender and other social justice issues, in particular by Oxfam "Transformative Leadership for Women's Rights"

Source: Authors' own elaboration

• POSITIVE PROJECT'S GENDER-RELATED EFFECTS AT MICRO LEVEL

When analysing **MICRO** level project beneficiaries' responses to our online survey, an overall positive feedback emerges as for the effectiveness of the project in improving gender-related aspects of SEs' activities and generated effects. In particular, around 80% of SEs respondents stated that the project helped them in creating new jobs opportunities for women either moderately (almost 40%) or "a lot" (almost 40%). Around 70% of respondents stated that the project helped empowering and giving voice to female and young social entrepreneur either moderately (almost 30%) or "a lot" (almost 40%) (see Figure 9). Moreover, Figure 13 below shows that SEs respondent who considered women and/or young people to be "little" or "moderately" involved in their business (8% and 18% respectively) dropped in favour of considering them "fully involved" after the project, increasing the percentage from 61% before the project to 73% after the project. This confirms the perceived positive contribution of the project in raising women and youth active role within SE business.

Figure 13 - Contribution of MedUp! in raising women and youth active role within SE business



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

2.4 Efficiency

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- Have human and financial resources been properly used to maximize outputs?
- Were the objectives timely reached?
- Was partners' expertise conformed to project needs and objectives?
- Is current management and governance structure of the project fully functional to reach the project's objectives or is there a need to make operational adjustments?
- Did internal governance guarantee inclusiveness of decision-making processes?



Have human resources been properly used to maximize outputs?



Unbalanced allocation of human resources with respect to the actual workload and the high staff turnover have been reported as two major issues concerning human resources. A partial solution to the former problem was provided by the choice of hiring a new figure supporting both the regional coordination and the communication activities.

MUCH WORK FOR LIMITED HR RESOURCES AND CONSIDERABLE STAFF TURNOVER

The staff from three PMUs and one technical partner identified **disproportion in the allocation of human resources with respect to the actual working effort** needed to implement MedUp! activities. At regional level, few staff members declared that the project is very demanding on that side, having required more time than what originally expected. It was also highlighted that daily accounting tasks are not properly remunerated and the workload is greater than how it should be, according to the Budget. However, he/she recognized that these problems are generally due to HR eligible expenses limitations imposed by the Donors. Similar perceptions about the intense workload for few resources have been shared at regional level also by the RPM, who reported that this issue has been tackled and solved through the acquisition of a **new Project Assistant and Communication Officer**.

The choice of hiring a new Communication Officer proved MedUp! ability to promptly tackle what was explicitly described by three PMUs, the RPM and the European Commission Focal Point for MedUp! as a **weak point of the project** up to that moment, namely the project's **poor performance in promoting both external and internal visibility** (👉 see also **BOX 3, Section: Effectiveness**). External visibility deals with project's ability to communicate its purposes and contents to the external stakeholders. Moreover, it should be noticed that this aspect may have played a negative role in

MESO and **MACRO** level beneficiaries' engagement (👉 **Section: Relevance** and also **Annex 1-Methodology & Evaluation Limitations**). Instead, internal visibility concerns the project's ability to clarify tasks and roles, as well as promoting a positive communication flow among the Consortium members. The latter is further investigated in the paragraph dedicated to "Communication and Coordination" later in this Section.

Moreover, a significant level of staff turnover was reported. In fact, both regional and national teams have experienced changes in human resources, in the past 24 months of implementation. One

technical partner has explicitly mentioned staff turnover as one of the reasons explaining the lower performances in certain MedUp! countries.



Have financial resources been properly used to maximize outputs?



Structural budget limitation was recognized as a constraining factor in the pursuance of MedUp! ambitious objectives and targets. Allocation of financial resources is perceived to be equitable and well-balanced across countries by almost all the key implementors involved in the project.

LIMITED BUDGET FOR MEDUP! AMBITUOUS OBJECTIVES

All the MTE respondents implementing field activities expressed some complaints about the limited available budget to pursue MedUp! ambitious objectives. In particular, budget constraints have been identified with reference to financial support to SEs and advocacy campaigns. As far as the financial support to SEs, Table 24 below offers a synthetic overview on sub-granting schemes. PMUs declared to have been able, on one side, to finance less SEs than the number that was theoretically eligible – to be considered that 138 SEs reached the second stage of selection and, hence, submitted the full proposal after the concept note – and, on the other side, to allow lower amounts with respect to SEs' requests. As for the first issue, creation of synergies with other Oxfam-led in-Country Projects allowed to provide support also to the SEs that were not selected by MedUp!. As far as the latter, we highlight that only the 64 most promising SEs out of the 100 originally foreseen have been funded (👉 Effectiveness).

Table 24 - Overview of funds granted to selected SEs

Country	No. of funded SEs (1)	Average amount requested by SEs (2)	Average amount granted to SEs (3)	Average amount requested funds granted (4)=(3/2*100)	% of	Total amount granted (5)
Lebanon	10	35.099 €	14.506 €		41%	145.059 €
Egypt	9	28.241 €	13.222 €		47%	119.000 €
Morocco	12	21.413 €	12.917 €		60%	155.000 €
Tunisia	9	41.449 €	14.105 €		34%	126.947 €
Jordan	11	40.714 €	19.989 €		49%	219.877 €
Palestine	13	32.854 €	16.615 €		51%	216.000 €
Total	64	33.295 €	15.342 €		46%	981.883 €

Source: ARCO's elaboration of data extracted from project documentation (last update 04/10/2020)

By the same taken, **advocacy activities** have been described as **budget-constrained** by the three PMUs participating to the transnational FGD. **Scarcity of financial resources devoted to advocacy campaigning** is in fact one of the key MedUp! weak points mentioned during the focus group discussion with PMUs.

PARTICIPATIVE BUDGET DESIGN AND (ALMOST) EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES BETWEEN COUNTRIES

Two respondents referred that all MedUp! partners had an **active role in the design of the budget**. In particular, all local offices and future implementing partners have been asked to provide their own estimates about the financial resources needed to implement MedUp activities. In such a way the allocation of financial resources was expected to meet the different needs expressed by the local implementers, in conformity with local peculiarities and necessities. This **participative process to budget design led to a distribution of resources which was generally said by respondents who have played a key role in designing the overall Budget, to be in line with the different MedUp! Countries' needs**. Thus, as also expressed by a regional staff member, the existing disproportions in the allocation of financial resources across Countries depends, for instance, on the different activities carried out in each setting, the particular cost structures, the number of beneficiaries reached and the presence of other Oxfam-led interventions. In this framework, however, one respondent working in the Egyptian context has showed not to be in line with the general perception of fairness in financial resources allocation. According to the latter, in fact, as for certain project activities, fewer resources were allocated with respect to other project countries. Concerning this aspect, two points may be emphasized. First, this disproportion appears to be confirmed by the Budget. However, the related activities were indeed carried out. Second, in conformity with all other MedUp Countries, the quantification of the national portion of total Budget was determined through a mutual agreement between the Oxfam IT and national office staff that was present at the time MedUp! was designed.




Were the objectives timely reached?



Despite external constraints, the project has been timely reaching its results so far. Minor delays have been attributed to difficulties in engaging local stakeholders in project activities.

OBJECTIVES TIMELY REACHED ALTHOUGH WITH SOME MINOR DELAYS

Despite the diffusion of Covid-19 pandemic has slowed down or slightly postponed certain activities, the **project's results have been timely reached so far** (see MedUp! MEL Report). Apart from the constraints which have been imposed by **external factors**, such as Covid-19 and the more and more precarious economic and political situation in Lebanon – having the latter, however, little affected project timing so far– only **minor delays** have been reported. In some PMUs' opinion, these delays should be mostly attributed to encountered **difficulties in engaging local stakeholders** ( [Section Relevance](#)). However, no relevant drawbacks have been detected due to these delays.



Was partners' expertise conformed to project needs and objectives?



Diversity and complementarity of partners' expertise are perceived as key factors in pursuing project objectives. In some respondents' opinion, partners' knowledge and expertise could be further exploited.

GOOD AND COMPLEMENTARY OVERALL CONSORTIUM EXPERTISE BUT SINGLE PARTNERS' EXPERTISE NOT FULLY EXPLOITED

MedUp! partnership composition is perceived by the entire Consortium, as **one of the crucial Project's strengths** (see Annex 5, SWOT Analysis by MTE respondents). In particular, this is mainly attributed to the **diversity and complementarity** of partners' expertise. On the one hand, technical partners are endowed with **outstanding experience in leading Social Entrepreneurship-related initiatives** and relevant stakeholder **networks in the European context**; on the other, both Oxfam affiliates and, most of all, Southern Mediterranean partners enjoy a **well-consolidated presence and knowledge of the local contexts**¹⁸. Although not being endowed with a long-standing expertise on SE, Oxfam succeeded in building an effective partnership, ensuring both **technical and geographical coverage** to the intervention.

Despite this fact, it was argued that there is still **an untapped potential in terms of partners' expertise** to be exploited. In particular, it was said that the expertise of the EU technical partners and of Oxfam (with reference to its gender expertise) could have informed more the project's approach and activities. Moreover, succeeding in valorising the presence of Project associates¹⁹ has been mentioned as a desirable additional result for the project's incoming period. Among these, Banca Etica was pointed out as being endowed with a relevant financial expertise which could, indeed, be useful for the project.



Is current management and governance structure of the project fully functional to reach the project's objectives or is there a need to make operational adjustments?



Did internal governance guarantee inclusiveness of decision-making processes?



MedUp! complex governance structure is aimed at ensuring both efficiency and inclusiveness of decision-making processes. Oxfam central management is generally perceived to be very responsive to partners' requests and inputs. Cooperation within PMUs is efficient, smooth and based on effective mutual support. The same can be stated for the overall collaboration among project partners, despite some obstacles were encountered at first. However, the risk of excessive compartmentalization of partners' tasks still needs to be tackled, in some respondents' opinion. Finally, more than a regional project, MedUp! has been adopting a multi-country approach, as the regional dimension is indeed a potential leverage of the project, but not currently fully exploited. Respondents, in fact, sensed a poor and intermittent connection and dialogue among project countries.

¹⁸ For detailed information on partners' previous experiences refers to MedUp! Project Full Application.

¹⁹ Namely Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Tuscany Region, Banca Popolare Etica Società Cooperativa per Azioni and AIDDA (Associazione Imprenditrici e Donne Dirigenti di Azieda)

EFFECTIVE COORDINATING ROLE AND HIGH RESPONSIVENESS BY OXFAM IT

“ I have never worked remotely in any organization receiving so much support and coordination from central team. We have been supported, we can discuss, they [Oxfam IT] are always ready for feedback. ”

Oxfam IT is described by the MedUp! partners as **very committed and engaged in coordinating and fostering participatory processes**. Country PMUs perceive Oxfam IT as very **responsive** to their requests, succeeding in **balancing a strong leadership role with the ability to pursue mutual dialogue**.

A REMARKABLE COMPLEX STRUCTURE

“ In terms of planning, the project governance is very strong: everything follows specific patterns, rules, tasks. Ideally, the governance is amazing and how decisions are made and the pipelines for the decisions that Oxfam has put in place are remarkable. ”

Fully complying with Donor’s requirements of transparency and accountability, MedUp! is characterized by a **complex governance structure**, aimed at **ensuring both efficiency and inclusiveness of decision-making processes**. Project’s strategic governance is in fact composed by two bodies: the Steering Committee (SC) and the MedUp! Oxfam board. The Steering Committee gathers all project partners and has been created to “supervise the implementation of the project and provide strategic steer and orientation in order to achieve objectives and expected results” (First Year Project Document, Annex 15, MedUp! Project Governance ToR, p. 1). MedUp! Oxfam Board, on its part, acts at an intermediate level in order to reach internal consensus on main issues and decisions to be presented to the SC. At the operational level, the activities are set up and technically oriented by the Regional Project Management Unit. The latter is composed by a technical team, supervised and coordinated by a Regional Project Management, and a Regional Technical Committee whose main role is to advise and promote the consolidation of MedUp! positioning with respect to Social Entrepreneurship and Social Economy themes. Finally, the RPMU’s inferior branches encompass the staff working within the national PMUs.²⁰

Seven respondents, including the European Commission Focal Point for MedUp!, have applauded the outlined Project infrastructure, in its willingness to be at the same time well-organized and participative. Nevertheless, according to a number of project partners, once this complex and inclusive governance is implemented on the ground, it sometimes slows down the flow of the decision-making process, mostly due to numerous communication exchanges collecting feedbacks

²⁰ For a detailed description of Project governance, we refer to Annex 15, Year 1, “MedUp! Project Governance ToR”.

from all partners. When further investigating this aspect during Phase 2.2 of the evaluation, this was not considered as a relevant issue for the project effectiveness, although better communication and alignment among all partners was considered an aspect to be improved. As for the inclusivity of the decision-making process, respondents generally confirmed feeling properly involved in the project governance with a minor exception. Only in one case, in fact, some communication pitfalls were reported: in the Egyptian case, some advanced proposals and requests were not properly endorsed. When further investigating on this matter during Phase 2.2 of the evaluation, however, the decision-making process of the project was confirmed by participants to be inclusive.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

- **BETWEEN COUNTRIES' PMUs:**
A MULTI-COUNTRY RATHER THAN A REGIONAL APPROACH TO COORDINATION

Nine respondents, including country PMUs, technical advisors and project stakeholders from MedUp! regional platform, shared the opinion that, more than a regional project, MedUp! has been adopting a **multi-country approach**. To this respect, one respondent believed that the regional dimension is indeed a potential leverage of the project, but not currently fully exploited. Six respondents sensed a **poor and intermittent connection and dialogue among project countries**. One respondent, in particular, felt that communication among project PMUs and partners is more about updating on implementation rather than a regional level learning process. Hence, having more time and opportunities for exchange of practices and learning events among all project countries was believed to be desirable. Reasons for this have been mainly identified by two respondents with the fact that MENA region is “one of the least integrated in the world”, and in the absence of identifiable MENA region policy actors which the project can target, respectively.

- **WITHIN COUNTRIES' PMUs:**
POSITIVE COLLABORATION AND MUTUAL LEARNING WITHIN COUNTRIES' PMUs

Duality of local management is perceived as a relevant project's strength. Relationships within the national PMUs are believed to be smooth and characterized by **effective cooperation and mutual support**. Communication between the Oxfam affiliate representative and the local partner coordinator was said to be constant and fluent at national level. Daily collaboration is perceived as a chance for mutual improvement.

- **BETWEEN ALL THE PARTNERS:**
GENERALLY SMOOTH COLLABORATION AMONG PROJECT PARTNERS... WITH A SLOW START AND RISK OF EXCESSIVE COMPARTMENTALIZATION

“ At the first Steering Committee there was no common language. Between the first and second SC I had the perception that this gap had been filled. Having a professional partnership, not only competent but which puts itself out there, has made this possible. ”

Both project partners and the regional team members agreed on the fact that, despite a slow start, there is now a **good level of cooperation and synchronization** among all the implementing actors. In particular, even if two PMUs reported few initial misunderstandings about technical partners' tasks and role, national project managers have generally expressed their praise for **technical partners' flexibility and sensitiveness** with respect to the needs which have been emerging from the field, with one exception²¹.

Thus, the slow start has been attributed, on one side, to the brand new nature of the cooperation among actors who had mostly never worked together before this project and, on the other side, to the **lack of clarity over partners' roles and responsibilities**. The latter aspect has, in fact, was said to have initially generated confusion about who was in charge to carry out certain tasks, leading to some duplication of efforts between the local implementors and the technical experts. However, according to the respondents, this issue is now almost completely solved. Against this backdrop, another weak point which was reported as still needing to be properly addresses, is represented by the **potentially excessive compartmentalization of partner' actions** which hinders their holistic vision and knowledge of the overall project activities. For this reason, making the levels dialogue will be analysed as a crucial pillar for the project sustainability.

²¹ An explicit request to take some elements under consideration as for Egypt in preparation of a project webinar were said to be not taken into account causing a lack of Egyptian participants at the event. In example, it was reported that the Egyptian PMU asked the technical partner to send invitations to the webinars also in Arabic, as public officials tend to perceive as offensive all communication in foreign languages, however the request was not taken into account.

2.5 Sustainability

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- To what extent benefits of the initiative may continue after it ceased?
- To what extent technical, financial, environmental, social and institutional sustainability is ensured?
- Which kind of measures have been already put in place to ensure future sustainability of the project? Which ones still need to be further strengthened?

We acknowledge that the actual sustainability of the project can be correctly assessed only once all activities will be completed. Nevertheless, the Mid-term Evaluation can still provide a first impression of the sustainability potential of the project. At this stage, in fact, the project staff should have already laid the foundations of the measures that will ensure steadiness and dissemination of the generated benefits and/or changes even after the end of the intervention.

Indeed, it must be recognized that the MedUp! project, by virtue of its foreseen activities and expected results and outcomes, can be considered in itself a clear example of a **sustainability-oriented project design** aiming at addressing all the different components of sustainability. In this sense, **sustainability is strictly interdependent to the overall effectiveness of the project**. Thus, the greater and the more effective the project achievements are, the higher the probability that positive changes may keep on existing and further develop in the long run.

First, we outline the main drivers for future sustainability identified by the respondents during the interviews and the focus group discussions. Then, the primary findings about Medup!-supported SEs' effective enhancement in terms of sustainability potential are briefly presented. Finally, the main foundations to future sustainability laid so far by the project are examined, followed by the main challenges that MedUp! will need to tackle in the next phase of project implementation.



To what extent technical, financial, environmental, social and institutional sustainability is ensured?



Which kind of measures have been already put in place to ensure future sustainability of the project? Which ones still need to be further strengthened?



The sustainability-oriented project design has been confirmed and investigated during MTE activities. The project has been found to be properly addressing all the five dimensions of sustainability by putting in place concrete actions at all levels.

IDENTIFYING THE MAIN DRIVERS FOR FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY

All the key actors involved in the data collection activities were asked to identify which kind of changes triggered by the project are likely to guarantee future sustainability. Additional measures that should be put in place in order to ensure the preservation of positive outcomes after the end of the project were also asked.

The answers have been analysed, aggregated and categorized under the five dimensions of sustainability (technical, economic/financial, social, institutional, environmental). Thus, Table 25 displays the main drivers for sustainability identified by respondents during the interviews and the focus group discussions, together with insights about their current state of realization.

Table 25 - Main sustainability drivers and their progress in respondents' opinion

SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENT	LEVEL	MAIN DRIVERS FOR SUSTAINABILITY IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS DURING KIIs AND FGDs	LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT	CURRENT STATUS*
Cross-cutting	MICRO	Accurate selection of SEs	Achieved	//
TECHNICAL SUSTAINABILITY	MICRO	Increased SEs technical skills (→ see Effectiveness)	In progress	On the right track
	MESO	Increased quality and accessibility of SESOs' services (→ see Effectiveness)	In progress	On the right track
	ALL	Positive effects of Cross- fertilization and Peer Learning processes	In progress	On the right track
	MESO MICRO	Creation of national and international networks among SEs, SESOs and between SESOs and SEs (→see Effectiveness)	In progress	Challenging
	--	PMUs' connector role in creating local synergies and supporting ecosystem after the end of the project	In progress	Challenging
	--	Design and approval of "follow-up" projects	In progress	On the right track
ECONOMIC & FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	MICRO	Increased SEs' capacity to attract resources and generate income	In progress	Still too early to be assessed
	MICRO MESO	Creation of networks with financial actors/investors (→ see Relevance)	In progress	Challenging
	MICRO	Reduction in income inequality , especially for women and youth	In progress	Still too early to be assessed
SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	ALL	Good level of beneficiaries' ownership	In progress	Challenging
	ALL	Dissemination of SE culture and best practices , also thought the creation of "SE national heroes"	At an early stage	Most related activities are planned for years 3 and 4
	MICRO	Increased inclusiveness of SEs' governance structures (→ see BOX 5 Sustainability evidence from MedUp! Social Enterprises)	In progress	On the right track
	MICRO	Concrete empowerment of women and youth entrepreneurs	In progress	Still too early to be assessed
	MICRO	Increase in the positive social effects generated by SEs (→ see Section Effectiveness, Figure 11)	In progress	Still too early to be properly assessed
INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	MACRO (MESO)	Increased awareness of SE at policy level mainly through transfer of knowledge and the exposure to different regulations and contexts (→ see Effectiveness)	In progress	On the right track
	MACRO	Establishment of policies/regulations concerning SE ecosystem and inclusive growth (→ see Effectiveness)	In progress	On the right track
	ALL	Dialogue and alliances among the most important actors in the national SE ecosystems	In progress	Challenging
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	MICRO	Some of the SEs reduced their environmental footprint and/or tackle environmental problems	In progress	On the right track

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from project documentation and data collection activities

Items which have been labelled as "Challenging" in Table 25 are further investigated at the end of this Section.

BOX 5: SUSTAINABILITY EVIDENCE FROM MEDUP! SOCIAL ENTERPRISES



To what extent benefits of the initiative may continue after it ceased?



To what extent technical, financial, environmental, social and institutional sustainability is ensured?

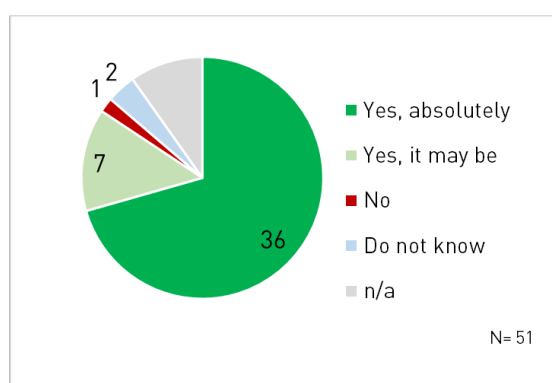


Micro-level beneficiaries provided evidence on project long-lasting impact potentials. Technical and social sustainability appear to be the most developed components of SEs' sustainability. More efforts are needed to further boost financial sustainability.

Being the social enterprises the micro-level beneficiaries, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive assessment on project's sustainability without investigating to what extent the implemented activities have concretely fostered SEs' abilities to be themselves sustainable beyond project's timeframe. In that sense, the long-lasting presence of benefits generated by MedUp! is partly related to the targeted SEs' actual enhancement (➡ see [Section Effectiveness](#)).

As far as micro-level beneficiaries are concerned, 70% of total sample (36 over the 51 SEs involved in the Mid-Term evaluation Survey) is certain that benefits provided by the project will continue to be present even after the end of the activities, while another 14% (7 SEs), provided a positive answer but with a higher degree of uncertainty (see Figure 14).

Figure 14 - Respondents' answer to the question "Do you think that the benefits you are getting by the project will continue to be present even after the end of the project?"



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

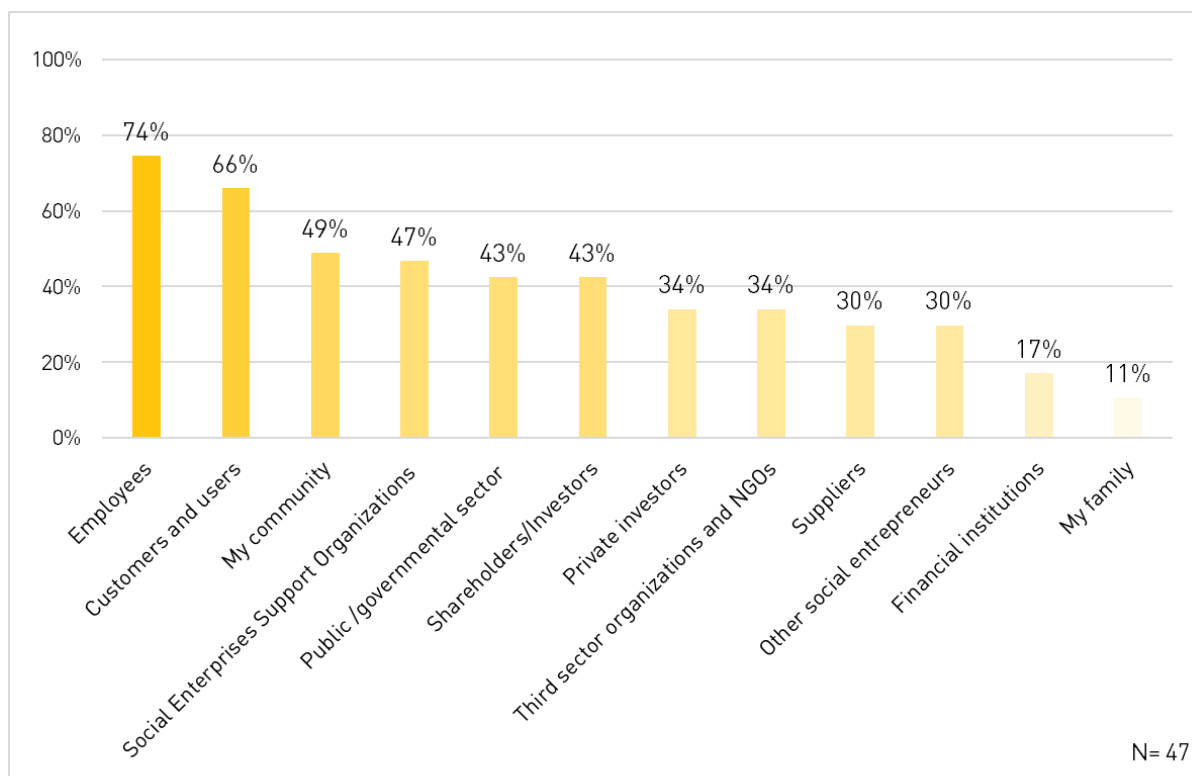
Besides respondents' perceptions, however, it is still premature to properly evaluate to what extent the positive changes generated by MedUp! are likely to trigger a significant impact on SEs' sustainability in the long run.

Nevertheless, primary insights on this aspect can be found investigating both whether there have been already concrete improvements in SEs' business and social impact performances (➡ [Section Effectiveness](#)) and if any change in governance structures and/or stakeholders' involvement have taken place.

Albeit being aspects strictly concerning MedUp! SEs, they are indeed indirectly related to the project's social sustainability, with potential implications also on its technical, economic and financial sustainability.

While Figures 11 and 12 in [Section Effectiveness](#), have already provided insights on the actual improvement in SEs' relationships with their key stakeholders, Figure 15 below sheds light on entrepreneurs' opinion on who the most important actors for future development of their business are. Related to this aspect, it is quite emblematic that if it is true that great importance is attributed to actors implicitly linked both to social and technical sustainability – namely employees (being mentioned by 74% of actual respondents), customers (66% of respondents), community (49% of respondents) and SESOs (47% of respondents), far less relevance is attributed to the actors potentially playing a key role in ensuring SEs' economic and financial sustainability, namely private investors (mentioned only by one third of respondents) and financial institutions (perceived as important only by the 17% of the sample). The issue concerning the creation of networks with financial players as important element to foster sustainability is further investigated in the last paragraph of this Section.

Figure 15 - Respondents' answer to the question "Who are the most important actors who will play a key role in your business future development?"

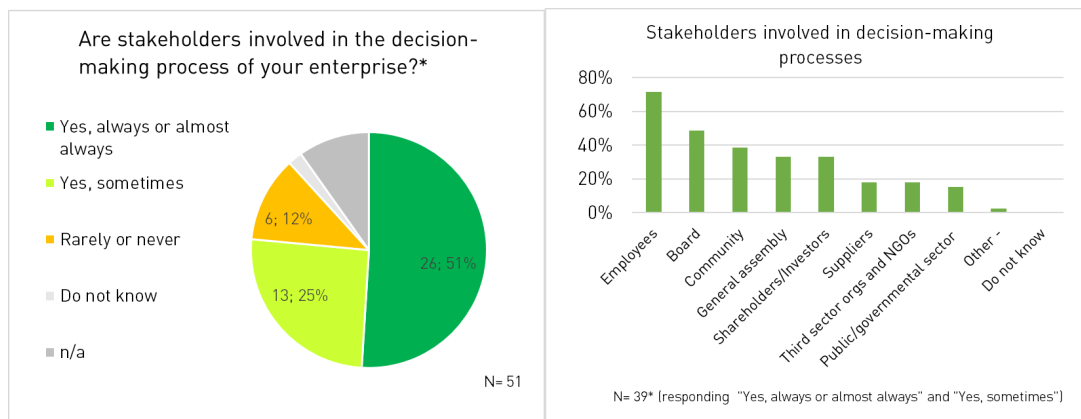


Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

Note: 47 out of 51 total respondents answered to this question

Going back to the social component of SEs' sustainability, it should be also noticed that almost half of the 51 social entrepreneurs responding to the survey declared that stakeholders are involved on a regularly basis in the decision-making processes regarding their enterprises, while a quarter of respondents declared to only sporadically involve them (Figure 16, graph on the left). Consistently with what has been detected so far, employees are involved in the decision-making processes of 72% of the enterprises, while 38% of them involve the community (Figure 16, graph on the right).

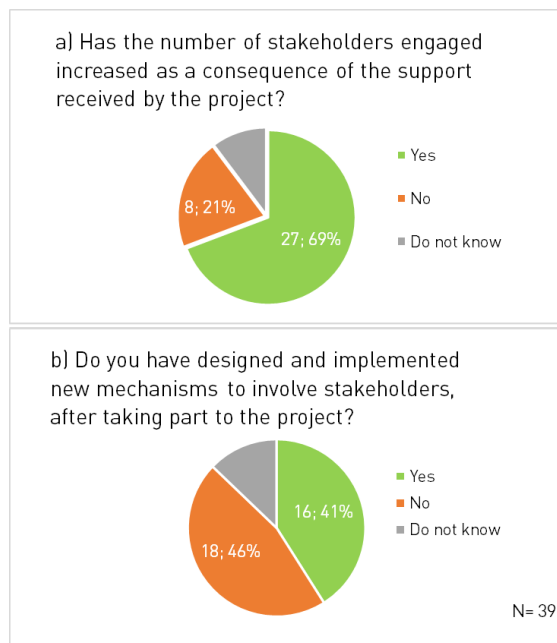
Figure 16 – Engagement of stakeholders in SEs decision-making process



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

Moreover, as a consequence of taking part in MedUp! project, 69% of SEs reported an increase in the number of stakeholders engaged (Figure 17a), while 41% of entrepreneurs declared also to have designed and implemented new mechanisms to involve stakeholders (Figure 17b).

Figure 17 - Changes in stakeholders engagement generated thank to MedUp! support



Source: ARCO's elaboration of data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Entrepreneurs

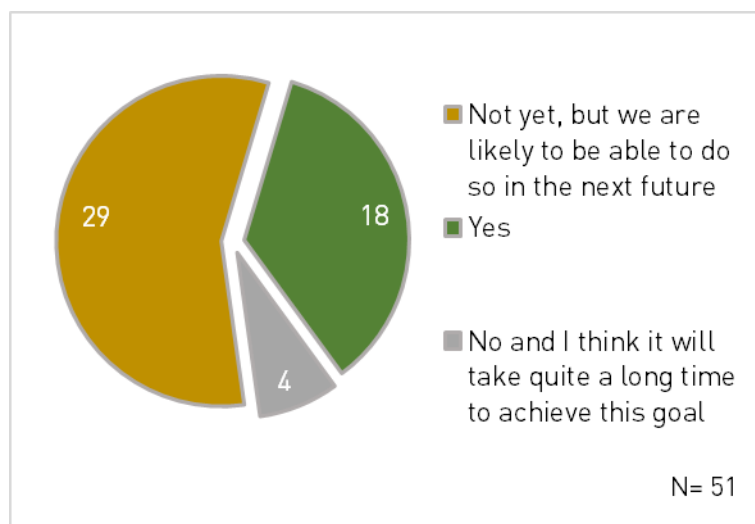
Note: only the respondents who have answered "Yes, always or almost always" ore "Yes sometimes" to the question displayed on the left-hand side of Figure 16 were asked to respond also to the questions reported in Figure 17.

All these findings provide good signs on SEs' future sustainability, as far as the social, and partially technical, components are concerned.

However, SE's financial sustainability still appears to be little developed. As can be noticed by examining Figure 18 ,only 18 out of 51 SEs is currently able to cover all their running costs. Even

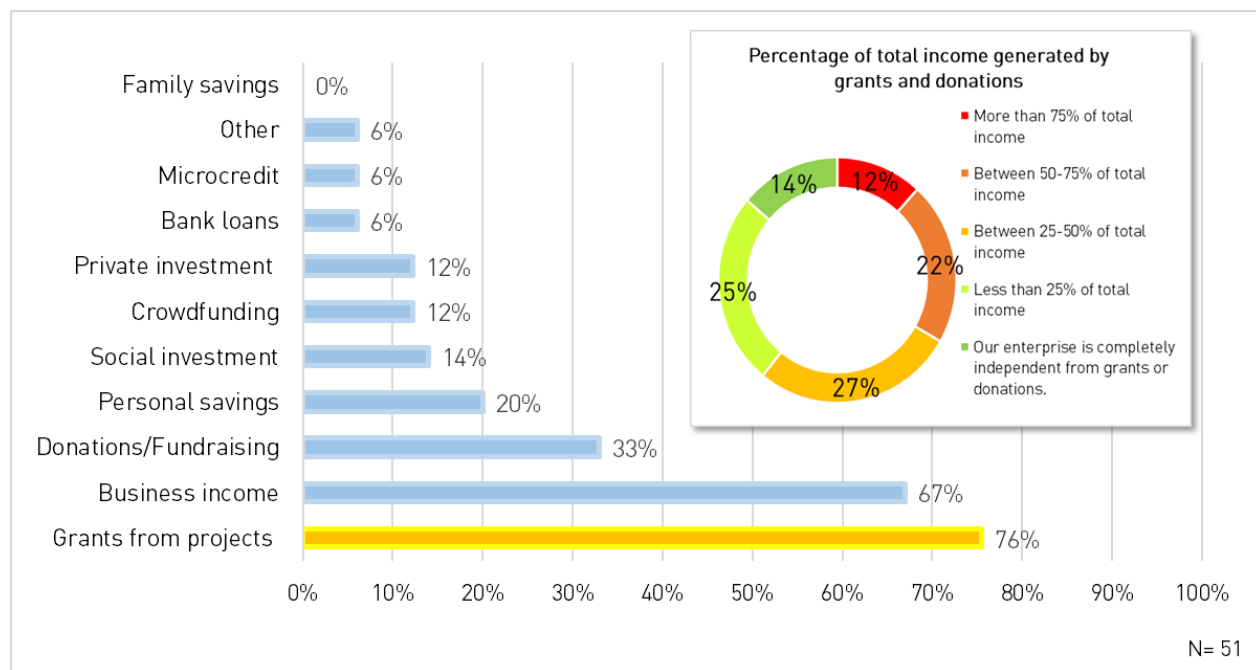
more significantly, by looking at the most important sources of income mentioned by the respondents (Figure 19), almost all of SEs declared that grants received from projects are one of their main sources of income. This implies an over reliance on external grants rather than on sustainable sources of funding. Moreover 1 out of 3 entrepreneurs declared to rely on grants and donations which represents more than 50% total business income.

Figure 18 - Respondents' answer to the question "Is your enterprise able to cover all running costs?"



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises

Figure 19 - Percentage of total respondents identifying each of the reported items as one the main sources of income for their SE and percentage of total income provided by grants and donations



Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Enterprises



Which kind of measures have been already put in place to ensure future sustainability of the project? Which ones still need to be further strengthened?

➔ On the one hand, two main pillars placing the foundations for the project's sustainability are (a) the choice of the eligibility criteria for SEs selection process and (b) the intention to target multiple levels of the SE ecosystem. On the other, the most relevant challenges to the project's sustainability rely on the ability of (i) promoting a multi-level dialogue in the ecosystems, (ii) supporting the creation of networks and synergies (iii) fostering local stakeholders' ownership and (iv) engaging financial players and the private sector. As far as MedUp! partnership is concerned, respondents highlighted the need to move from a micro-management to a more strategic-oriented approach.

GOOD PREMISES FOR LONG-LASTING BENEFITS

1. A TAILORED SELECTION OF THE MOST PROMISING SEs: SUSTAINABILITY AS A SELECTION CRITERIA

Almost 80% of MedUp! implementors have declared that a fundamental factor ensuring the sustainability of project results is represented, at micro level, by the **thoughtful choice of SEs' selection criteria** carried out by MedUp! Consortium.

In fact, in order to benefit from MedUp! support, both in term of sub-granting and technical assistance (project activities 3.1.1 and 3.1.2), social enterprises were expected to meet specific requirements, testifying both their growth and sustainability potentials.

Table 26 below shows the selection criteria²² which links to one or more dimensions of sustainability. As can be seen, all the five aspects of sustainability are incorporated in these criteria. **Accuracy of the selection** is another aspect on which all the respondents have agreed. In particular, the latter frequently mentioned that only 64 SEs (instead of 100 originally foreseen) were actually funded (➔ **Section Effectiveness**), implying that only the enterprises which seemed to be endowed with more chances to be successful and sustainable in the long-run were admitted to the project.

Table 26 – Selection criteria for SEs and their linkages to sustainability

GRANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	UNDERLYING SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENT
<input type="checkbox"/> The proposed project is implemented in the country and relevant to the business in the national context ;	✓ ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL ✓ SOCIAL/ ENVIRONMENTAL
<input type="checkbox"/> The proposed project focuses on growing the business ;	✓ ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL ✓ TECHNICAL ✓ SOCIAL/ ENVIRONMENTAL
<input type="checkbox"/> The applicant is not in any way involved in activities such as arms, tobacco, alcohol and gambling industries, registered in so-called tax-havens, or involved in environmental or human rights abuses or corruption ;	✓ SOCIAL/ ENVIRONMENTAL
<input type="checkbox"/> The applicant contributes at least 35% into the financing of the proposed activity ;	✓ ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL ✓ SOCIAL (OWNERSHIP)

²² The comprehensive list of criteria and procedures related to the sub-granting selection process are reported in the project document "EU MedUP! Fund – Country Manual" (Annex 2, Second Year Project documentation).

GRANT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	UNDERLYING SUSTAINABILITY COMPONENT
➤ Strength of team / entrepreneur: Qualifications, experience and track-record, strong motivation, energy and inspirational presence, unquestionable integrity, commitment to knowledge sharing;	✓SOCIAL ✓TECHNICAL
➤ Social / environmental impact: Vision/strategy and scale of impact (indicators such as jobs), approach for inclusion of women and youth, ethical and environmental standards (inclusive labor, tax, anti-corruption), level of innovation;	✓SOCIAL ✓ENVIRONMENTAL
➤ Growth potential of business: Potential of markets and products of SE, ability to grow supply and demand, potential to scale up to other markets, sustainability;	✓ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL ✓TECHNICAL
➤ Feasibility of proposal: Commercial, financial and technical feasibility, other risk factors such as political, security, partnership and more;	✓ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL ✓TECHNICAL
➤ Use of SE ecosystem: Use of existing SESOs in the project, leveraging of finance from FIs for own contribution.	✓INSTITUTIONAL ✓ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from project documentation

2. A SYSTEMIC AND INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH TARGETING THE ECOSYSTEM THROUGH CROSS-FERTILIZATION AND MUTUAL LEARNING

Another set of project's strengths which have been mentioned by the vast majority of respondents and may have a significant impact on sustainability is composed by the constituting features of MedUp! approach, namely 1) the fact that it is **targeting the whole ecosystem, engaging actors at all levels**, and 2) its willingness to systematically activate **cross-fertilization and peer-learning processes**.

As for the first point, the most immediately assessable result which will testify the success of this strategy is the creation, at least in the medium run, of both **vertical (intra-ecosystems) and horizontal (inter-ecosystems) networks among the different actors engaged by MedUp!**. Even if new networks have already been created (➡ **Section Effectiveness**), the most significant results both in term of number and intensity of new relations are expected to come in the next phase of project implementation.

As for the second point, Table 27 reports a list containing the most emblematic project activities designed according to the aforementioned approach. In particular, **a comprehensive and well-diversified menu of project methods and tools** have been designed in order to pursue MedUp! cross-fertilization and peer learning purposes.

Table 27 - Cross-fertilization and peer-learning in MedUp! design.

Key project activities explicitly encompassing a cross-fertilization and peer-learning processes	Main tools/actions foreseen by the project
A1.1.2. – Conduct policy and advocacy initiatives on the importance of social entrepreneurship as a mechanism for inclusive growth and job creation at national and cross-country level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National and regional advocacy events; ▪ Peer Regional Reviews; ▪ Study visits to EU countries; ▪ Advocacy at the regional level showcasing success stories of young MENA women in business using creative and innovative media.
A.2.1.4 – Organize exchange and networking events between public and private key stakeholders and their counterparts in the EU and in the Southern neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peer-to-peer learning; ▪ Regional events; ▪ Local networking and learning events; ▪ Online regional platform; ▪ Regional Scale- Up Boot camp for Social Entrepreneurs.

A.3.1.3 – Collecting good practices of promising social enterprises and disseminating them at national, regional and European level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of the most successful and replicable social entrepreneurship practices and social enterprises in each targeted country; ▪ Short documentary on successful SE stories to be distributed, with a guidebook, inter alia, to existing and potential social entrepreneurs to spread best practices.
A.3.1.4 – Defining a strategy for the replication of successful social enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of the SEs willing to be replicated in other geographical contexts; ▪ Exchange/coaching activities with aspiring social entrepreneurs to concretely stimulate the set-up of new businesses.

Source: ARCO's elaboration on data extracted from project documentation

It must be said, however, that not only projects' direct beneficiaries (namely SEs, SESOs and policy makers) and countries' local public and private stakeholders are intended to be involved in these virtuous processes. As stated by the respondents working in the project regional platform, mutual learning processes are expected to be activated even across PMUs and between the "two souls" constituting the PMUs themselves, namely Oxfam affiliate and the Southern Mediterranean co-applicants. However, while positive evidence of mutual exchange and support has been detected inside the PMUs at Country level, communication and learning across the different PMUs appeared to be still little developed (➡ **Section Efficiency**).

MOVING FROM A PROJECT-BASED TO A PROGRAMME-ORIENTED APPROACH: IDENTIFYING THE MAIN CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABILITY

“ I really would like that in MedUp! we could move from a project-based to a programme-oriented approach. I think this idea has been quite well understood. ”

Indeed, the above-reported sentence brilliantly synthesizes MedUp! intent to guarantee significant sustainability. In order to achieve a programme-oriented perspective, however, a set of challenges were identified throughout the evaluation process and will need to be addressed by MedUp! partnership in the next future. Indeed, all the challenges discussed hereinafter are to be interpreted as potential leverages that could help the Project to increase its future sustainability.

We anticipate that a common reflection on sustainability challenges will be carried out in Phase 2.2 of our Mid-term evaluation process. The latter will see the participatory involvement of all project partners' representatives.

Below we report the main challenges/leverage points of the project's sustainability which emerged from the first phase of our evaluation activities²³ :

- **CHALLENGE 1: ALLOWING FOR DIALOGUE AND SYNERGY ACROSS LEVELS**

²³ The order in which the items are presented is not related to an evaluation concerning the magnitude or the importance attributed to the related challenges.

To promote the creation and consolidation of enabling ecosystems for SEs in MedUp! countries, the project is trying to promote **system-based** and **long-term solutions to national and regional challenges**. Consistently with the project's willingness to target the ecosystems, a **multi-level dialogue** needs to be fostered. According to four implementing partners, MedUp!, despite being properly working at all levels, is still showing a **modest performance in effectively allowing for a true dialogue and synergy between the MICRO, MESO and MACRO levels**. That has been said to be true **both internally** – partners mostly focused on their level of intervention without putting enough effort for the creation of synergies across levels (☛ [Section Efficiency and Effectiveness](#)) – and, **to a minor extent, externally**, i.e. concerning the capacity of triggering public debates involving all the actors in the national ecosystems. Of course, concerning this last point, results obtained so far are quite heterogeneous across MedUp! countries and are subject to several external factors that may influence the effective achievements of those goals. In Lebanon and Jordan, for instance, the project is believed to be providing a fundamental support in promoting the national debate on the topic, while both in Egypt and in Morocco difficulties have been reported in engaging different actors for common initiatives (☛ [Section Effectiveness](#)). It must be said however that being a complex process, the creation of a vibrant and fruitful multi-level dialogue takes time. Moreover MedUp! design and ambitious objectives are already a promising evidence of its intention to tackle **SE ecosystems with a holistic approach across all levels**.

- **CHALLENGE 2: STIMULATING THE CREATION OF BOTH STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS**

During data collection activities, when asked which are the project's long-lasting changes, 80% of respondents highlighted the **importance of both national and international networks**. The European Commission Focal Point for MedUp! stressed the fundamental role of bilateral networking processes in ensuring sustainability at the highest levels. Conversely, all the other respondents mentioning this aspect, have highlighted the importance of the creation of networks among project's beneficiaries, namely SEs, SESOs and policymakers. Thus, along with policy changes, potential partnerships arising from the newly established networks are perceived as the **concrete long-lasting inheritance of the project**. Strictly linked both to the peer-learning processes and the (eco)systemic approach, the creation of partnerships and networks both at national and international level may well foster all the five dimensions of sustainability. Moreover, it can contribute to generate a proactive ground for future interventions aimed at supporting the already targeted ecosystems.

- **CHALLENGE 3: BOOSTING LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT AND OWNERSHIP**

Local stakeholders are key actors who can ensure the sustainability of project's outcomes after the implementation timeframe. However, obstacles related to **beneficiaries' scarce commitment and difficulties in the MACRO and MESO level stakeholders' engagement** have been detected throughout the implementation of the project (☛ [Section Relevance](#)), with significant implications also in the execution of Mid-Term Evaluation data collection activities (☛ [Annex 1- Methodology & Evaluation Limitations](#)). Indeed, **low levels of local stakeholders' engagement and commitment may face the risk to be translated into insufficient local ownership** which, in turn, can undermine both project's sustainability and impact in the long run.

- **CHALLENGE 4: ENGAGING FINANCIAL PLAYERS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

Generating networks between financial players and project's beneficiaries (both SEs and SESOs) is one of MedUp! pursued goals (☛ [Section Effectiveness](#)) and is fundamental to foster economic and financial sustainability of the ecosystems themselves. Similar reflections have been shared by MedUp! staff concerning the involvement of private sector entities. In addition, these actors **can play a role in shaping the ecosystems**, first of all by supporting SE actors in advocating for policy

changes aimed at facilitating business operations while, at the same time, boosting social impact. Curiously, when asked for the most important actors for the future development of their business, only one third of our survey sample of SEs named private investors and only 17% indicated financial institutions (Figure 15 discussed before in this Section). Nonetheless, SESO representatives indicated accessing financial means as a need and a challenge both for SEs and SESOs during our data collection process (👉 [Section Relevance](#)).

This appears to be consistent with the arguments reported in the SESOs' Need Assessment conducted by Euclid Network (Project Document: "Annex 24, Draft SESO Needs Assessment Report") whereas the absence of financial institutions specialized on the SE sector are found to be obstacles in the SE ecosystem. The SESO Need Assessment findings underline that, in some countries, many financial operators are unaware of SEs' activities or reluctant to cooperate with the SE sector. Moreover, in some cases, SEs are lacking information on where to find financial products and support and, in many cases, financial support and financial products for SEs' sustainability are not present at all. MedUp! support in this field is thus crucial.

- **CHALLENGE 5: MOVING FROM A MICRO-MANAGEMENT TO A STRATEGIC-ORIENTED APPROACH**

Another fundamental step to shift from a project-based to a programme-oriented approach depends on MedUp! Consortium's capacity to **enable the organizations constituting the PMUs to take the lead**, in such a way to maintain and further develop the virtuous processes activated by MedUp!, after the project's timeframe. Both the regional staff members and the international partners agreed on the importance of having the local co-applicants intensively working to generate **new synergies and projects at local level** (for present synergies 👉 [Section Coherence](#)). Being aware of the crucial role they will play in the next future is part of the **ownership-enhancing processes** that have been initiated through a dedicated dialogue between Oxfam IT and the PMUs themselves. However, the perception that, in general, **country-level management is more focused on daily implementation rather than on strategic perspectives** has been shared by regional staff members and by technical partners respondents. It must be highlighted, however, that this issue could be deriving from the project's governance and structure itself (👉 [Section Efficiency](#)). All the aforementioned respondents, however, declared that **PMUs' proactiveness is constantly growing**.

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3. Key learnings and Recommendations

3.1 Collective discussion on lessons learnt and potential recommendations for future actions

Phase 2.2 and 3 of the mid-term evaluation was aimed at collectively discussing and elaborating recommendations for the next years of the project implementation. To this respect, **two participatory online Working Groups** with key project implementors were conducted on October 5th and 6th, 2020. The latter provided the opportunity for mutual learning and cross-validation of key evaluation findings and recommendations as well as the appropriation and operationalization of evaluation learning outcomes by project implementors themselves. Key evaluation findings from Phase 2.1 and which provided room for further discussion, informed the questions that were asked participants during the online Working Groups, facilitated by the evaluators. In particular, for each question, participants were asked to brainstorm and discuss main lessons learnt from the project implementation and/or to propose concrete improving actions for the next years of the project implementation.

Table 28 below reports main key points emerging from this participatory activity. In particular, inputs discussed during both Working Groups are merged in Table 28 which reports participant's main contributions. The Working Groups concluded with an open discussion on how to further develop or revise the overall project's strategy in order to foster an enabling ecosystem for SEs. To facilitate the discussion and as a reference, the framework elaborated by Biggeri M., Bellucci, M & Testi E., 2017 was showcased.

Table 28 - Collective discussion lessons learnt and potential recommendations for future actions

QUESTION 1	 How can we keep a high SESOs' commitment to the project activities?
LESSONS LEARNT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In the Egyptian context, providing incentives helps, such as sharing research outputs, asking for feedbacks, setting up activities which are relevant for the target and tailored to the culture and the national ecosystem; ✓ Some SESOs are actually ESOs: the support provided to SEs is different. More effort to making them understand what a SESO is needed. ✓ It is important to make SESOs realize their role in the SE ecosystem (in connection with both the MICRO and MACRO level); ✓ Many SESOs have busy agendas and are not always available: the project activities face the risk of creating additional workload; ✓ In Tunisia, SEs already know the existing SESOs: this might be one of the reasons for their little engagement with MedUp! project; 	

- ✓ It is more effective to build a SESOs community, more than to target them individually;
- ✓ Project activities targeting SESOs are too general and similar across countries. Project countries are at different stages of SENT ecosystem development;
- ✓ SESOs are very motivated by peer exchanges with EU counterparts and networks;
- ✓ Broader connections and dialogue between MESO and MICRO level are needed;
- ✓ Risk of missing to communicate the “big picture”, to make the SESOs understand the broader dimension of the holistic journey that MedUp! is offering them.

CONCRETE ACTIONS

Overall Consortium:

- To foster their engagement, send SESOs the workshops' agenda in advance, ask for their feedbacks as for the workshops design and planning and reply to their questions before the workshop;
- Redesign activities involving SESOs in a way that is relevant for local contexts, perhaps continuously mapping the policies/trends in the local ecosystem and identifying SESOs' specific interests, objectives and supporting them in pursuing their goals. Strengthening connections between project partners and PMUs is advisable in this regard;
- Not burdening SESOs with extra workload; instead, supporting them in what they are already doing and in what they want to accomplish;
- Organize formal talks/international meetings at national and regional level among SESOs from all countries to increase SESOs' networking, capitalization, self-awareness and know-how (i.e. supporting the creation of SESOs' communities)
- Create more linkages between MESO and MICRO level project activities, i.e. supporting project SESOs to deliver mentoring and technical coaching to project SEs, hence alternating training to implementation;
- Increase internal communication/connection across the project management levels (MACRO, MESO, MICRO): broader communication on this topic.

PMUs:

- PMUs should take up the role of facilitators for the creation of connections between SEs and SESOs, in particular, and across project levels, in general;
- PMUs could present MedUp! activities in a more coherent manner to SESOs: make SESOs understand the benefits/advantages of participating to the overall MedUp! activities and the opportunity to bring their voice/opinion also at the MACRO level;

QUESTION 2



How should the GENDER-sensitive approach be translated into project activities?

LESSONS LEARNT

- ✓ There is/was a prevailing “neoliberal” belief that economic empowerment of women automatically entails transformation of social norms: lack of gender expertise at different levels is harmful;
- ✓ Gender component should have been included from the design phase of the project;
- ✓ Country implementors might perceive the gender component as a “burden”, as more workload;
- ✓ It is important to introduce the concept of SEs through gender-sensitive approach;
- ✓ Difficulties were partly due to the fact that the role and tasks of the Gender team had not been clearly communicated at an earlier stage of project implementation;
- ✓ In the Jordanian context, it proved to be helpful to adopt a gender-sensitive language and message in all communication channels and outreach activities. This allowed to have many women entrepreneurs and, considering the Jordanian context, having women leaders was a great success;
- ✓ Without a coherent and shared gender awareness-raising action, each PMU understood the gender sensitive approach by its own perspective

CONCRETE ACTIONS

Overall Consortium:

- Need for more gender expertise at different levels of implementation;
- Include more gender analysis in the coming stages;
- For future projects, provide more emphasis on gender component starting from the designing phase as well as ensure enough Gender expertise;
- As far as SEs are concerned, looking beyond numbers and indicators and trying to detect the potential for transformation of social norms: “number of women entrepreneurs” is not a sufficient indicator of a gender-sensitive approach;

PMUs:

- Promote direct consultations coming from PMUs to the Gender team, fostering proactive cooperation and engagement to ensure the project partners’ full understanding and alignment on gender aspects and enhancing a proactive attitude towards these topics. The Gender Team cannot follow up on all PMUs’ activities, but it is available to answer questions, provide technical expertise, provide resources and offer advice;

Gender Team:

- Gender team could prepare a presentation on how they see their expected role, then jointly discuss with PMUs;
- The Gender Team could design an operational gender action plan for all project levels of implementation, with also concrete examples, also drawing from the regional research findings;

- When lacking gender expertise, perhaps the right questions might not be asked. Hence, the Gender Team, instead of waiting for PMUs questions, could have a more active and stimulating role to play, advancing proposals to be discussed with PMUs;
- Gender team could oversee the implementation of gender-sensitive approach in carrying out the project activities.

QUESTION 3



QUESTION 4

Speeding up the decision-making process: which are the best solutions to overcome the inclusiveness/efficiency trade-off?

During the project's implementation, how can dialogue and synergy be fostered between project partners?

LESSONS LEARNT

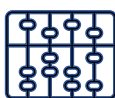
- ✓ Taking into consideration the complexity of the project, there might be some gaps in the decision-making but, in general, its inclusiveness and efficiency are fine. The issue is more about the need to improve efficiency and frequency of internal communication, connection and transparency between project partners.
- ✓ The complexity of the governance implies much coordination efforts among implementors that can sometimes be overwhelming and delaying the decisions/actions. Everyone's feedback is important, at the same time this should not slow down the process. What helps is to write everything down, understand who is involved in which activity, on different levels and focus communication between implementors that are actually involved in a specific action.
- ✓ Concerning the already existing internal communication channels:
 - The Whatsapp group is more vibrant in term of interactions, but sharing documents is not possible and communication tends to be confused;
 - The Facebook group is not active and not much used by project partners;
- ✓ Need for a clearer understanding of partners' roles and activities;
- ✓ Informal meetings/calls are also relevant for the promotion of dialogue, trust and synergy among partners;
- ✓ Face-to-face meetings/interactions are helpful for synergy, collaboration and trust: Covid-19 pandemic is a challenge in this respect;
- ✓ Usefulness of the propositional role of the partner leading a certain project activity: e.g. sharing a proposal and opening for feedbacks instead of opening to receive proposals from everyone;
- ✓ There are no decision-making issues at the regional level but perhaps between regional and country level. It is a highly decentralized project: country PMUs are deciding mostly everything at country level and there is a big part of budget for them;
- ✓ Some of the mechanisms already in place (e.g. working groups, regional meetings) are not very frequent. At the same time having more meetings is not so appealing.
- ✓ Sharing success stories from the field also helps the project implementation

CONCRETE ACTIONS

Overall Consortium:

- More focus on internal ongoing and updated communication and visibility of project's activities and progress among implementors, keep on increasing info exchanges and resources through digital and engagement platforms. Transparency and visibility can be improved to increase alignment and synergy among partners.
- Create a shared Calendar, displaying activities carried out in all countries also on a long-term view;
- Plan regular meetings across country PMUs, partners and with the regional team to discuss updates and specific/relevant issues as well as sharing best practices and offering mutual support;
- Use online tools and platforms (such as "Slack") to improve and speed-up the internal communication and sharing between partners (pros and cons, to be assessed by the project partners);
- Foster the use of existing platforms on the part of SESOs and SEs: e.g. Facebook group and LinkedIn age which are trying to collect stories from the field;
- Include project beneficiaries in meetings (SESOs and SEs), enlarge the base of engagement: shifting the power to the grassroots instead on focusing only on project's internal processes (pros and cons, to be assessed, risk to slow down even more the decision-making process)
- In order to make the decision-making process smoother, instead of all 6 country offices participating to the decision-making process there could be a rotating representative (nominated by the country offices) which is then in charge to communicate with country PMUs.
- Emphasize a more propositional approach when collectively discussing on decisions
- The project is very complex and innovative. Ideally it has to be inclusive but, sometimes, depending case by case, for the sake of efficiency, inclusivity can be sacrificed if it takes too long to reach a consensus.

QUESTION 5



How can we foster dialogue and synergy across and within SE ecosystem levels (micro, meso, macro level stakeholders)?

LESSONS LEARNT

- ✓ Now (also due to Covid-19 pandemic), people receive too many invitations to roundtables. For this reason, meetings should be designed in a more interesting/relevant/impactful way;
- ✓ PMUs are best placed to create connections and synergies across levels;
- ✓ Networks are fundamental also to increase SEs' awareness of their impact and boosting their contribution to the advocacy (MACRO level);
- ✓ Linkage between MICRO and MACRO level should be further enhanced;
- ✓ Importance of connecting SEs with financial institutions

CONCRETE ACTIONS

Overall Consortium:

- Organize regional panels which provide networking opportunities and visibility for actors at ALL levels;
- Improve frequent assessment of beneficiaries' specific needs and follow-up after workshops and events;
- Promote the creation of informal communities between SEs, SESOs and SEs-SESOs;
- Encourage SEs and SESOs to be more active on existing project communication platforms.

PMUs:

- Increase PMUs' effort in building partnerships, promote external synergies with other projects within the national and regional contexts and aligning MedUp! with other interventions;

QUESTION 6



Which are the best strategies to boost local stakeholders'/actors' ownership of the project's effects and approach?

LESSONS LEARNT

- ✓ Networking event planned to share experiences are welcomed by local stakeholders;
- ✓ Networking events help to boost ownership/learning.

CONCRETE ACTIONS

- Involve stakeholders in the designing of activities, ask for their feedbacks, harmonize and connect working agendas.

QUESTION 7



Which aspects of the project's strategy could be further developed/revised?

- ✓ More efforts on advocacy and political stakeholders' engagement;
- ✓ Enhance the linkages to foster collective actions;
- ✓ Focusing only on SESOs, or potential SESOs, which are really interested and concretely providing support to SEs;
- ✓ Development of institutions: institutionalization of social innovation going beyond informality;
- ✓ Focusing more on creating market linkages and access to external resources;

- ✓ Helping SESOs to grow internationally and regionally internationally and regionally internationally and regionally;
- ✓ Targeting small SESOs rather than try to change mindset of bigger/established organizations.

Source: Authors' elaboration of Working Groups' outcomes

3.2 Additional recommendations from evaluators

On the part of the evaluators, further recommendations are provided below:



FOSTERING SESOs ENGAGEMENT

Further considerations can be made in addition to those pointed out from project implementors themselves (Section 3.1):

- a) Project SESOs show a different level of business development and of learning needs, resulting in different levels of interest/commitment towards **capacity building activities**. It is advisable to start an in-depth dialogue with more committed SESOs in order to build with them a “modular” training set-up for upcoming MedUp! trainings. In other words, a more differentiated training package could be offered to SESOs in order to give them the possibility to choose the best suited and most useful training module.
- b) MedUp! could consider creating a label **for SESOs and SEs** (either benefitting or not benefitting from the project activities) responding to a definite set of criteria and evaluated by a commission formed by both partners and stakeholder's external to the project. The label would identify and allow for visibility and recognition of those performing SESOs effectively working to support SEs and SENT ecosystem in their day-to-day business. The awarding of the label could be used as an overriding requisite to access MedUp! online regional platform (Project activity A.2.1.4) - see point e).
- c) As the need to create local and international networking opportunities for SESOs results to be crucial, there is an opportunity to more effectively **link the two meso level activities** (A 2.1.2, A 2.1.4). This entails a strong coordination between Impact Hub (IH) and Euclid Network (EN) when designing their project activities, to the extent, for example, that IH trainings could more specifically address the **capacity of SESOs to effectively take advantage from networking opportunities** organized by EN (e.g. training SESOs on how to engage in partnerships, in project design, planning and budgeting, how to find and engage financial supporters etc.). Moreover, since accessing international markets for SEs has been pointed out as a need on the part of SESOs, this opens a window for a more targeted training on how to access these foreign markets, as well as for learning about international standards and certifications, export requirements and international regulations. This know-how could enrich the service portfolio that SESOs offer to SEs.
- d) Linked to the need for more networking opportunities for SESOs, it is indeed advisable to organize **more business/partnership oriented networking events allowing SESOs to meet potential partners, clients (SEs) and sources of funding**. As for the latter, ongoing project *Activity 2.1.3 - Promote networking activities between social*

entrepreneurship support organizations and local financial institutions –definitely has the potential to respond to this need. Moreover, connecting SESOs with potential clients (SEs) can certainly play as incentive for their commitment to the MedUp! project. MedUp! funded SEs and supported SESOs represent a pool of opportunities for both actors. Advices on fostering their connection are provided in points e), f), g).

- e) As for project activity A.2.1.4, which encompasses the creation of an online regional platform we suggest allowing access to SESOs and SEs conditional on them being awarded the “label” (see point b). The platform could work as an effective display window for their visibility, networking and market opportunity to which other public and private organizations, academia institutions and financial actors can access to.
- f) It is advisable to support and foster the creation/formalization of national “**Social Entrepreneurship Clubs**” in project countries engaging SEs and SESOs, enhancing internal synergy and connection as well as external “lobbying” capacity (e.g. at macro level) and ecosystem awareness (both internal and external). Identifying “Focal Points” within these “SENT Clubs” as their spokesperson/organizations in private-public dialogues and advocacy events can strengthen the link between the networking dimension with the advocacy dimension of MedUp! channels of intervention.
- g) MedUp! could launch a **regional award-winning competition for project countries SEs-SESOs**, either project beneficiaries or not, which best show to be effectively tackling specific social/environmental issues. The competition may be organized as follows:
 - MedUp! implementors could incentivize private foundations/financial institutions to act as sponsors for the competition, being the regional-level event a good chance for them to increase their visibility and exposure at the international level;
 - Set up a rule for which each SE has to be necessarily nominated by its supporting SESOs in order to participate in the competition. Each team comprised of one SE and one SESO will therefore act as unique participant and therefore the monetary prize will be equally divided into two parts and awarded to both organizations.
 - An International Evaluation Committee (which could be composed by MedUp! Consortium technical advisors and members of the project’s National Evaluation Committees, A 3.1.1 plus external stakeholders) will be in charge of assessing the quality and importance of the participants’ contribution to the SE Ecosystems, and will identify the winning SE-SESO teams. In addition to the evaluation committee, a remote voting system could also be promoted, engaging a wider audience from MedUp! countries, thus stimulating the active participation by national stakeholders.
 - Awards could be handed by policy level actors from the winning SEs/SESOs’ countries in occasion of a regional project event.

The main advantages of this award-winning competition are: i) to strengthen the link between SESOs and SEs, ii) allow for a greater visibility for both SEs and SESOs, iii) engage policy-level actors, iv) engage financial institutions/private foundations as sponsors and guests, v) allow for a wide regional resonance of MedUp! and the SENT ecosystem in the MENA region, vi) involve other stakeholders in project’s activities

- h) Finally, it is strongly advisable to improve and leverage an effective communication when offering “MedUp! package” of activities, opportunities and advantages to SESOs. The abovementioned suggestions as well as any project’s future strategy to maintain SESOs’ engagement need to be properly “marketed” and, hence, properly planned and integrated in MedUp! communication strategy, both at regional and at country level.

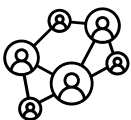


STRENGTHENING MEDUP! GENDER COMPONENT

Further considerations can be made on the unclear implementing strategy for the gender component as well as the untapped gender expertise which should inform the project's activities. We suggest a more proactive role on the part of the Gender team in terms of advising PMUs and overlooking at their project implementation, in terms of steering towards a gender-sensitive approach.

For example, the Gender team could provide **brief practical guidelines instructing project implementors** on the meaning of the gender-sensitive approach and on how to translate the latter in concrete actions when carrying out project activities.

Similarly, tailored guidelines could be useful to be delivered to **SESOs** in occasion of the capacity building trainings. A gender-sensitive know-how and approach on the part of SESOs, could help them delivering the appropriate support to Women Social Entrepreneurs (WSEs) as well as in increasing the gender awareness in the SENT ecosystems. Moreover, gender guidelines for SESOs can also inform them **on gender-related data** showcasing statistics on main benefits and impact of WSEs as well as SEs working for gender parity. This data can be used and disseminated by SESOs and SEs both to better communicate impact as a social marketing strategy to attract new investors/clients.



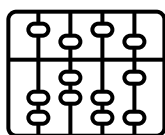
IMPROVING DIALOGUE AND SYNERGIE BETWEEN PROJECT PARTNERS

Further advice can be provided concerning the intermittent connection and dialogue among project countries as well as the excessive compartmentalization of partners' tasks.

Evaluation Working Groups were appreciated by participants, that showed the need for more **frequent collective learning and capitalization moments among project implementors**.

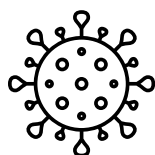
Hence, we advise to organize a **roundtable every 2-3 months**, perhaps facilitated by the Project Assistant/Communication Officer, between project PMUs in the first place, but also gathering technical partners and advisors, project affiliates and/or regional platform actors depending on the topic of discussion. As for the latter, we advise setting up a **participatory agenda** so that requests to discuss over certain issues may come from the facilitator, country PMUs, regional actors or project partners. Beneficiaries' representatives may be invited as well to share a first-hand opinion. The idea is to allow for a frequent opportunity for learning and exchange among project implementors, therefore setting a few topics/questions of the agenda and allow for a facilitated yet fluid collective discussion. Examples of topics that could be discuss are: updates on activities carried out across and within countries, challenges and lessons learnt concerning certain project activities, successful experiences/activities to be shared, potential synergies to be created among project countries, advisory briefing over certain topics (e.g. gender-sensitive approach, Social Entrepreneurship concepts and theories, etc.).

Moreover, as some respondents pointed out the project Facebook group to be underutilized, the WhatsApp Group too chaotic and emails not providing a very interactive channel, we advise (as also suggested by one PMU representative during our Working Groups) to use "Slack" platform, if considered appropriate. The latter could improve the Consortium direct and informal dialogue and yet a more structured platform in order to share real-time updates, feedback and documents.



FOSTERING DIALOGUE AND SYNERGY ACROSS AND WITHIN SE ECOSYSTEM LEVELS (MICRO, MESO, MACRO LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS)

Concerning the need for more dialogue and synergy across and within SE ecosystem levels (micro, meso, macro level stakeholders), we propose that besides fostering networking events to boost ownerships and learning, as well as external synergies and alignments with other projects, the project should increase the **PMUs connection with European Union delegations in project countries**. This can indeed foster the link between Southern Mediterranean Partners and the EU and open further project opportunities thus allowing for greater sustainability of MedUp! impacts, processes and learnings.



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES IMPOSED BY COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Covid- 19 pandemic has so far imposed disruptive consequences to worldwide economies, thus hindering also financial and social sustainability of the key players in the different national SE ecosystems.

In this framework, MedUp! project may provide a useful contribution in fostering beneficiaries' resilience, by putting in place focused actions at MACRO, MESO and MICRO levels.

To this purpose, some suggestions by ARCO are briefly reported.

At **MACRO LEVEL**, the current increase and harshening of social needs may represent a key point to focus on, in order to shed light on the crucial role that social enterprises can play in tackling and alleviating social problems. For this reason, awareness-raising actions at macro-level should be focused on highlighting and promoting SEs' positive contribution to social welfare. This can be pursued also by publicizing meaningful examples of SEs which are sustainably solving collective issues in the current setting.

As far as financial institutions are concerned, energies might be focused on lobbying and emphasizing SEs' ability to attract and repay credit.

At **MESO LEVEL**, significant emphasis should be put on digitalization (see also Recommendation "FOSTERING SESOs ENGAGEMENT"). In addition, project partners working at the MESO level may provide SESOs with a list of free digital tools that can be used for online networking and cooperation. The creation of on-demand digital short lessons to instruct SESOs on the utilization of these tools might be considered as well.

In order to support **MICRO-level** beneficiaries, attention should be paid to promoting SEs' financial liquidity, first of all by enhancing their capacities to access financing opportunities. To this purpose, specific training (or short video made available on demand) should be released. For instance, SEs might be provided with suggestions on concrete steps to effectively ask for credit

from banks and microcredit institutions. To be more effective, this activity might be carried out with the direct involvement of financial institutions, selected in each Country by the PMUs.

Crowdfunding opportunities for SEs might be explored as well, along with the enhancement of SEs' self-branding skills in order to become more attractive to private investors.

For SEs having an online market potential, technical support could encompass e-commerce techniques and tools.

Similarly to what could be done for SESOs, a list of free digital tools to work online might be shared also with SEs, together with an up-to-date list of grants, donations and emergency funds made available after the pandemic outbreak. Sponsorship by local foundations could be considered an additional avenue to explore.

As the last point, if viable, little modifications to the sub-granting procedures might be beneficial for SEs in the current situation.

Potential actions could be:

- flexibly adapting project's deadlines to the situation;
- decreasing the percentage of the in-kind contribution by SEs;
- providing a certain percentage of funds in advance;
- speeding up the processes for funds distribution;
- extending the sub-granting contract period.

ARCO's Overall Assessment

The findings from the mid-term evaluation confirm a **positive overall assessment** of project's contribution to the achievement of its global goal "promoting an enabling environment in the Southern Mediterranean partner countries for the development of the social entrepreneurship sector as a driver for inclusive growth and job creation".

So far, the project has been **properly detecting and addressing the needs** coming from the field, as well as efficiently tackling the emerging challenges with an adequate degree **of flexibility and foresight**.

Albeit project countries show different levels of SE ecosystem development, MedUp! actions have found to be **effective and significant at all levels** (namely the **MACRO**, **MESO**, and **MICRO** levels).

Moreover, the governance structure and the participatory approach to decision-making guarantee **transparency and inclusiveness of internal processes**, while **diversity and complementarity of partners** represent a key asset in the effective pursuance of MedUp! ambitious objectives.

Promising foundations for future sustainability have already been laid, provided that concrete actions have been put in place to properly address all the five dimensions (technical, economic, social, institutional, and environmental) of sustainability.

For the incoming implementation phase, additional efforts could be made in order to **engage and stimulate a more proactive involvement of Social Entrepreneurship Support Organizations in the project's activities**, along with further providing local stakeholders with valuable opportunities to **foster dialogue and create synergies across and within the national SE ecosystems**.

As far as the MedUp! Consortium internal processes are concerned, it would be useful to provide the project partners with more frequent opportunities to engage in facilitated roundtables aimed at promoting **mutual learning and capitalization** over topics set up through a **participatory agenda**. Finally, increasing partners' **mastery of gender topics** is another important aspect to be fostered in order to make the project's actions even more effective with respect to the pursued gender-sensitive approach.

Annexes

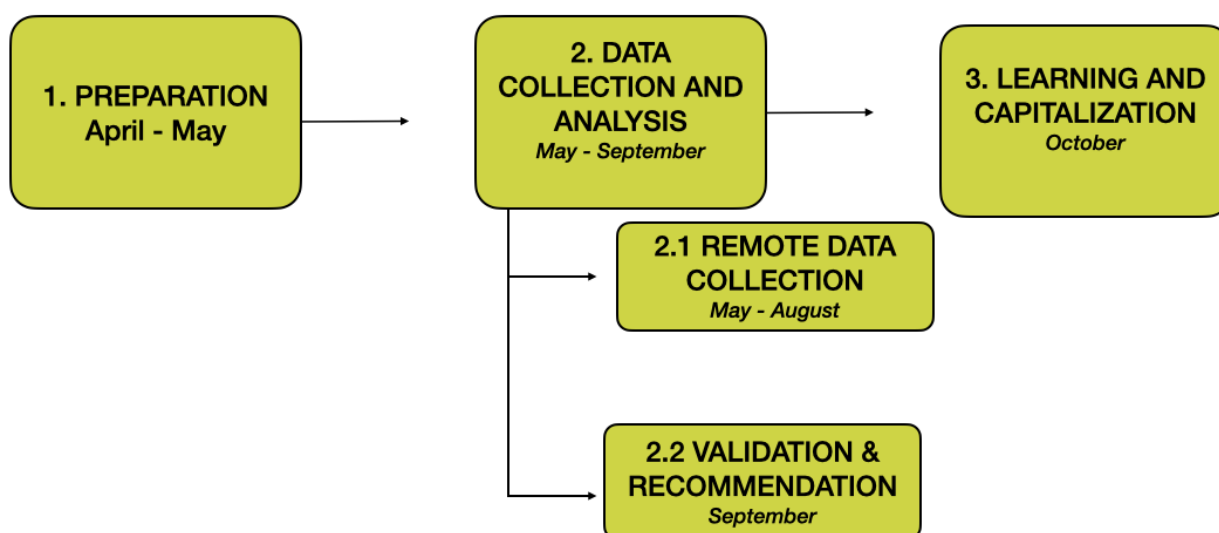
Annex 1- Methodology & Evaluation Limitations

The methodology used to conduct the Mid-Term Evaluation of the MedUp! project was elaborated with the specific purpose to provide comprehensive and detailed insights and learnings about the results achieved by the project in the first 24 months of its implementation. Moreover, the methodology, presented and explained hereinafter, builds on a Preparation phase which was carried out by ARCO researchers in close collaboration with the Project's Consortium.

Evaluation Phases, Methods and Tools

ARCO's researchers identified three different phases of the mid-term evaluation, namely 1) **Preparation**, 2) **Data Collection and Analysis**, and 3) **Learning & Capitalization**, which are presented below.

Main MTE Evaluation Phases:



Phase 1. Preparation

During the preparatory phase, an open and collaborative approach was maintained with the MedUp! Consortium in order to agree on the general **methodology**, the detailed **workplan** as well as on the **Data Collection Tools** for the Mid-Term evaluation. The latter, in fact, also integrated the Consortium feedbacks and inputs.

Moreover, during this phase, all available project's documents and secondary data were collected and taken into account for the elaboration of the data collection tools. This step was essential in order to avoid data duplication during the collection phase.

Phase 2. Data collection and analysis

Given the constraints due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the evaluators could not travel to project countries, therefore they carried out a remote-based data collection as for Phase 2.1. The same approach will be used in the upcoming Phase 2.2 -Validation and Recommendation. The table below summarises the main features of each Phase.

Overview on Phase 2.1 and 2.2 of MedUp! MTE

Data collection & analysis phase	Period	Evaluation Tools	Remote Communication Tool
Phase 2.1 Remote Data Collection	May-August 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey • Online KIIs • Online FGDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online platform • Online/Phone calls
Phase 2.2 Remote Validation & Recommendation	September-October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online/Phone calls
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online FGDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online/Phone calls

As for **Phase 2.1** of the evaluation, three different data collection methods were adopted each targeting specific evaluation objectives and different stakeholders:

- Semi-structured one-to-one interviews to key informants (KII);
- Structured Focus Group Discussions (SFGD);
- Online questionnaire.

For each evaluation method, the following table highlights the data collection tool, the type of data collected and the practical organization in carrying out the assessment.

The following table also shows that for certain data collection tools, the number of respondents do not correspond to the numbers actually planned. This issue will be further investigated in the following section “Evaluation limitations and workplan variation”. The full list of MTE respondents is available in Annex 2, Data Collection Agenda: MTE respondents .

As for the practical organisation in carrying out the data collection phase:


- ARCO closely coordinated with the Regional Project Manager to identify the project staff to be interviewed, including technical partners and advisors. Moreover, the Regional Project Manager, the project MEAL Advisor and the Communication Officer were copied in all emails sent by ARCO when communicating and coordinating with the MTE respondents throughout the entire data collection phase.
- ARCO closely coordinated with the country PMUs’ staff in identifying the two respondents representing Oxfam Affiliated entities and the Southern Mediterranean Co-applicants. In particular, each PMU freely decided and indicated their two representatives to be interviewed by ARCO.
- ARCO closely coordinated with the country PMUs’ staff in identifying the Local Stakeholders and SESOs respondents. Moreover, for each project country, PMUs’ representatives were always copied in all emails sent by ARCO to reach out to respondents in order to schedule the interviews. Hence, PMUs representatives were always kept up to date on the data collection progress in their respective countries throughout the entire data collection phase.
- Interviews and SFGDs were carried out by ARCO’s researchers in English and French at respondents’ convenience. Some interviews were carried out also in Arabic.

- ARCO ensured as much flexibility as possible in order to accommodate respondents' preferences when scheduling the date and time of the interviews and SFGDs. In particular, Doodle platform was used to facilitate coordination when scheduling date and time of the SFGDs.
- Almost all interviews and SFGDs were recorded, prior consent on the part of respondents. Recording were used exclusively by ARCO's researchers for evaluation purposes.

As for the practical organisation in administering the online questionnaire to the project's SEs:

- The survey used a structured questionnaire with both open and multiple-choice questions.
- The questionnaire was administered in English, French and Arabic through SurveyGizmo, a professional online survey platform.
- A pilot test was conducted with 1 social entrepreneur in each Country (selected with the national PMUs) in order to verify the quality and robustness of the questionnaire. The respondent's feedback was collected through the survey evaluation form which was sent along with the survey. The pilot feedbacks were integrated in the final version of the questionnaire.
- The survey administration was carried out in close collaboration with country PMUs. In fact, the survey link was sent by ARCO to each country PMU which, in turn, shared it with all project social entrepreneurs. Respondents were given two weeks to complete the survey. PMUs supported ARCO in soliciting their responses before the final completion deadline.

Methods and Tools for ARCO MTE Data Collection - Phase 2.1

Method	Data Collection Tool	Target Group	Type of Data
Individual interviews	<p>Semi-structured one-to-one interviews (via online platform)</p>  <p>N° = 28 (out of 30 planned)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Project Manager • Technical Advisors (Diesis, Euclid Network, Impact Hub and Oxfam Novib) • Gender Advisor • MEAL advisor • Grant Manager • National Project Management Unit (PMUs) Staff (Oxfam Affiliated entities + Southern Mediterranean Co-applicants) • European Commission (EC) Project Officer • Policy makers • Other Local Stakeholders (identified in coordination with PMUs) • SESOs technical staff 	Quantitative and qualitative
Objectives			
<p>KIO1) Determine the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project and the tools adopted (criteria OECD-DAC).</p> <p>KIO2) Verify the level of participation and the contribution to the implementation of the activities of the partners and the project staff.</p> <p>KIO3) Verify the perception and opinion of the project staff, partners, trainers and technical staff.</p> <p>KIO4) Determine the main results and outcomes.</p> <p>KIO5) Identify best practices, key learning, lessons, areas to be strengthened as well as actors both at national and regional level to be included in the next years of project implementation.</p> <p>KIO6) Assess whether the current management and governance structure of the project is fully functional to reach the project's objectives or there is a need to make operational adjustments, with reference to for the regional and gender dimensions.</p>			

KIO7) Analyse the main obstacles encountered, the strengths and the weaknesses, the opportunities and threats of the project (SWOT).

KIO8) Verify if there have been any external factors that can have influenced the project activities and results and eventual delays according to the project timeline.

KIO9) Understand to what extent the project is gender inclusive.

KI10) Assess the current policies to support Social Enterprises in their capacity to bring positive change to the sector at the country-level.

KI11) Analyse possible policies and policy instruments at the macro level (MENA region) in order to promote social enterprises and the most relevant stakeholders to be involved


KI12) Collect context-based information that may be useful in deepening and complementing the dimensions investigated in the Survey for SEs.

As for SESO technical staff:

SFGO7) Investigate with the stakeholders involved in the project the dimensions in which the project produced a visible change and the relative magnitude on each dimension using a reduced version of the enabling ecosystem framework created by Biggeri and Testi (2018)

SFGO8) Verify the results of the training received by the Social Entrepreneurship Support Organizations (SESOs) and their ability to effectively support SEs to grow and scale up in a sustainable way (Op2.1)

SFGO9) Assess which policies and actions both at the national and regional level could be implemented by the project and with which stakeholders

Method	Data Collection Tool	Target Group	Type of Data
Participatory methods	<p>Structured Focus group discussions</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N° = 3 (out of 6 planned) <u>national-based</u> (with SESO representatives from Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine- one SFGD for each country) N° = 1 <u>transnational</u> (with Jordanian, Lebanese and Palestinian PMU representatives) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SESOs' technical staff National PMUs (one for each country) 	Qualitative

Objectives

National PMUs

SFGO1) Determine the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project and the tools adopted (criteria OECD-DAC).

SFGO2) Identify best practices, key learnings, lessons and areas to be strengthened for future project implementation

SFGO3) Assess whether the current management and governance of the project is fully functional to reach the project's objectives or if operational adjustments are needed, with reference to the regional and gender dimensions.

SFGO4) Determine main results and outcomes.

SFGO5) Determine main obstacles perceived by National PMU's staff.


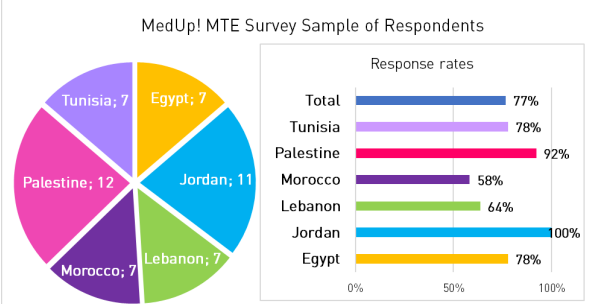
SFGO6) Draw a systemic analysis about peculiarities and interlinkages among national contexts, performances and characterizations.

SESO's technical staff

SFGO7) Investigate with the stakeholders involved in the project the dimensions in which the project produced a visible change and the relative magnitude on each dimension using a reduced version of the enabling ecosystem framework created by Biggeri and Testi (2018)

SFGO8) Verify the results of the training received by the Social Entrepreneurship Support Organizations (SESOS) and their ability to effectively support SEs to grow and scale up in a sustainable way (Op2.1)

SFGO9) Assess which policies and actions both at the national and regional level could be implemented by the project and with which stakeholders

Method	Data Collection Tool	Target Group	Type of Data
Survey questionnaire	 Online questionnaire	51 Social Enterprises (80% of targeted project Social Enterprises completed the survey)  N= 51	Quantitative and qualitative

Objectives

SO1) Position the SEs within the most common international criteria that define social enterprises (EMES criteria).

SO2) Categorize the SEs according to their business model and most common business models (e.g. cross-subsidy, market connector, fee for service etc.).

SO3) Evaluate the project's actions aimed at increasing workers' skills, jobs opportunities and the participation of youth and women in the labor market.

SO4) Evaluate the impact of the investments in the SEs on their turnover and their possibility to achieve the project's overall objective.

SO5) Evaluate the capacity of the social enterprises involved in the project to deliver social impact in the community.

SO6) Verify the influence of macro and meso features of the ecosystem on the SEs in terms of enabling factors and constraints also referring to OC, IOC1, IOC2 and IOC3 indicators in the logical framework.

SO7) Peer-to-peer learning, networking and partnership are facilitated among North-South and South-South key counterparts in order to build cross-border networks, share best practices and stimulate learning (Op 2.2).

SO8) Verify if the best practices on social entrepreneurship are widely disseminated among national, regional and international audiences for replication. (Op3.2)

SO9) Verify if one hundred SEs become more financially and socially sustainable and able to scale up. (Op3.1)

Data gathered for objectives SO1 and SO2 will provide us with additional possibility for data analysis of SO3, SO4, SO5.

See Annex 3 for the full questionnaire
 See Annex 7 for more information on the SEs responding to the MTE online questionnaire


Phase 2.2 of the evaluation was mainly devoted to **case stories** and **participatory Working Groups** with key project implementors aimed at **validating findings and collectively elaborating recommendations** for the next years of the project implementation. The latter was also fundamental for the **cross- validation of findings**, as well as for the process of **appropriation and operationalization of evaluation learning outcomes by stakeholders themselves**. In fact, the participatory discussions about projects results constitutes a fundamental component of the evaluation learning process and is also aimed at contributing to **foster participants' ownership and accountability**. Moreover, the **6 case stories** (one per each country) were developed in order to highlight stories of particularly successful beneficiaries and to provide in-depth knowledge about the effects of the project implementation, as well as key learnings to the consortium (see Annex 10). The case stories had been elaborated based on in-depth interviews with social entrepreneurs benefitting from the project (see Annex 9 for the interview questions). The latter were selected by ARCO staff in accordance with the MedUp! Consortium and the PMUs. The following selection criteria were followed:


- Social and innovative Business Models;
- Relatively low reliance on grants and donations;
- Actual or potential ability to generate profit;
- Reinvestment of profit in the company's business or redistribution of profits among SE's disadvantaged workers;
- Relatively consistent project support in achieving the SE's social goals;
- Engagement of stakeholders in SEs' decision-making processes;
- Action plan or practice favouring gender equality;
- Significant engagement of women and youth in the SEs' business.

The selection was based on data collected through the online questionnaire administered to SEs during Phase 2.1 of the evaluation and integrated with PMUs first hands knowledge of the social entrepreneurs.

Social Entrepreneurs were interviewed in Arabic on Zoom online platform.

Methods and Tools for ARCO MTE Data Collection - Phase 2.2

Method	Data Collection Tool	Target Group	Type of Data
Case Stories	 <p>In-depth interviews (via online platform)</p> <p><i>N= 6 (1 per each project country)</i></p>	<p>Direct Beneficiaries <i>Social Entrepreneurs selected as good practice</i></p>	Qualitative
Objectives			

<p>CSO1) Delve into particularly significant stories to show changes triggered by the project activities on SEs, both positive and negative</p> <p>CSO2) Assessing the existence of gender-related factors affecting the opportunities to become a successful social entrepreneur</p> <p>CSO3) Focus on the personal history of the Social Entrepreneurs, their motivations and their relationship with society and local culture</p> <p>CSO4) Identify best practices, key learnings, lessons, areas to be strengthened.</p>			
Method	Data Collection Tool	Target Group	Type of Data
Participatory methods	<p>Working Group discussions</p>  <p>N° = 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Project Manager Project Assistant/Communication Officer Technical Advisors (Diesis, Euclid Network, Impact Hub and Oxfam Novib) Gender Advisor MEAL advisor Grant Manager Global Portfolio manager Regional Head of Programs (Regional Platform) National Project Management Unit (PMUs) Staff (Oxfam Affiliated entities + Southern Mediterranean Co-applicants) 	Qualitative
Objectives			
Mutual learning and collective elaboration of recommendations for the next years of the project implementation			

Phase 3. Learning and Capitalization

The present evaluation report containing all the key facts and the most important evidences and recommendations, capitalizing what has emerged from the preliminary findings (Chapter 2), results from validation & recommendation phase (Chapter 3), and the lessons learnt from case stories (Annex 10).

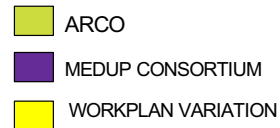
Evaluation limitations and workplan variation

The Mid-Term Evaluation faced certain challenges which will be discussed hereinafter. For this reason, the evaluation limitations should be taken into account when generalizing our findings.

The data collection phase revealed to be more demanding than expected mostly because of **communication challenges with some respondents**.

This issue caused, first of all, an overall delay of the data collection phase. The figure below highlights in yellow the workplan adjustments put in place.

ARCO's MTE Workplan Variation



A	May				June				July					August				September				October				
W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 5	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 5
2	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	22	2	0	1	2	27	0	1	1	2	3	0	1	2	2	0	1	1	2
7	4	1	8	5	1	8	5	-	9	6	3	0	-	3	0	7	4	1	7	4	1	8	5	2	9	6
0	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	26	-	-	-	-	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	8	5	2	9	5	2	9		3	0	7	4		7	4	1	8	4	1	8	5	2	9	6	3	0

1. PREPARATION																										
Sharing of second year project documentation		MedUp Consortium																								
Desk research on project's documents		ARCO																								
Tools elaboration for data collection (call with Oxfam)		ARCO & MedUp Consortium																								
Elaboration of the inception report & data collection tools		ARCO																								
Delivery of Inception report & data collection tools (May 20 th)																										
Validation of the Inception report & data collection tools		MedUp Consortium																								
2. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS																										
Phase 2.1 Remote data collection	Organization and scheduling of data collection	ARCO																								
	Online Key informant interviews & FGD																									
	Finalization and Pilot test of the questionnaire																									
	Online survey for 100 SEs																									
	Data cleaning, systematization and analysis																									
	Elaboration of preliminary findings report																									
	Delivery of preliminary findings report (August 28 th > September 14th)																									
Phase 2.2	Case stories & Validation of Phase 2.1	ARCO																								
3. LEARNING AND CAPITALIZATION																										
Writing of the mid-term final evaluation report (draft)		ARCO																								
Delivery of mid-term final evaluation report (draft) + ppt (October 9 th > October 19th)																										
Feedbacks on Mid-term final evaluation report (draft)		MedUp Consortium																								
Integration of feedback		ARCO																								
Delivery of the mid-term final evaluation report (October 28 th > October 30th)																										

In fact, in some cases, it took much time for respondents to provide their availabilities and to schedule a time and date for the interview/SFGD. In others, ARCO's researchers had to replace respondents (in coordination with country PMUs) as the invitations to take part to the evaluation received no reply in the first attempt.

Moreover, PMUs were ARCO's fundamental entry points in order to identify and reach the evaluation target groups, namely local stakeholders, SESO representatives and social entrepreneurs. Their support was, indeed, extremely useful in order to carry out the data collection phase.

However, in some cases, communication with the project PMUs was quite slow, causing delays in the workplan or the impossibility to engage some stakeholders in the MTE. For this reason, some project countries have a number of respondents which is lower than planned.

Hence, as a consequence of the communication challenges ARCO faced, certain **stakeholders and certain countries** are less **represented** in the evaluation findings, notwithstanding the several attempts that have been made to reschedule the appointments.

The table below summarizes the data collection activities that were possible to conduct per each country.

Data collection Agenda

	EGYPT	JORDAN	LEBANON	MOROCCO	PALESTINE	TUNISIA
Interview with Country PMUs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Policy-Level Stakeholder	⊘	✓	✓	✓	✓	⊘
Local Stakeholder	⊘	⊘	✓	✓	✓	✓
National FGD With SESO Representatives	⊘	⊘	Only 2 SESOs	✓	✓	⊘
Individual Interview with SESO Representatives	⊘	✓ (1)	✓ (2)	Not required	Not required	✓ (2)
Participation to Transnational FGD with PMUs	⊘	✓	✓	⊘	✓	⊘
SE Survey Respondents	78% (7)	100% (11)	64% (7)	58% (7)	92% (12)	78% (7)
Participation to Working Group Discussion 1	⊘	✓	⊘	✓	⊘	⊘
Participation to Working Group Discussion 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual interview with Social Entrepreneurs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

We highlight that project **SESO representative were the hardest to engage** in the foreseen SFGDs which were supposed to take place one per each project country

In order to mitigate the risk of a relevant low representativity of **MESO** level project beneficiaries and in agreement with the RPM, ARCO's researchers tried to reach SESO representatives with a second attempt through targeted and individual interviews instead of FGDs when required. This strategy allowed to include six SESO respondents' feedback, therefore, to guarantee a minimum of representativity as for **MESO** level beneficiaries in Lebanon, Jordan and Tunisia.

In spite of our efforts, however, we alert on the low representativity of this category of project stakeholders in our Mid-Term Evaluation findings.

Similar difficulties were encountered in scheduling the transnational SFGD with country PMUs which was supposed to gather one representative of each project PMU. Only three out of six participants were present at our scheduled SFGD.

ARCO's researchers tried a second attempt to organize another transnational SFGD with the PMUs which were not present in the first one, but participation still remained too low to organize it.

Annex 2 - Data Collection Agenda: MTE respondents

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Data collection tool</i>	<i>Project stakeholder</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Date</i>
1. <i>Sherwet Ahmed</i>	Semi-structured interview	PMU representative	Program Coordinator – Oxfam Egypt	03/07/20
2. <i>Margreet Magdy</i>	Semi-structured interview + Working Group	PMU representative	Director of Business Incubator – SEKEM Egypt	03/07/20 06/10/20
3. <i>Wannis Hovig</i>	Semi-structured interview//Working Group	PMU representative	Project Manager - Oxfam Lebanon	2/07/20 06/10/20
4. <i>Zeina Maroush</i>	Semi-structured interview//Structured FGD	PMU representative	Project officer - Oxfam Lebanon	2/07/20 07/08/20
5. <i>Nada Qaddoura</i>	Semi-structured interview//Structured FGD//Working Group	PMU representative	Economic Justice Project Manager - Oxfam Jordan	01/07/20 07/08/20 06/10/20
6. <i>Mohammad Ali Al-Amoush</i>	Semi-structured interview	PMU representative	Deputy/ Executive Director – JOHUD Jordan	01/07/20
7. <i>Salam Yusef</i>	Working Group	PMU representative	JOHUD Jordan	05/10/20 05/10/20
8. <i>Mohammed Sawafta</i>	Semi-structured interview	PMU representative	Economic Development Programme Manager - Oxfam Palestine	23/06/20
9. <i>Huthayfa Assi</i>	Semi-structured interview // Structured FGD// Working Group	PMU representative	Project Coordinator – PARC Palestine	23/06/20 07/08/20 06/10/20
10. <i>Ahmed Ben Nejma</i>	Semi-structured interview//Working Group	PMU representative	Project Officer - Oxfam Tunisia	08/07/20 06/10/20

11. <i>Afef Ajengui</i>	Semi-structured interview// Working Group	PMU representative	Project Officer – TCSE Tunisia	08/07/20 06/10/20
12. <i>Hind Nejbah</i>	Semi-structured interview// Working Group	PMU representative	Project Officer - Oxfam Morocco	25/06/20 06/10/20
13. <i>Maha Ech-Chefaa</i>	Semi-structured interview// Working Group	PMU representative	Country Leader – ENACTUS Morocco	25/06/20 05/10/20
14. <i>Cristian Bevacqua</i>	Semi-structured interview// Working Group	Regional Project Coordinator	Regional Project Coordinator - Oxfam IT	28/07/20 29/07/20 05/10/20
15. <i>Lorenzo Paoli</i>	Semi-structured interview// Working Group	Technical Advisor	MEAL Advisor – Oxfam IT	25/06/20 06/10/20
16. <i>Hadeel Qazzaz</i>	Semi-structured interview// Working Group	Gender Regional Expert	Gender Regional Expert – Oxfam International	24/06/20 05/10/20
17. <i>Michela Della Porta</i>	Semi-structured interview	Finance Manager	Grant Manager – Oxfam IT	7/07/20
18. <i>Laurens Coeveld</i>	Semi-structured interview// Working Group	Technical Advisor	Project Leader Access to Finance - Oxfam Novib	26/06/20 05/10/20
19. <i>Samuel Barco</i>	Semi-structured interview// Working Group	Technical Partner	Consultant - Diesis Network	19/06/20 05/10/20
20. <i>Marina Sarli</i>	Semi-structured interview// Working Group	Technical Partner	EU Cluster Coordinator - Impact Hub	22/06/20 06/10/20
21. <i>Christian Vietz</i>	Semi-structured interview// Working Group	Technical Partner	Policy and Project Officer – Euclid Network	25/06/20 06/10/20
22. <i>Heinke Veit</i>	Semi-structured interview	EU Focal Point	European Commission DG NEAR – Focal Point for MedUp!	29/06/20
23. <i>Zeyad Daradkeh</i>	Semi-structured interview	Policy-level stakeholder	Economic and Social Council	7/08/20
24. <i>Fued Kharmah</i>	Semi-structured interview	Policy-level stakeholder	Cooperation Work Agency	10/08/20

25. <i>Abdelouahed Laabid</i>	Semi-structured interview	Policy-level stakeholder	Office Du Développement De La Cooperation (ODCO)	22/07/20
26. <i>Lamia Chamas</i>	Semi-structured interview	Policy-level stakeholder	Prime Minister's Office	28/08/20
27. <i>Abed Ghaleb</i>	Semi-structured interview Semi-structured interview	Local stakeholder	VISIONARIS	16/07/20
28. <i>Randa Abed Rabo</i>	Semi-structured interview	Local stakeholder	Union of Cooperative Associations	07/07/20
29. <i>Mohamed Salah Frad</i>	Semi-structured interview	Local stakeholder	UGFS	27/07/20
30. <i>Mounir Elkadiri</i>	Semi-structured interview	Local stakeholder	Agence Nationale pour la Promotion des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises - MarocPME	23/07/20
31. <i>Samer Sfeir</i>	Semi-structured interview	SESO representative	LSE Lebanese Social Enterprises Association	03/07/20
32. <i>Tarek Matar</i>	Semi-structured interview	SESO representative	Neopreneur	03/07/20
33. <i>Emili Abdallah</i>	Structured FGD	SESO representative	Al Majmouaa	16/07/20
34. <i>Ahmad Audi</i>	Structured FGD	SESO representative	LOST	16/07/20
35. <i>Malak Faisal</i>	Semi-structured interview	SESO representative	Tti	20/07/20
36. <i>Lama Amro</i>	Structured FGD	SESO representative	Build Palestine	9/07/20

37. <i>Suzan Abu Farha</i>	Structured FGD	SESO representative	Palestinian Consultative council PCS	9/07/20
38. <i>Fayrouz Khoury</i>	Structured FGD	SESO representative	Bethlehem Business Incubator BBI	9/07/20
39. <i>Ali Ramadan</i>	Structured FGD	SESO representative	Palestine Polytechnic Univ. Incubator PPU	9/07/20
40. <i>Malek Maazoun</i>	Semi-structured interview	SESO representative	COART	13/08/20
41. <i>Adnen Ben Hadj Yahia</i>	Semi-structured interview	SESO representative	EL Space	14/08/20
42. <i>Asmae Diani</i>	Structured FGD	SESO representative	CGM	16/07/20
43. <i>Abdellah El Karimi</i>	Structured FGD	SESO representative	Cooperative Karam Alwaha	16/07/20
44. <i>Leila Abouhalim</i>	Structured FGD	SESO representative	Innov idea	16/07/20
45. <i>Sonia Drioli</i>	Structured FGD	SESO representative	Fondation Soleterre	16/07/20
46. <i>Ismail Iftissen</i>	Structured FGD	SESO representative	ES.Maroc.Org	16/07/20
47. <i>Rudaina Haddad</i>	In depth individual interview	Social Entrepreneur	Book Agri	01/10/20
48. <i>Lama Amr</i>	In depth individual interview	Social Entrepreneur	BuildPalestine	05/10/20

49. <i>Mohamed Ali Chebil</i>	In depth individual interview	Social Entrepreneur	BC distribution	01/10/20
50. <i>Yassine Ettayal</i>	In depth individual interview	Social Entrepreneur	Educall	30/09/20
51. <i>Amr Abuzed</i>	In depth individual interview	Social Entrepreneur	Small Artisans for Trade and Supply	29/09/20
52. <i>George Bitar</i>	In depth individual interview	Social Entrepreneur	Live Love and Recycle	09/10/20
53. <i>BuildPalestine</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
54. <i>mothers'cooking</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
55. <i>Habaybna.net</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
56. <i>Zelij invent</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
57. <i>Sciencia</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
58. <i>BC Distribution</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
59. <i>Bookagri</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
60. <i>Kalys</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A

61. Jeron	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
62. Couss & Co Edition	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
63. Asma AlWeshah Institute	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
64. Desert Rose arts & crafts	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
65. Couss & Co Edition	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
66. Le Lemon Tour	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
67. Habaybna.net	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
68. Ba Alf Seen ltd	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
69. Holy Land Handicraft cooperative Society	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
70. شركة وسيلة المفكر للخدمات والوسائل التعليمية	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
71. Alwan Wa Awtar Organization	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
72. Banlastic Egypt	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A

73. <i>جمعية ارسالية هيرنهوتر للمساعدات الكنيسة المورافية</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
74. <i>Small Artisans for Trade and Supply - SATS</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
75. <i>اللسطينية لإسناد الطلبة</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
76. <i>LiveLoveR ecycle</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
77. <i>FabricAID</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
78. <i>The Good Socks</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
79. <i>جمعية غنينا التعاونية الزراعية م.م</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
80. <i>Hydrobarle y</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
81. <i>Easyrun</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
82. <i>جمعية نجمة بيت لحم الخيرية</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
83. <i>مركز مدارات للتنمية المجتمعية</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
84. <i>جمعية النهضة النسائية</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A

85. جمعية الريحية التعاونية للتطوير الزراعي	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
86. Safe Eat sarl	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
87. Educall	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
88. PREV DEV	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
89. Associatio n Pensée Nationale Libre	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
90. Vlaby	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
91. IDYR	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
92. شركة الحياة للدراسات والبحوث	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
93. Cooperativ e Mounet Arsal	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
94. GebRaa	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
95. Baalbek Communit y Farm	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
96. مركز العودة لتأهيل الطفولة والشباب	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A

97. <i>Egywater</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
98. بيت الخياطة	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
99. <i>Dibeen.com</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
100. <i>Ghoorcom</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
101. <i>Recycling for education</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
102. تعاونية المونة الريفية عرسال	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A
103. <i>Green Track</i>	Online questionnaire	Social Enterprise	N/A	N/A

Annex 3 – Survey questions for Social Entrepreneurs

A.) GENERAL INFORMATION AND BUSINESS MODEL

A.1) Name of enterprise

A.2) Country

A.3) What is your role in the enterprise?

- ☐ Founder
- ☐ Board Member
- ☐ Employee
- ☐ Other (specify)

A.4) Is your business driven by a social/environmental objective?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know

A.5) (if A.4= “Yes”) Is this social/environmental objective formalized in the statute or other legal documents of the organization?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know

A.6) (If A.4= “Yes”) Which phases/components of your business process generate a positive effect on community?

- ☐ Type of product/service (*e.g. satisfying basic needs, solving a social/environmental problem*)
- ☐ Selection of human resources (*e.g. employees belong to vulnerable categories*)
- ☐ Selection/Provision of production inputs (*e.g. suppliers are social enterprise as well/ inputs are bought from disadvantaged categories of producers*)
- ☐ Production process (*e.g. production processes are fully environmentally sustainable*)
- ☐ Distribution (*e.g. type of customers reached/different pricing mechanisms, such as clients with lower income/ belonging to vulnerable categories pay different prices with respect to higher income clients*)

A.7) Which one of these business models better describes your own way to run your business?
(*More than one option is eligible*)

- ☐ Market Intermediary Model
Social purpose: connect producers to customers
Revenue: sale of products at a mark-up
- ☐ Market Connector Model
Social purpose: connect investors to projects
Revenue: fees for service
- ☐ Fee-for-Service Model
Social purpose: provide affordable social services/goods
Revenue: affordable fees charged for services (rates, credits, ...)
- ☐ Cooperative Model
Social purpose: benefit cooperative's members (i.e. market information, technical assistance/extension services, collective bargaining power, economies of bulk purchase, access to products and services, access to external markets for member-produced products and services, etc.)
Revenue: sale of products/services
- ☐ Cross-subsidy Model
Social purpose: provide access to services/goods with a social/environmental objective
Revenue: differential pricing (i.e. High-income people pay a higher price than low-income people)
- ☐ Employment & Skill Training

Social purpose: Improve employability for disadvantaged groups
Revenue: sale of services/goods in the market

- ☐ Independent support
Social purpose: Support social initiatives
Revenue: Business activities are separated from social initiatives

☐ Other (specify)

A.8) Which are your main sources of financing?

More than one option is eligible

- ☐ Business income
☐ Bank loans
☐ Grants from projects
☐ Personal savings
☐ Family savings
☐ Donations/Fundraising
☐ Crowdfunding
☐ Microcredit
☐ Social investment
☐ Private investment (different from personal savings)
☐ Other - Please, specify:
☐ Do not know

A.9) Apart from the grant given by the project, what percentage of your total business income is, on average, provided by grants or donations?

- ☐ More than 75% of total income
☐ Between 50-75% of total income
☐ Between 25-50% of total income
☐ Less than 25%
☐ Our enterprise is completely independent from grants or donations.

A.10) Do you have a bookkeeping system for your enterprise?

- ☐ Yes, a paper bookkeeping system
☐ Yes, a digitalized bookkeeping system
☐ No yet, but I am creating one
☐ No, I do not need it

A.11) Is your enterprise able to cover all its running costs with its business revenue during the year?

- ☐ Yes
☐ Not yet, but we are likely to be able to do so in the next future
☐ No and I think it will take quite a long time to achieve this goal
☐ I do not have enough information to evaluate this aspect (e.g. in case of start-up)

A.12) Does your enterprise generate any profit (total income, including grants, is higher than total costs) at the end of the year?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I do not have enough information to evaluate this aspect (e.g. in case of start-up)
☐ Do not know

A.13) (if A.12= "Yes") How are these profits used? Please specify % profits allocated to each category (total sum must be 100%)

Personal/ Founders' profits	_____ %
Distributed among other shareholders	_____ %
New investments to improve business	_____ %
Benefits for workers	_____ %

Other (please, specify:)	_____ %
Total	100%

B.) PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS & RELEVANCE

B.1) Have you had the opportunity to make an investment thanks to the grant provided by the project?

- ☐ Yes
☐ Not yet

B.2) (if B1= "Not yet") Why?

- ☐ Because of external constraints/obstacles
☐ Because we are still collecting information to concretely make the investment
☐ Because we are considering the option of changing our investment
☐ Other (Specify)

B.3) (if B1=Yes) How would you evaluate the usefulness of the investments you made thanks to the **grant** provided by the project in fostering **long term business performance and sustainability_of your enterprise?**

- ☐ Completely useless
☐ Little useful
☐ Quite useful
☐ Fundamental
☐ The investment is too recent to evaluate its usefulness
☐ Do not know

B.4) (If B.3= "Completely useless" or "Little useful") Why?

More than one option is eligible

- ☐ Because of external constraints/obstacles
☐ Because we do not have enough internal skills to make the investment profitable
☐ Because we made the wrong investment
☐ Other (specify)

B.5) (if B1=Yes) How would you evaluate the usefulness of the investments you made thanks to the **grant** provided by the project in fostering your enterprise ability to generate a **greater positive impact on community?**

- ☐ Completely useless
☐ Little useful
☐ Quite useful
☐ Fundamental
☐ The investment is too recent to evaluate its usefulness
☐ Do not know

B.6) (If B.5= "Completely useless" or "Little useful") Why?

More than one option is eligible

- ☐ Because of external constraints/obstacles
☐ Because we do not have enough internal skills to make the investment profitable
☐ Because we made the wrong investment
☐ Other (specify)

B.7) Did your enterprise have the opportunity to take advantage of the technical support (e.g. trainings) provided by the project?

- ☐ Yes
☐ Not yet
☐ No, we are not expected to receive any kind of technical support

B.8) (If B.7= "Not yet") Why?

- ☐ Because it is planned in the next future (e.g. with reference to trainings)
☐ Because the provision of technical support was not designed, in terms of time and place, in such a way to make us able to take advantage of it.
☐ Because external constraints/obstacles prevent from taking advantage of technical support
☐ Other (specify)

B.9) (if B.7= Yes") How would you evaluate the usefulness of **technical support** given by the project in providing you with tools and knowledges to enhance **long term business performance and sustainability?**

- ☐ Completely useless
☐ Little useful
☐ Quite useful

- ☐ Fundamental
- ☐ The investment is too recent to evaluate its usefulness
- ☐ Do not know

B.10) (if B.9= "Completely useless" or "Little useful") Why?

More than one option is eligible

- ☐ The level of technical support provided was too basic
- ☐ The level of technical support provided was too advanced
- ☐ The technical support was not in line with our technical needs
- ☐ Other (specify)

B.11)(if B.7= Yes") How would you evaluate the usefulness of **technical support** given by the project in providing you with tools and knowledges to enhance your enterprise ability to generate a **greater positive impact on community**?

- ☐ Completely useless
- ☐ Little useful
- ☐ Quite useful
- ☐ Fundamental
- ☐ The investment is too recent to evaluate its usefulness
- ☐ Do not know

B.12)(if B.11= "Completely useless" or "Little useful") Why?

More than one option is eligible

- ☐ The level of technical support provided was too basic
- ☐ The level of technical support provided was too advanced
- ☐ The technical support was not in line with our technical needs
- ☐ Other (specify)

B.13)Focusing on the social/environmental effect generated by your business, please indicate how much did the project help you in achieving the following goals:

Goal	How much did the project help you in achieving this result?					
1. New job opportunities created for women, youth and/or people with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> a little	<input type="checkbox"/> moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> Not one of my goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not know
2. Increased working skills for employees belonging to vulnerable categories	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> a little	<input type="checkbox"/> moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> Not one of my goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not know
3. Increased stakeholders' income (e.g employees', suppliers')	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> a little	<input type="checkbox"/> moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> Not one of my goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not know
4. Increased benefits for customers/ increased number of vulnerable customers reached	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> a little	<input type="checkbox"/> moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> Not one of my goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not know
5. Empowering and giving voice to female and young social entrepreneurs	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> a little	<input type="checkbox"/> moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> Not one of my goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not know
6. Broader environmental impact (e.g saving resources, reducing carbon emissions, conserving biodiversity)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> a little	<input type="checkbox"/> moderately	<input type="checkbox"/> a lot	<input type="checkbox"/> Not one of my goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not know

B.14) How would you evaluate the relevance of networking opportunities (getting in touch with supporting organizations, financial institutions, other social enterprises, new investors, etc) provided by the project in widening and enhancing your business networks?

<input type="checkbox"/> completely useless	<input type="checkbox"/> Little useful	<input type="checkbox"/> Quite useful	<input type="checkbox"/> fundamental	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not know
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B.15) How would you evaluate the quality of the relationship you have with each of your stakeholders now compared to the period before the project? How much did the project affect the improvement or worsening of these relationships?

	a) Quality of relationship, after taking part in the project	b) Contribution of the project (If B.11.a= "Worsen" or "Improved")
1. Shareholders/Investors	<input type="checkbox"/> Worsened <input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> I have no relation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> n/a
2. Employees	<input type="checkbox"/> Worsened <input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> I have no relation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> n/a
3. Social Enterprises Support Organizations (incubators, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Worsened <input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> I have no relation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> n/a
4. Suppliers	<input type="checkbox"/> Worsened <input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> I have no relation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> n/a
5. Costumers and users	<input type="checkbox"/> Worsened <input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> I have no relation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> n/a
6. Public / governmental sector (ministries, municipalities)	<input type="checkbox"/> Worsened <input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> I have no relation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> n/a
7. Financial institutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Worsened <input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> I have no relation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> n/a
8. Private investors	<input type="checkbox"/> Worsened <input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> I have no relation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> n/a
9. Third sector organizations and NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/> Worsened <input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> I have no relation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> n/a
10. Other social entrepreneurs	<input type="checkbox"/> Worsened <input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> I have no relation	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> A little <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately <input type="checkbox"/> A lot <input type="checkbox"/> n/a

B.16) Do you think that the project has been addressing your real needs?

☐ Yes

- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know

B.17) (If B.16= "No") Which kind of needs are not tackled by the project? (max 100 words)

B.18) (if B.16= "No") Are these needs related to the difficulties generated by Covid-19 pandemic?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

C.) GOVERNANCE AND INCLUSIVENESS

C.1) When your enterprise takes decisions are the stakeholders²⁴ involved?

- ☐ Yes, always or almost always
- ☐ Yes, sometimes
- ☐ Rarely or never
- ☐ Do not know

C.2) If yes, which kind of stakeholders are involved?

- ☐ Board
- ☐ General assembly
- ☐ Shareholders/Investors
- ☐ Employees
- ☐ Suppliers
- ☐ Customers and users
- ☐ Public/governmental sector (ministries, municipalities)
- ☐ Third sector organizations and NGOs
- ☐ Community
- ☐ Other, specify _____
- ☐ Do not know

C.3) (If C.1=" Yes, always or almost always" or " Yes, sometimes") Has the number of stakeholders engaged increased as consequence of the support received by the project?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know

C.4) (If C.1= "Yes, always or almost always" or " Yes, sometimes") Do you have designed and implemented new mechanisms to involve stakeholders, after taking part in the project?

- ☐ Yes (please, specify)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know

C.5) Who takes the most important decisions in your enterprise?

- ☐ Owners/Funders
- ☐ Managers
- ☐ Shareholders/investors
- ☐ Board of directors
- ☐ Employees
- ☐ Community
- ☐ Another private enterprise
- ☐ Public bodies/public authorities
- ☐ Other (please, specify)
- ☐ Do not know

C.6) Have internal governance structure and decision-making processes been modified, after taking part to the project?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know

²⁴ Stakeholder= "A person, group or organization that has interest or concern in an organization"

- C.7) (If C.6= "Yes") How has internal governance structure and decision-making processes been modified? (max 100 words)
- C.8) Does the company have measures that specifically encourage balanced participation of women and men in decision-making processes?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Do not know
- C.9) Is your enterprise endowed with a code of conduct, mentioning for instance anti-discrimination rules and principle of equal treatment?
- ☐ Yes, we had one even before being involved in the project
☐ Yes, now we have one, but before we did not have any
☐ No, but we are planning to design one
☐ No
☐ Do not know
- C.10) Does the company have a plan of action for equality between women and men?
- ☐ Yes, we formally have one gender equality action plan
☐ Yes, despite it is not formalized we put in place concrete actions to foster equality between women and men inside our company
☐ Not yet
☐ No, we do not need it.
- C.11) (if C.9= "Yes, despite it is not formalized we put in place concrete actions to foster equality between women and men inside our company") Which kind of actions? (max 100 words)
- C.12) Do your employees get additional benefits (either material or immaterial) apart from the wage, by working for your enterprise?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Do not know
- C.13) (if C.12= "Yes") Does the company offer maternity benefits, either monetary or "in kind", in addition to those foreseen by the law?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Do not know
- C.14) (if C.12= "Yes") Apart from maternity benefits if applicable, which kind of addition benefits does your enterprise offers to employees? (max 150 words)
- C.15) When scheduling shifts, does the company consider the need for both male and female workers to conciliate their professional, family and personal life?
- ☐ Yes, we consider both male and female workers' needs
☐ No, we consider only male workers' needs
☐ No, we consider only female workers' needs
☐ No, we do not consider our workers' needs at all
- C.16) To what extend would you evaluate the relevance of the involvement women and/or young people in your business before taking part in the project and now?

Before	<input type="checkbox"/> no involvement	<input type="checkbox"/> little involved	<input type="checkbox"/> moderately involved	<input type="checkbox"/> fully involved	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not know
Now	<input type="checkbox"/> no involvement	<input type="checkbox"/> little involved	<input type="checkbox"/> moderately involved	<input type="checkbox"/> fully involved	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not know

D) LOOKING AT THE FUTURE

- D.1) Please list the most serious constraints/obstacles (max 6) that may hamper your future business stability and/or growth. Then, give them a score from 1 to 5, according to their importance/seriousness (two or more constraints may have the same level of importance).

Constraint	Importance
1. <i>Insert a constraint</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. <i>Insert a constraint</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
3. <i>Insert a constraint</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. <i>Insert a constraint</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
5. <i>Insert a constraint</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. <i>Insert a constraint</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

- D.2) Please rank in a scale from 5 (highest priority) to 1 (lowest priority) your priorities in the next 3 years

Priority	Importance
1. Higher turnover	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. Products/services innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
3. Scaling-up	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. Greater social/environmental impact	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
5. Increased financial sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
6. Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

- D.3) Who are in your opinion the most important actors who will play a key role in your business future development?

More than one option is eligible

- ☐ Shareholders/Investors
- ☐ Employees
- ☐ My family
- ☐ My community
- ☐ Social Enterprises Support Organizations (incubators, etc.)
- ☐ Suppliers
- ☐ Customers and users
- ☐ Public / governmental sector (ministries, municipalities)
- ☐ Financial institutions
- ☐ Private investors
- ☐ Third sector organizations and NGOs
- ☐ Other social entrepreneurs

- D.4) Do you think that the benefits you are getting by the project will continue to be present even after the end of the project?

- ☐ Yes, absolutely
- ☐ Yes, it may be
- ☐ No
- ☐ Do not know

Annex 4 - List of constraints mentioned by respondents

Source: MedUp! MTE Survey for Social Entrepreneurs

COVID-19

SEs' Country	Constraint	Perceived importance (1-5 scale)
Palestine	The current situation with Corona	5
Jordan	market instability (COVID-19)	5
Palestine	Corona pandemic	5
Palestine	Spread of coronavirus	5
Morocco	La crise causée par le covid	5
Morocco	Pivot Post-Covid19 au niveau du business modèle social	5
Tunisia	Corona Virus	5
Palestine	Corona Virus, suspending work	5
Egypt	covid 19 and affecting the purchasing power	5
Egypt	COVID and traveling to rural communities	5
Jordan	covid 19	3
Tunisia	conjoncture actuelle	5
Egypt	the closing of preschools	5
Tunisia	La fermeture de écoles primaires et des librairies	1
Palestine	Corona virus Covid 19	1
Lebanon	Covid 19	5
Egypt	Covid 19	4
Lebanon	Coronavirus	3
Palestine	The economic, social and political environment in light of the Corona pandemic	3
Tunisia	un deuxième confinement en Tunisie	2
Tunisia	Une deuxième vague du Coronavirus en Tunisie	1
Morocco	The economic crisis due to corona virus	1
Morocco	Lack of events (our first source of finance) for covid	1
Lebanon	Covid-19 lockdown	1

Legal and institutional framework

SEs' Country	Constraint	Perceived importance (1-5 scale)
Palestine	Our legal status as Non profit company in Palestine creates a lot of issues like "Funding Approval, tax" and other issues	5
Jordan	Legal constraint	5
Palestine	Official work permissions issued by governmental agencies and the time related to bureaucratic procedures	5
Jordan	Regulation	4
Palestine	The legal status for social enterprises in Palestine affects our support for social entrepreneurs.	5
Jordan	Company legal procedures after registration as non-Jordanian	3
Tunisia	Cadre juridique douanier	4
Morocco	Manque de connaissance juridique	2
Palestine	Complexity of the governmental process to issue licences	5

Palestine	Policies of the Cooperative Work Agency about the time-limited mandate of the general assembly	3
Lebanon	Regulation and Law	5
Jordan	taxation	3
Jordan	Permissions	3
Jordan	Governmental decisions, especially with regard to refugees	5
Egypt	Politiche governative	2

Funding

SEs' Country	Constraint	Perceived importance (1-5 scale)
Lebanon	Lack of funding	5
Jordan	Finance	5
Palestine	Funding	1
Egypt	Lack of Finance	5
Morocco	Ressources financières/Accès aux subventions	5
Palestine	Stopping external and internal financing	5
Lebanon	Decrease of funds	4
Egypt	Lack of funding	5
Egypt	Obtaining investments	3
Jordan	Investment	4
Jordan	Investments	3
Palestine	Lack of financial support from donors and the government	3
Palestine	Funding	4
Jordan	Finding impact investors who are focused on social impact beside the business and sustainability	3
Palestine	Providing the shop with the needed capital, after providing basic equipment	4
Jordan	Financial challenges	3

Political and social situation

SEs' Country	Constraint	Perceived importance (1-5 scale)
Palestine	Political situation	1
Lebanon	Economic Crisis in Lebanon (haircut & inflation)	5
Lebanon	Instability in Lebanon	1
Lebanon	War and Security issues	4
Lebanon	Politic Instability	5
Lebanon	Security issues and social instability	3
Palestine	Issues related to occupation	5
Lebanon	Politic Instability	5
Palestine	The political situation	3
Jordan	war	4
Palestine	Israeli occupation	5
Lebanon	security and stability	4

Human resources and human capital

SEs' Country	Constraint	Perceived importance (1-5 scale)
Morocco	Skills in design and leather goods	1
Morocco	Lack of Human Ressources	5
Morocco	Sourcing/respect du genre	4
Tunisia	calification des ressources humaines	3
Tunisia	Sérieux de certains artisans	2
Morocco	Formation	4
Morocco	Expertise	1
Morocco	Lack of women who want to work on handicrafts	1
Jordan	Qualified team with reasonable salaries	3
Tunisia	Recrutement d'un senior	4
Tunisia	Qualified team with reasonable salaries	5
Egypt	Training Expertese	3
Jordan	lack of farmers	3
Jordan	Output quality	3

SE's economic performance and sustainability

SEs' Country	Constraint	Perceived importance (1-5 scale)
Lebanon	Failure to achieve self-sustainability (covering operating costs from profits)	5
Morocco	Le manque de revenu financier	2
Jordan	The cash flow	5
Jordan	Cost constraint	5
Egypt	Cash flows	4
Palestine	Spese operative	4
Palestine	The institution's inability to pay salaries	5
Egypt	not making the needed revenue to sustain the project after the end of the fund	3
Palestine	Spese per il personale dipendente	3
Jordan	Balancing between social impact and financial sustainability	4
Jordan	Strategic challenges	2

Cultural Factors

SEs' Country	Constraint	Perceived importance (1-5 scale)
Morocco	Ecosysteme innovation	1
Morocco	La réticence des agriculteurs	2
Palestine	Mentality , people don't accept changes are afraid that doesn't work	2
Palestine	Culture, traditions	4
Palestine	Educational, training and cultural policy challenges	3
Jordan	social economy	2
Palestine	Lack of cooperative awareness	4
Palestine	Resilience, adaptation and alternatives	2

Challenges related to production and commercialization

SEs' Country	Constraint	Perceived importance (1-5 scale)
Inputs supply		
Morocco	Le sourcing de la matière première	2
Tunisia	Increase in the prices of raw materials prices	3
Jordan	The prices of raw materials become higher	4
Egypt	Suppliers Risk	3
Palestine	Raw Materials	3
Palestine	Suppliers who wants commissions	1
Physical capital and production process		
Tunisia	Le local	4
Palestine	Old Equipment	4
Palestine	Not having a headquarter for the organization	4
Lebanon	Production and manufacturing operations	3
Egypt	delay in the production process	5
Tunisia	la non conformité des résultats R&D avec le terrain	
Morocco	We don't have our own production workshop	2
Palestine	Material constraints	3
Tunisia	couverture Internet	3
Palestine	Other Business-specific constraints**	5
Lebanon	Other Business-specific constraints**	5
Egypt	Other Business-specific constraints**	4
Tunisia	Diversité des produits	3
Marketing and commercialization		
Jordan	Transportation challenges	2
Tunisia	Moyen de transport	3
Morocco	Accès au marché	1
Jordan	Low marketing on products	4
Palestine	Not marketing	4
Palestine	Skills in digital marketing	4
Tunisia	Communication des activités les plus rémunératrices	3
Palestine	Create a website	2
Palestine	Marketing	1
Palestine	marketing	4
Palestine	Marketing in the current circumstances	3
Palestine	Apertura di nuovi mercati in città o fuori dalla Palestina	4
Egypt	Expansion to other countries	3
	Marché export	3
Egypt	repetitive purchasing and CRM	3
Palestine	E-Marketing	1
Morocco	Communcation	2
Jordan	User behaviour	5
Tunisia	Païement des clients	2
Market competition		
Egypt	competition	1

Palestine	The competition	3
Jordan	Increased number of competitors	2
Tunisia	Respect de la propriété intellectuelle	3
Tunisia	Concurrence: Publication d'autres magazines	5
Palestine	Imitation of our crafts coming from abroad	1

Economic volatility and stagnation

SEs' Country	Constraint	Perceived importance (1-5 scale)
Lebanon	Economic and social decline	3
Jordan	Supply chain instability	4
Tunisia	Crise économique	4
Lebanon	Monetary instability	2
Egypt	purchasing power of target market of rural communities	4
Palestine	Market stagnation and opportunities	4
Lebanon	Low people's purchasing power	3
Jordan	Economic Growth	5
Lebanon	Banque's restrictions in Lebanon	5
Lebanon	Financial and economic crises	5

Institutional support and partnerships

SEs' Country	Constraint	Perceived importance (1-5 scale)
Morocco	Manque de partenaire institutionnel	3
Morocco	Passage B2B & B2Gov	4
Morocco	Encouragement étatique	2
Tunisia	La non coopération du ministère de l'éducation nationale	4
Egypt	Communication with government ministries	2
Jordan	Partnership	3

Annex 5 - SWOT Analysis by MTE respondents

The table below gathers the findings from the single SWOT analysis which MTE respondents were asked to carry out during KIIs with ARCO's researchers. These results were indeed integrated in our Evaluation Findings.

STRENGTHS

Partnership → Expertise → Maturity → Diversity → Aligned → Receptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of partners involved for the best impact and collective expertise (5) • Expertise on project topics (3) • Partnership (4) • Partnership composition (4-5) • Expertise, good knowledge (4) • Many competences + commitment (3) • Maturity of Consortium, so high quality organizations (4) • Diversity of project parties/partners • Attempt to bring EU expertise (partners MESO and MACRO) (4) • Shared vision on society by all partners (5) • All partners accept it is a learning for them, they are humble and receptive to changes and suggestions (4)
Collaboration within PMUs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and good relationship Johud-Oxfam (5) • Local team is very committed (5) • Dual nature of micro-management, partnership setup (3) • Synergy between Oxfam Tunisia and TCSE: in practice there is no dichotomy, cooperation beyond the (macro from Oxfam vs meso-micro of TCSE) (5) • Good collaboration within the PMUs (4)
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility (4) • Flexibility (4) • Reaction to pandemic was great: we have not stopped our work (5+)
Project design → Targeting the ecosystems → Regional component → North-South Dimension → Innovation → Multi-level approach → Networking approach → Mutual learning approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting all levels of the ecosystem (4) • Ecosystemic approach (5) • Connection of MESO and MICRO, not working only with entrepreneurs (3.5) • Support SMES on the ground not only policy level (5) • Willingness to create connections between different contexts and local stakeholders • Capacity of engage many people, which is creating a pool at the base of the ecosystem • Complexity (levels, expertise, countries) (3,5) • Regional project (4) • Have actors in every country (5) – it is also a big challenge: quite different, different interests • Being regional and international (4) • North-South dimension (4) • “one of the best designed projects I have ever taken part in” • Pilot, innovation (5) • Innovation in term of approach and target + zoom on social issues solution (4) • Innovation (4)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi- level approach (4) • Piloting approach (3) • Networking approach (4) • mutual learning approach(5) • Label of the project is quite clear • ToC (4.5)
Embeddedness with local contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong linkages with national context (5) • Working in many governorates in rural areas (4)
SE's successful selection and good support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting also already existing enterprises, not only start-ups (lower risks, high sustainability (3,5) • Criteria: Maturity of enterprises we are working with (4) • "SE chosen are very unique and successful → it was a great selection • Number of enterprise small, but big number of interventions for them • Grants helped them a lot, they meet their need of funds

WEAKNESSES

Communication and coordination among partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many partners (sometimes lengthy communication and decision making) (4); • How to systemize regional cooperation between partners (governance) (3) • Lack of information about other partners' activities, other PMUs (3) • Non optimal systemic effectiveness and relational dynamics: PMUs are quite ineffective in connect all levels (5) • EU partners did not know MENA context (4) • Sometimes Oxfam's internal processes/bureaucracy are lengthy (3) • Difficult valorisation of Associates' roles (2) • EU partners not directly implementing activities • Insufficient coordination, ownership issue • Weak synchronisation in terms of communication and internal visibility • The management is more focused on details rather than strategic approaches across the program
Lack of project's flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project's not flexible, not easy adaptable to external dynamics (2) • Not flexible implementation (5) • No space for innovation and creativity
Difficulties in measuring results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outputs are only measured in numbers not reflecting true impact and quality and type of organizations, very unfairly set because dependent on others' actions (3) • Lack of tools to assess results at the different levels (2.5)
Low Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak support to SEs (given to the low budget) (5) • Our small budget • Budget lower than expected (4)
Few HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough amount of resources allocated to human resources (we have worked more than what we were paid for) (3) • Lack of human resources (3) • Much work for few resources (3)
Poor connection between levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate efforts for meso and macro need to be connected 2 • Not super connected with other partners and activities at meso and macro level (4)

Weak regional dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not well connected at regional level (3) • Weak regionalization (2) • Weak regional dimension (3)
Project's complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity: difficult to manage and to keep the standard levels and methodologies everywhere (3,5) • Working in ambiguity (4) • Project's very ambitious, with many external factors (3,5) • Too ambitious (3)
Scarce beneficiaries' commitment and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment from SESOs (5) • Difficulties in getting policy makers engaged and not proper tools to do it (1) • Lack of an holistic vision by beneficiaries
Gender and inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender component (2,5) • Gender component is struggling to take off + make it fit the contexts is not easy(3) • No sure how they will use gender study (3) • Not targeting people with disabilities (2) • Criteria selection: more men-led and from central urban areas; no great outreach (needed translation because Arab language not foreseen+ not all have access to platform+ lack of activities to empower applicants to write the proposal) (4)
Communication and visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and visibility: at the beginning we have badly disseminated our results. (4) • Do not invest in "marketing" the project, in producing communication materials and spreading it locally (originally not communication officer and high turnover) (3) • Weak communication 3
Weak bilateral linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak link to the bilateral level, but different performances across countries (from 2- to 4)

OPPORTUNITIES

Synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergies with other projects in order to make the activities attractive to the competitive market of SESOs in Egypt and to make the project sustainable (4); • New project with partners we did not know before-(4) • Need to make the best out of our EU partners and their experience
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking (4) and partnerships with different countries (4) • Good networking opportunities related to project (4) • Networking in strategic Mediterranean contexts (3,5) • Partner in the countries are looking for networking • Sharing knowledge between Countries
Shaping the ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal framework we now have (5) • Building a SENT framework both at local and regional level (2), • Ecosystem is becoming more vibrant (4) • Overarching opportunity to set the landscape for a SE ecosystem • Opportunity to engaged financial actors
MENA region dynamic context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MENA region is a very dynamic context (4) • Favourable geographic and social context (young people, positive attitude towards innovation, organized civil society, legal framework to shape) (4)
Covid-19 as an opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • post Covid-19 is opportunity for new solution and understand things that are out of the box thinking the project could use this opportunity • Covid-19 to highlight the good value of SE (3.5) • big opportunities given the circumstances of the collapse of the economic system worldwide> open road to concentrate on SE

Advocacy actors engagement &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include SEs and SESOs in advocating activities (5) • Building a regional advocacy strategy (5) • SE involves many actors: window of opportunity
MedUp! as a model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MedUp! as a good model: scalability and replicability
Donors' interest and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SE is a trending topic; there are funding opportunities (5) • Regional funding • Donors interested in SE • Donor is very supportive and engaged (4) • EU is helpful

THREATS

Effects of Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid (5). • Covid (4) • Covid impact on incubation: minor impact so far thanks to digitalization (3) • Covid impact for businesses (3) • Risk of second wave of Covid • Covid effects (mitigated by partnership's quality) • Covid (3) • Covid effecting performance of SE which are now struggling to survive; the impact goes down
Social and political situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not stable socio-economic situation • Occupation, annexation (3) • General context of the country : political instability • Economic and political situation (4) • Political instability (3) • Political instability • Difficult political situation in some Countries • Economic situation, political situation in the countries • Anchored to the economic setting of each country (3-4) • Changes in national policies can reduce project's impact

Annex 6 - Focus on SE Ecosystem





































SESO representatives as well as PMU representatives participating to the transnational SFGD were asked to brainstorm and share their ideas as for which key ingredients make an ideally inclusive and enabling ecosystem for SEs.






These respondents were later asked to place these elements on different colours according to their stage of development and/or attainment in each country's ecosystem, starting from the red (least developed aspects) up to the blue (most consolidated aspects). This methodology was intentionally aimed at allowing for a first brainstorm of ideas and opinions as context-free as possible. In fact, when asked to reflect on an "ideal" ecosystem, the intention was to avoid respondents to reply with a "negative" approach, i.e. reflecting on what is missing in their countries, in favour of a "positive" approach, i.e. thinking on what the best scenario would look like. Respondents were asked only later to place the mentioned key elements according to their country's stage of SE development.

Figures below present the results of this evaluation activity.

It can be noticed that the mentioned elements are quite similar, albeit at different stage of development across countries. This is, indeed, coherent with our findings.

Key enabling elements of the countries' SE ecosystems in respondents' opinion

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE SE ECOSYSTEM	Jordan	Lebanon	Morocco	Palestine	Tunisia	Egypt
Legal framework and formal recognition for SEs						n/a
SE visibility and awareness						n/a
Academia involvement in SENT ecosystem						n/a
Full understanding of the concept of social entrepreneurship						n/a
SE actors' access to international markets/networks						n/a
Formalization of the SENT ecosystem: mapping of actors and activities for a holistic vision of the SENT						n/a
Government's willingness and commitment to support SENT ecosystem						n/a
Engagement of the private sector						n/a
Sustainable funding for SEs						n/a
Framework to measure SEs social impact						n/a
Entrepreneurial culture and mindset						n/a
SENT platforms and hubs						n/a
SESOS' technical assistance to SE business development						n/a
SE networking						n/a
MENA REGION						
Strong SE practice						
Exchange across SENT ecosystems						

Synergies and partnerships across ecosystem stakeholders	
Sustainable funding for SEs	
SE virtual community	
Social dialogue on SENT	
Experiences capitalization	
Map Legend: ○ Reported by respondents during FGDs ● Perceived as <u>well developed</u> ● Perceived as <u>quite developed</u> ● Perceived as <u>poorly developed</u> ● Perceived as <u>not developed at all</u>	

Source: ARCO's elaboration on MTE data collection activities

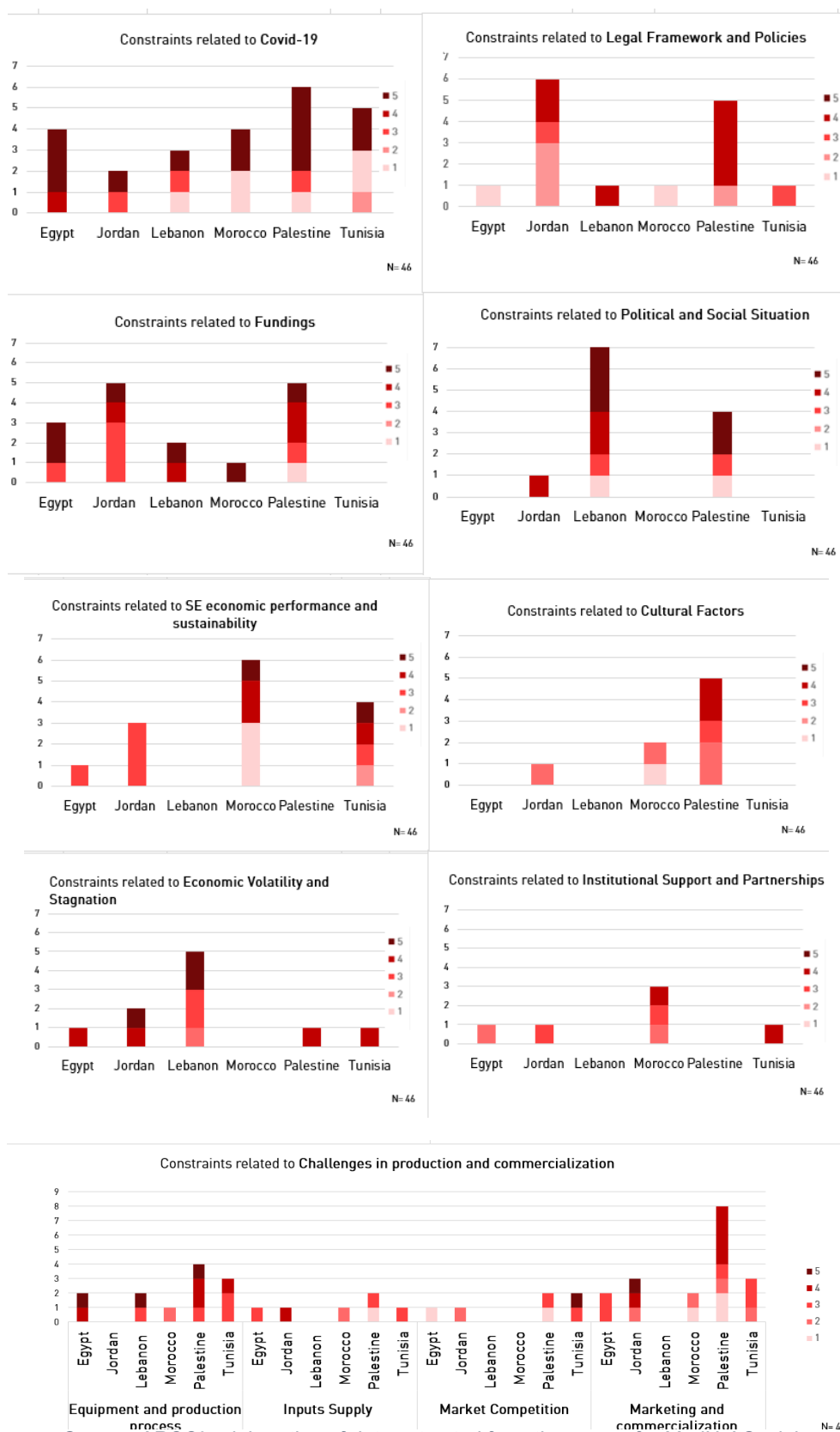
Note: Elements were placed by respondents on different colours according to their stage of development/attainment in each country's ecosystem, starting from the red (least developed aspects) up to the blue (most consolidated aspects). MENA region SENT ecosystem was discussed among Lebanese, Jordanian and Palestinian PMU representatives during a SFGD.

“Legal framework and formal recognition for SEs”, “SEs visibility/awareness” and “Full understanding of the concept of social entrepreneurship” are unanimously considered to be crucial element for the creation of enabling ecosystems for SEs in all the five analysed countries. In particular, both the legal framework and public awareness of SEs are perceived as quite developed in the Moroccan, Palestinian and Tunisian contexts. Three out of five countries (namely Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon) reported an insufficient level of understanding of the concept of social entrepreneurship. When assessing the overall MENA region, respondents have stressed the importance of (i) promoting a strong SE practise, (ii) supporting the creation of networks and synergies across national ecosystems and key stakeholders and (iii) capitalizing SE experiences.

Another interesting picture of the project countries' SE ecosystem is provided by data extracted from the survey administered to the Social Enterprises. Specifically, respondents were asked to list the main constraints to their business activities. These findings are already discussed in Section Relevance.

The figure below showcases results disaggregated by project country. Indeed, the displayed results are in line with the contexts of the different countries. In fact, Lebanese SEs have mainly mentioned constraints linked to the “Political and Social Situation” (reported also by Palestinian SEs) and “Economic Volatility and Stagnation”, while in the Palestinian context the most relevant constraints are related to “Marketing and Commercialization” and “Cultural Factors”. The existence of an underdeveloped legal setting for SEs and the access to funding are perceived as relevant constraints mostly by Jordanian and Palestinian SEs, while Moroccan SEs are more worried about their economic performance. Covid-19 appears to more or less equally affect SEs across countries.

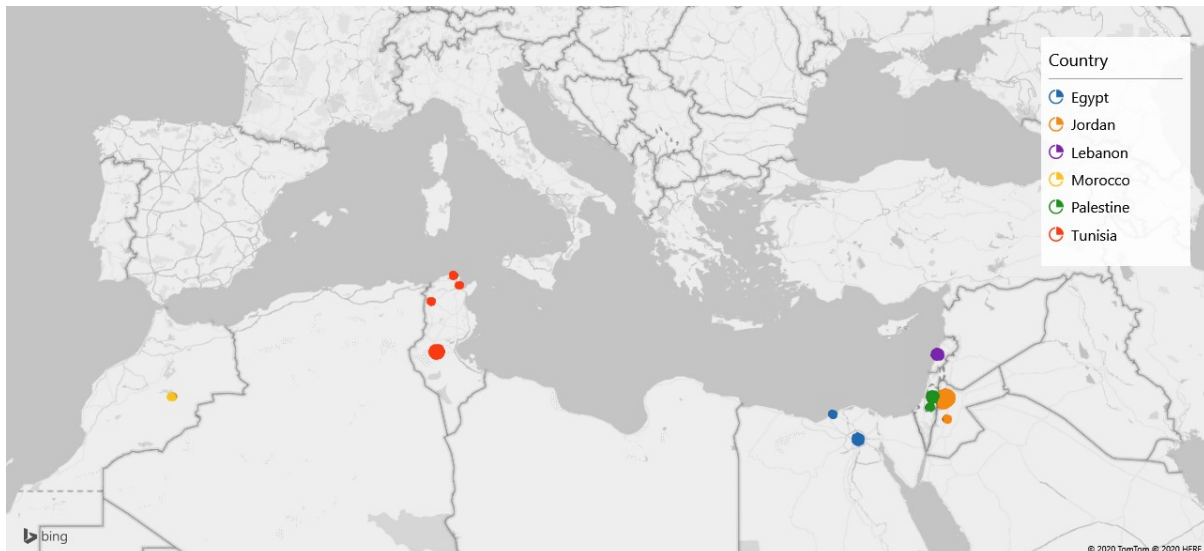
Constraints perceived by SE respondents, per project country



Source: ARCO's elaboration of data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Entrepreneurs

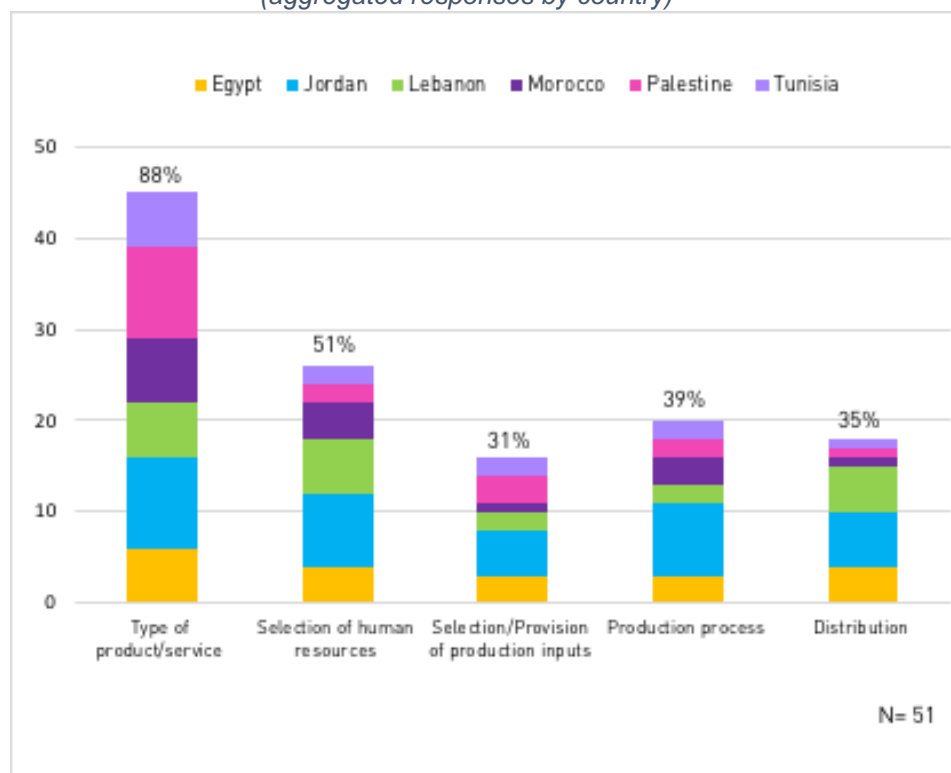
Annex 7 – Identikit of SEs responding to the MTE online survey

Location of SEs respondents to the MTE online questionnaire



Source: ARCO's elaboration of data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Entrepreneurs

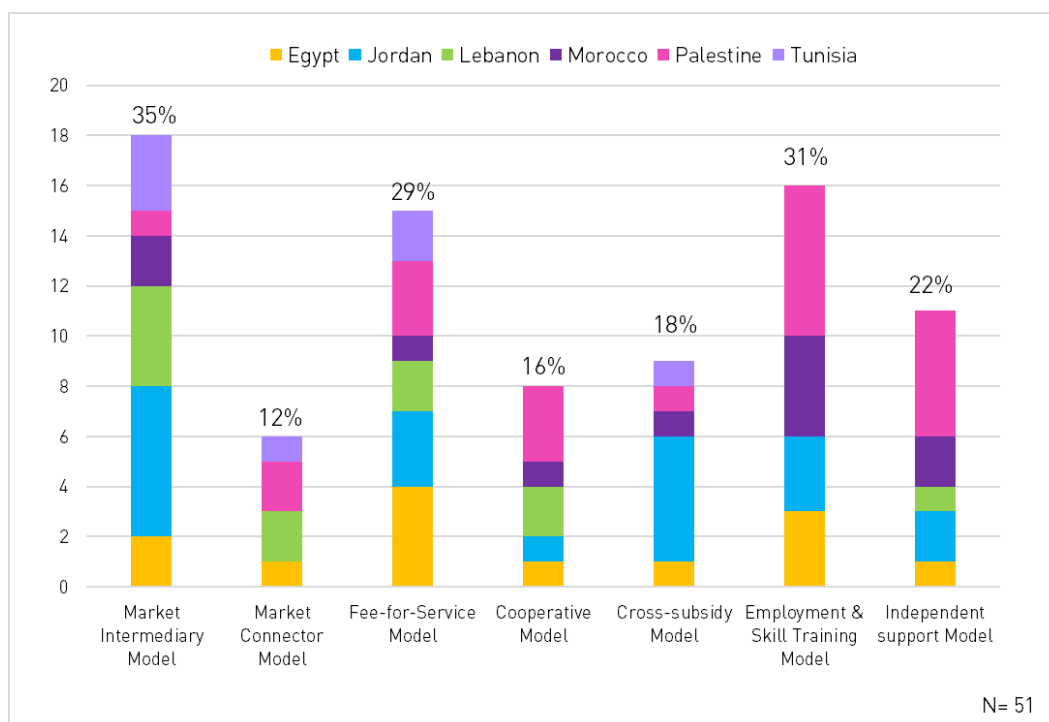
Frequency distribution of SEs business phases generating positive impact on the community (aggregated responses by country)



Source: ARCO's elaboration of data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Entrepreneurs

Note: percentages refer to the portion of respondents' selecting each category

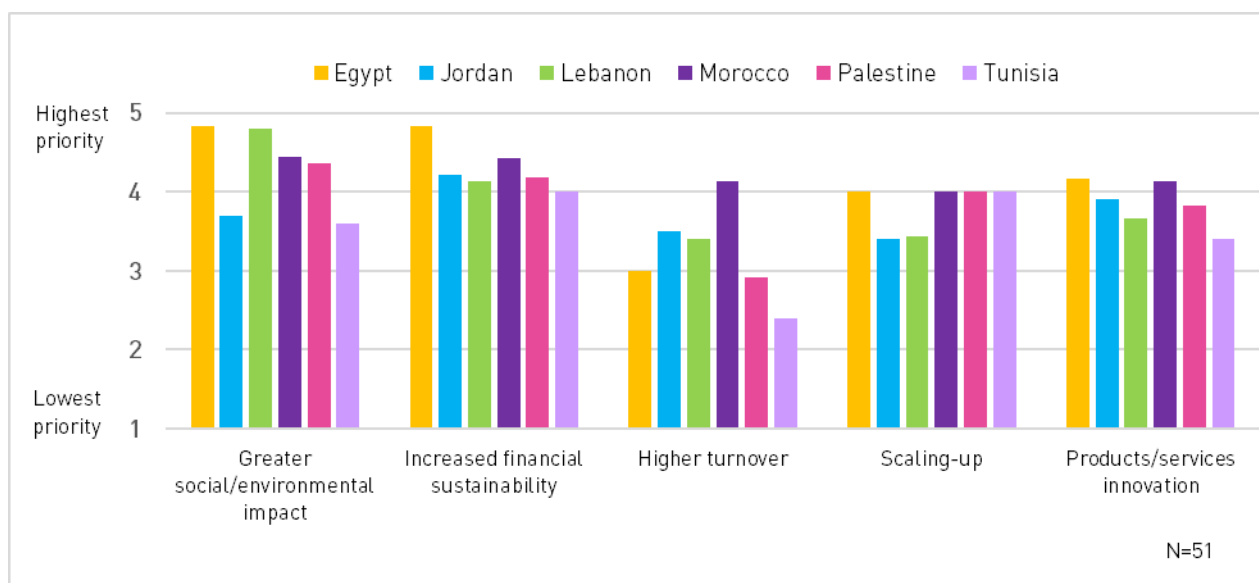
Frequency distribution of SE Business Model



Source: ARCO's elaboration of data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Entrepreneurs

Note: percentages refer to the portion of respondents' selecting each Business Model

Most relevant priorities for SEs business, by Country



Source: ARCO's elaboration of data extracted from the survey for MedUp! Social Entrepreneurs

Note: Average scores are provided in a scale from 1, "lowest priority", to 5, "highest priority"

Annex 8 – ToR MTE MedUp! 24 Feb 2020



This project is co-funded
by the European Union



MedUP! Promoting social entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean region
Reference: EuropeAid/155554/DH/ACT/Multi

Terms of Reference (ToR)
for
Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project

A. BACKGROUND

1. The project

1.1. Project summary

DURATION: 4 years, from 1 March 2018 to 28 February 2022

COUNTRIES: Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon

PARTNERS

Consortium Leader: Oxfam IT

European Organizations: DIESIS, Euclid Network, Impact Hub International.

Oxfam Country EA: Oxfam Novib (ONL) in Palestine, Tunisia and Egypt; Oxfam Great Britain (OGB) in Lebanon and Jordan; Oxfam Intermon (OES) in Morocco.

Mediterranean Countries Organizations: Sekem Development Foundation in Egypt, Tunisian Center for Social Entrepreneurship in Tunisia, Jordanian Hashemite fund for Human Development in Jordan, Enactus in Morocco, Agricultural Development Association (PARC) in Palestine.

Associated: Tuscany Region, Autonomous Region of Sardinia, Banca Etica, Associazione Imprenditrici e Donne Dirigenti di Azienda (AIDDA).

1.2. Intervention logic

Global objective: to promote an enabling environment in the Southern Mediterranean partner countries for the development of the social entrepreneurship sector as a driver for inclusive growth and job creation.

Specific objective: to increase economic inclusiveness and employment in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine where adequate policies on social entrepreneurship are in place, public-private dialogue and exchanges of practices are promoted and high quality services for social enterprises (SEs) are provided.

<p><u>Intermediary Outcome n.1:</u> Policy makers and key private and public stakeholders at local, national and regional levels are actively engaged in improving youth and gender sensitive policies and legal frameworks on social entrepreneurship.</p>	<p><u>Op1.1</u> One national survey of key SE priorities, regulations and actors will be held for each country with the objective to have a clear and updated overview on priority issues and actors involved in the social entrepreneurship sector and the differential impact on gender in each targeted country.</p> <p><u>Op1.2</u> Policy and regulatory frameworks at national level are strengthened mainly through advocacy activities.</p> <p><u>Op1.3</u> Barriers entrepreneurial young women face in the MENA region are compared and contrasted</p>
<p><u>Intermediary Outcome n.2:</u> Quality and accessibility of support services for SEs and coordination among social entrepreneurship support organizations are increased</p>	<p><u>Op2.1</u> Sixty Social Entrepreneurship Support Organisations (SESOs) are trained in business development, SE innovation and social business technical assistance in order to be able to effectively support SEs to grow and scale up in a sustainable way</p> <p><u>Op2.2</u> Peer-to-peer learning, networking and partnership are facilitated among North-South and South-South key counterparts in order to build cross-border networks, share best practices and stimulate learning</p>
<p><u>Intermediary Outcome n.3:</u> Existing social enterprises expand their businesses and awareness of their impact is well spread among public audiences</p>	<p><u>Op3.1</u> One hundred SEs become more financially and socially sustainable and able to scale up</p> <p><u>Op3.2</u> Best practices on social entrepreneurship are widely disseminated among national, regional and international audiences for replication</p>

1.3. Levels of intervention

MedUp! is a multicounty project with a strong regional dimension that is rooted on 6 different and specific context. The MedUp! strategy is implemented following the 3 levels of intervention below:

- At macro level, the Action will promote policy and advocacy initiatives and public-private dialogue to improve regulatory and policy environments at country and cross-country levels;
- At meso level, SESOs will be supported to improve the quality, innovativeness and outreach of their services targeting local SEs. This will be done through capacity building programs, establishing strategic alliances with local and international financial institutions and organizing exchange and networking events with counterparts in the Southern Neighbourhood and the EU;
- At micro level, the Action will assist social enterprises in targeted countries through appropriate financial and technical support and on disseminating promising and successful social enterprises at national, regional and EU level to help SEs grow and diversify and also to feed the advocacy work (at macro level) through evidence.

In general, the Action will stimulate the participation of key relevant actors at national, regional and EU level to develop an enabling social entrepreneurship ecosystem in each targeted country.

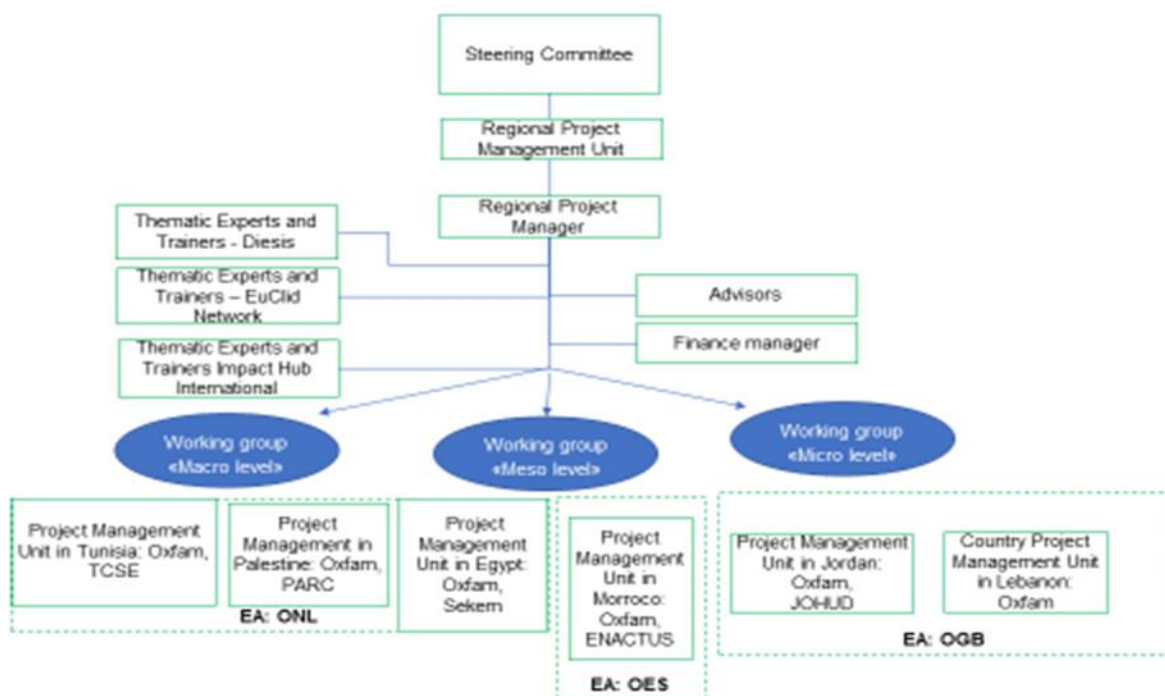
1.4. Organizational structure

The project implementation has two main management structures' levels:

- 1) Regional level: 1 Regional Project Management Unit is established and composed of a Regional Project Manager, Thematic Coordinators, Gender Advisors, MEAL advisor, Finance Manager;
- 2) National level: 6 National Project Management Units (PMUs) are in charge of the implementation of activities in each country of intervention.

In terms of Governance, there is a Steering Committee in charge of providing strategic steers for an effective implementation of the project. The Steering Committee is composed of members of each partner and from countries.

Below is an organogram of the project implementation team:



1.5. Beneficiaries

Target groups

- 1) 100 existing social enterprises (estimated 1.500 young men and women employed) that show a scalable model, are sustainable and generate a positive and long-term impact on their territories. Particular attention will be given to SEs that are women and/or youth-led or which create jobs for young people and women especially in rural areas;
- 2) 60 SESOs - estimated 480 technical staff - working closely with SEs and willing to improve the quality of their services through innovation and adaptation;
- 3) Governments officials and policy decision makers see a potential in SEs as drivers for inclusive growth and want to improve their policies and regulatory frameworks.

Final beneficiaries of the Action will be:

- Targeted youth, women and their households (est. 8.000 people);
- Media and influencing institutions, governmental bodies and main donors, educational institutions, private companies and investors and financial institutions.

(Refer Annex 1: MedUp! project's Logical Framework for details)

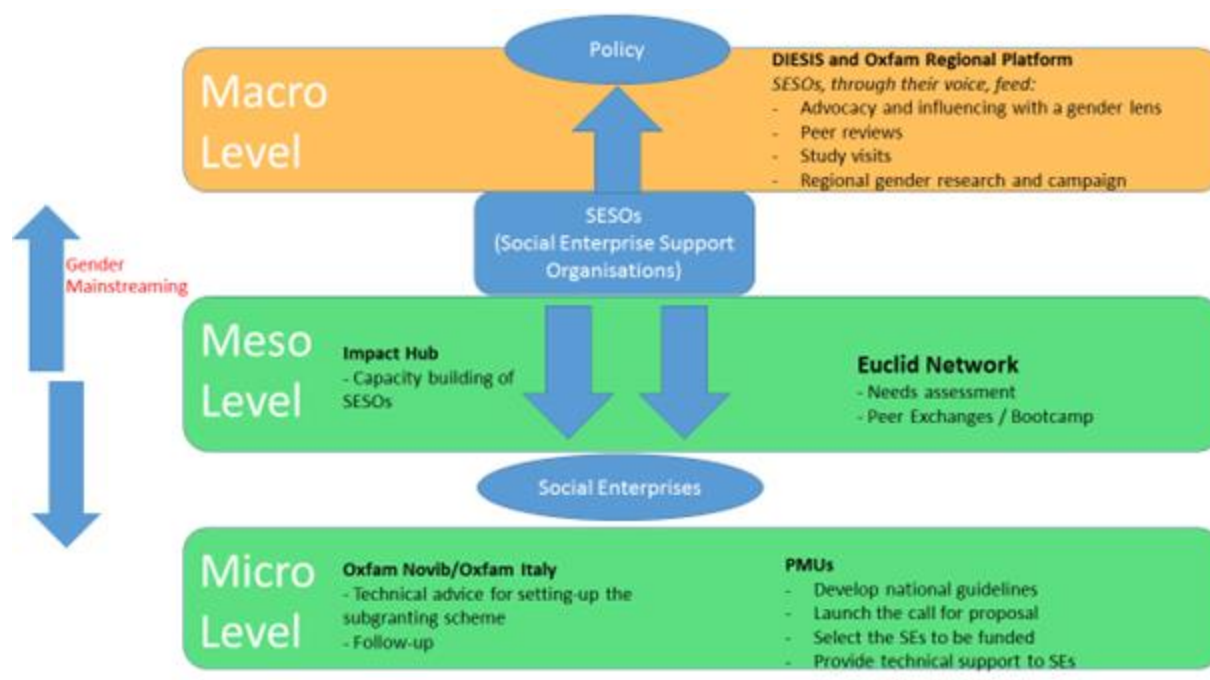
2. Project implementation

The project started in March 2018. The first year of the project was mostly dedicated to set-up the entire management and governance structure of the project at regional and country level and to establish the bases for collaboration and connections among all the partners and country teams. Indeed, given the combined perspective of the project, there has been a strong need to clarify roles, responsibilities, ways of working and coordination mechanisms among the different parties involved to ensure proper implementation. All this work, combined with very diverse and complex national contexts of intervention, consisted in several challenges that country management units had to face to get governmental approval to operate (Jordan, Egypt) and develop comprehensive contracts and agreements. As a result, the first year project implementation experienced some delay that also affected negatively the Consortium's capacity to spend the allocated budget. However, this delay have been recovered during the second year (March 2019 – February 2020).

Among the challenges, the Action is facing, it is important to mention that social entrepreneurship is a nascent sector with a potential to grow and generate positive impact if proper institutional commitment and ecosystem development are ensured. Indeed, even if social cooperatives have been existed in the region since long-time, they represent only a part of the whole spectrum of actors composing the SE ecosystem. The innovativeness of social entrepreneurship as sector consists in enabling other different kind of actors (associations, private companies, foundations, NGOs) to become protagonists of social change while pursuing activities in an entrepreneurial and sustainable manner.

The contribution of the Action is key especially in relation the influencing work towards national governments to stimulate enabling environments for social entrepreneurship and in terms of direct support to social entrepreneurs to solve social problems in challenging environments. Finally, the Action has the ambition to bring innovation and positive change at different levels, by addressing political impediments for SE to grow, by creating new spaces for strategic connections and collaboration among SESOs and by helping SEs to scale-up and become inspiring examples for similar initiatives to grow in other geographical areas.

Here below, a diagram describing the logic of intervention is reported:



B. MID-TERM EVALUATION

MedUp! project is approaching now the end of the second year of implementation (completing a half of the four-year intervention period). Therefore, to assess whether the project is successful in achieving its targets and results, there is a need to undertake a comprehensive evaluation exercise to evaluate the project's performance by looking at practices and ways of working at regional level and in each country of implementation. The Mid-Term evaluation is intended to assess whether targets and results (together with the performance's indicators reported in the logical framework) can be achieved within the project timeframe, if the implemented regional approach is functional to meet project objectives and to get useful learnings from the implementation during the first 24 months of the project. For this purpose, Oxfam Italia is looking for a Consultancy Firm with solid experience in conducting assessment exercises of complex programs in the MENA region.

3. Purpose

The MedUp! Mid-term Evaluation aims at assessing the a) Relevance, b) Coherence, c) Effectiveness, d) Efficiency and e) Sustainability of the project against its overall objective and the main outcomes. Furthermore, the Mid-term Evaluation has the objective to assess the effectiveness both of the regional and national strategies, to highlight key learnings coming from the direct implementation of the project in target countries and so to provide operational recommendations for the Regional Management Unit and for the National Management Units to strengthen the capacity of the project to deliver effective activities.

The evaluation purpose is focused on both accountability and learning. Therefore, the main evaluation questions are the following:

A. Relevance.

Assessing relevance means understand to what extent the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', regional, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change. Questions to consider are: To what extent are the objectives of the program still valid? Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?

B. Coherence.

Assessing coherence means analyse the compatibility of the project with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. Questions to consider are: To which extent other interventions support or undermine the project, and *vice versa*? Which are the synergies and interlinkages between the project and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government, as well as the consistency of the project with the relevant international norms and standards? Which is the consistency of the project with other actors' interventions in the same context?

C. Effectiveness.

Assessing effectiveness implies measuring the extent to which the project achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and results, including any differential results across groups. Questions to consider are: To which extent the project has already achieved its objectives and results or is likely to achieve them in both output and outcome levels? What have been the achievements and challenges of the MedUp! project, both at regional and national level? What enabled the achievements? What kind of measures the project adopted in order to put in place the strategy at regional level? What were the major factors influencing the achievement (or non-achievement) of objectives? How has Oxfam and MedUp! partners responded to challenges? What has been the effect and value of the activities to support partners to promote social entrepreneurship? What SESO, social enterprises, national and subnational authority, partners and project / regional management units learnt from the project implementation and from the ecosystem? How has the initiative influenced the appropriate stakeholder community, and what capacities has it built? What has been done to address the structural barriers that hinder women social enterprises in the different countries?

D. Efficiency.

Assessing efficiency means measuring the extent to which the project delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. The focus of this assessment should be less on cost-efficiency (in comparison to alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs) and more on process-efficiency. Questions to consider are: Were activities cost-efficient? Were objectives achieved on time? What has been effective in engaging/influencing communities, government at different levels & other stakeholders to strengthen social business?

E. Sustainability.

Assessing sustainability means measuring the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue. The project needs to be financially, economically, socially, environmentally, and institutionally sustainable. Questions to consider are: To what extent the benefits of a project continue after donor funding ceased? What were the major factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project? How have partners' capacities for influencing social business changed? How are the perspectives and priorities of women and young people addressed across all the project activities? Is there evidence that the project is likely to grow – scaling up and out – beyond the project life?

4. Objectives

- A. Identify, assess and document the evidence for the achievement of expected and unexpected results of the project towards the intended outcomes following the regional dimensions and the three levels of intervention (macro, meso and micro).
- B. Assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project related to contribution to partnerships, accountability, value for money from the perspectives of different stakeholders, capacity to generate long-term impact and development processes that continue after the project duration. This can include the appropriateness and relevance of the beneficiary selection.
- C. Identify key learnings, lessons, good practices, areas to be strengthened and provide recommendations to inform the revision to the strategies that currently in use.
- D. Assess whether the current management and governance structure of the project is fully functional to reach the project's objectives or there is a need to make operational adjustments, with reference to for the regional and gender dimensions.
- E. Identify potential risks that can impact on the project due to socio-economic, political and other factors. (Project already has the risk management matrix, it needs to be reviewed and updated).
- F. With particular reference to the sub-granting component of the project (1 million Euros will be disbursed to local social enterprises), assess the effectiveness of this financial support and elaborate key recommendations.
- G. Assess the existing strategies for sustaining the project and recommend measures for strengthening the same. This can be linked with the governance structure, decision making process, project implementation modality, steering committees etc.
- H. Facilitate a participatory process with staff to review, advice and guide the overall project management strategy and its strengths and weaknesses.
- I. Apply a strong gender inclusive analysis throughout the evaluation as this theme being implemented during the lifespan of the project. This can be done by reviewing the existing plans (e.g. Gender Action Plan; GAP) and assessing the progress against each activity and their intended targets.
- J. Identify external environment challenges and opportunities that had impacted on the project progress.
- K. Advise about possible and applicable measures and decisions that can increase the project's capacity to put in place activities at macro, meso and micro levels that are sustainable and well anchored to national and regional social entrepreneurship ecosystems.

The evaluation findings and recommendations will be used as a basis for well-grounded strategic reflection on possible changes to be applied to the existing strategies and project management.

5. Geographical area

The project is implemented both in rural and urban area of the following Middle East and North African (MENA) countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon.

The Mid-Term Evaluation will be done by combining work on remote and field missions in the target areas. The field-visits will have the purpose of collecting field data from partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries. Per each country of implementation, a stakeholder's map will be made available to the selected consulting firm.

(Refer Annex 2: List of the partner and stakeholder for each county)

6. Evaluation approach and methodology

To select the consultant in charge of conducting the Mid-Term evaluation, Oxfam Italia expects to receive clear technical and financial proposals clarifying the following:

6.1. Approach

- A. Evaluation will employ both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection supported by an extensive review of secondary information on demography and issues that are relevant to the project.
- B. Evaluation will be conducted using semi-structured questionnaire/s (SSQ), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and gender / feminist sensitive tools. Per each data-collection methodology, the consultant must develop specific questionnaire/guidelines that will be made available as annexes in the final report. The information so gathered will be triangulated to obtain a more accurate picture.
- C. The data collected on the ground, both in urban and rural areas, should show segregation of beneficiaries by gender and age, and it has to be carried out in at least three (3) countries where the project is implemented as described under section 5. The 3 countries will be identified with the Regional Management Unit. For the countries not included in the field visits, the data collection will be done remotely and in close coordination with the interested PMUs.
- D. In conducting the Evaluation, the Consultant must be in constant coordination with the Regional Project Management Unit (especially with the MedUp MEAL Advisor and the Regional Project Coordinator). As part of the technical proposal submitted, the Consultant should propose a plan to make sure the necessary coordination will be ensured.
- E. Outline Oxfam's focus on gender and inclusion with a specific focus on what this means in the context of this evaluation's focus. In line with Oxfam's values and organizational ambition, the evaluation should seek to prioritize a focus on gender and inclusion and trying to understand the extent to which the project or program applied gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches and explicitly aimed for results that improve the rights of all groups and that contribute to gender justice.

6.2. Methodology

- A. Review project documents (including the project proposal, Log Frame, M&E Plan) and carry out preliminary interviews with the relevant staff. Review the existing M&E tools in each country to ensure they capture data sufficiently.
- B. Develop detailed Evaluation Proposal and Inception Report along with the questionnaires, methodologies and work plan.
- C. Upon approval of the Evaluation proposal / Inception report, collect data at field level and remotely as per schedule, interpret and analyze them. Pay extra attention to data related to gender while collecting data and reporting on findings.
- D. Review the information available in the project and progress reports (half-year and annual) generated by project staff and triangulate them with the evaluation findings.
- E. Assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the project (by using indicators) as to whether it is on track and progressing towards the intended outcomes. Use country analysis data, information against the indicators, and perspectives provided by stakeholders through key informant interviews / focus group discussion as a basis for the Evaluation team's assessment.
- F. Identify the reasons for delays.
- G. Capture the evidence for the project's achievements in the form of case studies also.

H. Review the project management style and provide recommendations for greater efficiency.

6.3. Sampling methodology and sample size

The intended total number of final beneficiaries of this project is 8.000 people. The prospective consultant is expected to propose a methodology and sample for the Evaluation in his / her proposal.

7. Responsibilities of the consultant

The consultant is required to:

- A. Take the responsibility for the Evaluation and appoint a person as the contact point with Oxfam Italia for all the liaison and coordination;
- B. Compose the Evaluation team that is capable to deliver the output of required quality in time and mention the team composition in his / her proposal;
- C. Make necessary appointments for the key informant interviews, mobilize participants, including direct beneficiaries (mainly social entrepreneurs, social enterprises support organizations, policy makers), for focus group discussions and visit the partners for data collection. The project staff in the country (i.e. PMUs), however, would support and participate at FGDs. Oxfam will provide necessary authorizations through letters to use the organization names by the consultant. All communication and coordination in the country for collecting data should be the consultant's responsibility;
- D. Manage all the logistics of field survey in coordination with MedUp Project Management Units;
- E. Train an adequate number of enumerators that will be recruited in cooperation with the Oxfam country team for the field survey and supervise their work (both progress and the quality);
- F. Ensure that all his / her personnel employed are following the Code of Conduct and the policies of Oxfam and a declaration to this effect is signed by them;
- G. Submit the deliverables (mentioned under item 9 below) on / in time, and,
- H. Maintain the confidentiality of all information gathered. (Prior to undertaking, the consultant will have to declare that the information gathered would not be used for a purpose other than for those stipulated in the ToR).

8. Responsibilities of OXFAM ITALIA

As the organization commissioning the Evaluation, Oxfam Italia will:

- A. Provide all the relevant documentation for the Evaluation's purposes
- B. Hold the responsibility for the provision of feedback / comments for inception report, questionnaires, draft report and presentations as per the agreed time frame. Consultant can suggest the time frame;
- C. Provide the templates for reporting and financial settlements;
- D. Keep the relevant stakeholders (who are to be interviewed by consultant) informed about the evaluation;
- E. Make necessary arrangements for meetings and presentation whenever required;
- F. Review the timeline of evaluation and make necessary amendments in consultation with consultant, and
- G. Pay as per the agreed schedule upon the completion of minimum requirements.

9. Deliverables

The consultant is liable for the following deliverables:

- A. An inception report, including details such as work plan, questionnaires, guidelines FGDs and KIIs checklist and a field survey plan. (This needs to be agreed with Oxfam Italia prior to the start of field survey);
 - B. Final evaluation report with executive summary. This needs to be submitted according to the following procedures:
The consultant will prepare a draft report and share with Oxfam Italia followed by a PPT presentation of findings on a prior agreed date. Oxfam Italia will feedback on draft report and the consultant then have to finalize the report. Report should be comprehensive with benchmarks of all indicators set in log frame and other crosscutting issues and case studies. The consultant needs to submit the electronic version (i.e. Word, Power Point, and Excel);
 - C. It could be requested to attend a regional meeting (fully funded by the project) to present the findings (or the preliminary findings) of the evaluation with all the Consortium's partners.
- The working language for the elaboration of all deliverables is English.
- The period for the assignment is 3 months starting from the date of signing the contract until the submission of final report.

10. Competency of consultant

The consultant should possess extensive experience (minimum 10 years) in undertaking evaluations of complex multi-country/regional development programs (special attention will be given to the experience in assessing initiatives insisting on entrepreneurship and private sector support as well as in assessing EU funded projects) and in-depth knowledge on relevant sectors and conducting evaluations, surveys researches etc. The proposed team shall comprise personnel with extensive experience (at least seven years) in the related field. The consultant should also have:

- Excellent knowledge of EU practices and procedures for project implementation;
- Expertise in project cycle management and extensive knowledge of Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning systems and data collection methods;
- Deep knowledge of the social entrepreneurship sector and inclusive finance mechanisms
- Previous experience in working with INGOs' procedures, approaches and operations;
- Acknowledged similar consultancies with recognized organizations;
- Demonstrated analytical and writing skills;
- Excellent knowledge of English (Arabic would be an asset);
- Computer skills (advanced user of Microsoft Excel or similar software; statistical software is an asset);
- Desirable: previous experience and knowledge of the area.

11. Evaluation of proposals and selection process

The potential and interested firms / individuals are required to submit a comprehensive proposal describing / articulating the work requirements outlined in this ToR. The language proficiency of the proposed personnel, especially of the field enumerators are important to indicate in the proposal.

All proposals will be evaluated based on internally agreed criteria as follows and considered during the proposal assessment process:

(The weight for the each criteria given in percentages)

- A. Specific and extensive expertise in social entrepreneurship of the consultant (at least the Team Leader) (15%);
- B. Proposed team / personnel which includes composition of team such as principal investigator, statistician, social business specialties, gender specialist etc. and their educational qualification and experiences (25%). With equal competences, gender-balanced teams will be favourite;
- C. Methodology and work plan which includes approach / evaluation design, sampling methodology, data collection methodology, data analysis, work plan etc. (30%);
- D. Quality of presentation of proposal (10%).

80% of weight will be given to technical proposal and 20% of weight will be given to financial proposal. The applicant should score minimum of 40% in the technical evaluation to be eligible for financial evaluation.

The proposal and the budget should be prepared using the format provided.

(Refer Annex 3: Proposal and Budget format, for details)

12. Terms and conditions

Payment will be on submission of Tax Invoice on delivery against milestones. All incidentals, equipment and materials, accommodation and travel required for the assignment are to be procured by the consultant except where otherwise indicated in the consultancy agreement.

The consultant should follow the Oxfam's Branding policies and ensure Oxfam and donor logos are presented as per the guidelines. The consultant and his / her team in the assignment must abide by Oxfam child protection policy, code of conduct, sexual harassment policy and Oxfam's other relevant policies. All requirements in respect of insurance including professional indemnity, worker's compensation, public liability, superannuation and taxation, where applicable will remain, at all times, the responsibility of the consultant.

13. Schedule of payments

- A. 30% of total value of consultancy will be paid upon the signing of agreement and the submission of the inception report.
- B. 30% of total value of consultancy will be paid upon the submission of first draft report.
- C. 40% of final payment will be paid after the acceptance of final report.

14. Submission process

Interested candidates (individuals or companies) should send the comprehensive proposal describing / articulating the work requirements outlined in this ToR.

The proposal should include 2 (two) documents: a) Technical Proposal and b) Financial proposal, in Euro (refer Annex 3: Proposal and Budget format, for details). Each document should be enclosed in separate covers indicating the subject. Both covers and a memory stick carrying a soft copy of the technical and financial proposal should be enclosed in another envelope and mark **“Proposal for the Mid-Term Evaluation of MedUp!”**.

The abovementioned documents can be hand deliver or send in by registered post to the mailing address:

Oxfam Italia
Via Pierluigi da Palestrina 26/R
50144 Firenze, Italia
Telephone + 39 055 3220895 | Fax +39 055 3245133

Alternatively the abovementioned documents can be sent via email to the following addresses:

cristian.bevacqua@oxfam.it and lorenzo.paoli@oxfam.it

Revised deadline for the receipt of proposals by Oxfam Italy: **18 March 2020** at **16:00** Rome (Italy) time.

15. Indicative timetable **updated**

	Date	Time
1. Publication of Term of Reference	24 February 2020	-
2. Deadline for submission of the proposal for MedUp! Mid-Term Evaluation	18 March 2020	16:00 Rome time
3. Notification of award	27 March 2020	-
4. Contract signature	15 April 2020	-
5. Implementation of the evaluation process	From May to July 2020	
5.1 Preliminary findings of the evaluation	30 June 2020	
6. Ending of MedUp! Mid-Term Evaluation and delivery of the deliverables final versions	31 July 2020	-

Annex 9 - Interview questions for selected Social Entrepreneurs

Motivation and challenges

- 1) **Why did you decide to become a social entrepreneur? Tell us about your story and your enterprise...**
 - How has your life changed since you started running your business?
 - Which have been so far the most relevant challenges that you faced, concerning your entrepreneurial experience? Did they have any effect also on your personal life?
- 2) **Does it make any difference, in your opinion, being a female instead of a male entrepreneur, in terms of opportunities and easiness to run a business?**
 - Which are the challenges in being a women entrepreneur?

Assessing the impact of the project

- 3) **Tell us about your experience with MedUp!**
 - Is MedUp! project providing you with relevant support in improving your enterprise?
 - If yes, which are the most important types of support you have received so far (e.g. financial, technical, human support)? Which aspects are they helping you to foster?

Future expectations & suggestions

- 4) **How do you think your enterprise will look like in a couple of years from now?**
- 5) **Is there anything you would suggest to a young, aspiring social entrepreneur?**

Closing questions:

- 6) **Do you have anything you wish to add?**
- 7) **Is there any suggestion you would like to provide MedUp staff with, in order to increase their ability to better promote your business stability and growth?**

Annex 10 – CASE STORIES

Makra, Small Artisans for Trade & Supply: the story of Amr Abuzed

CASE STORY

MISSION

"Improving livelihood of artisans from unprivileged communities by increasing sales and productivity and creating jobs in better health conditions"

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: MAKRA, SMALL ARTISANS FOR TRADE & SUPPLY



A small value chain service company developing and trading 100% handmade products made from 100% raw materials. They support and acquire from artisans in underprivileged villages of Upper Egypt to create jobs and fight poverty

FOUNDERS: 2
WOMEN: 1
YOUTH: 2





NAME: Amr Abuzed
GENDER: Male
COUNTRY: Egypt

"I DECIDED TO BECOME A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT POOR PEOPLE NEED TO BE HELPED IN BRINGING THEM JOBS AND KNOWLEDGE, NOT BY CHARITY. SO I ALWAYS HELP MY ARTISANS BY BRINGING THEM JOBS AND EDUCATING THEM SO THEY HAVE A BETTER LIFE"

Amr Abuzed, expert in accounting law and a PhD in Management, was originally a banker: he worked for BNP Paribas for twenty years and before that he was an auditor and tax advisor.

He wondered whether he could set up a new type of organization that wasn't a financial institution nor a microcredit organization but more of a micro enterprise that could actually help people by providing them work and by teaching them how to produce. Since they lack access to the market and the proper machinery, instead of giving them loans, he first identifies a market, where he can sell their products. Then he gives them the proper raw materials, the proper equipment and the proper supervision and quality control. He then buys their products, pays them in advance to encourage them to acquire the materials, pay their artisans and produce in high quality. Finally, he brands the products and sells them internationally to concept stores, hotels and restaurants.

"It was a big change for me! Instead of being a banker with a cigar in my mouth, I had to go very deep in the upper Egypt. I am gaining more on the moral side. On the financial side it is less brilliant, of course, than was being the general manager of a bank. There is a difference on the financial side but on the human side there is a great gain. It changed my life for the better, but not on a financial side".

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS:

Amer thinks that for a woman it might be easier to raise funds compared to men since

there are many funders that wish to support women. Even though Amer does not have employees because he outsources production, all of his external collaborators in charge of packaging and quality control are actually women.

MEDUP! SUPPORT:

Although Amer was hoping in a larger grant amount, MedUp! funding proved to be very helpful for him. In particular, before MedUp Amer's project was still not formalized: "it was like one-man show, one-man employee, the bank account of the company was my personal bank account". MedUp! helped him to differentiate between the company and himself. Luckily, he received the first tranche of funding just before the closing due to Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, he managed to place the orders and his manufacturers were able to financially survive the pandemic lockdown. As a suggestion to further improve MedUp! support, Amer advises to better communicate also the technical support that is being offered by the project besides the financial provision.

AMER'S TIPS FOR A YOUNG, ASPIRING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

"Bookkeeping from day one, and variety. I would also suggest having a harmonic working team that believe in the idea. I would also suggest taking just what is needed from the income of the company as his personal salary and invest the main part in the project."

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FUTURE PERSPECTIVES:

In a couple of years from now, Amir sees his project turning from a micro enterprise into, at least, a small enterprise. With proper financing he would go to a higher stage and have more workshops, promote his brands, enroll product designers to enrich his offer and strengthen his e-commerce platform.

Book Agri: the story of Rudaina Haddad

CASE STORY

MISSION

"Allow for the social and economic inclusion of the local society"

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: BOOK AGRİ



A platform for showcasing agri-rural tourism businesses and farm activities connecting the visitor with a range of agri-tourism experiences and products

FOUNDERS: 1
WOMEN: 1
YOUTH: 0





NAME: Rudaina Haddad
GENDER: Female
COUNTRY: Jordan

"I DECIDED TO BECOME A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR BECAUSE I WANTED TO CREATE A PROJECT THAT WOULD ALLOW THE INCLUSION OF LOCAL SOCIETY, BY MAKING IT PART OF THIS PROCESS AND BY GIVING TO TOURISTS THE POSSIBILITY TO BUY DIRECTLY FROM FARMERS BOTH SOUVENIRS AND FOOD"

Rudaina Haddad was one of the first women tour guides in Jordan. Soon she became unsatisfied with the classical "tourist package" offered to visitors in Jordan, mainly consisting of visiting archaeological sites. In fact, she felt that, somehow, she was contributing to a type of tourism that marginalizes the local population and fails to allow tourists to really assimilate the true, local Jordanian culture.

"For example, one comes and visits Jerash, a great Jordanian city, and after the visit he/she is taken to souvenir shops where the 99.9% of what is sold is made in China or India. This marginalizes Jordanian heritage and products. On the contrary (these shops) should sell only Jordanian products made by local women and farmers. Instead, tourists go to restaurants where nothing is properly Jordanian. Menus mainly offer Lebanese food, which is very good and I also love it very much, but when someone comes to Jordan he should be immersed in Jordanian culture. The choice of where to stay falls usually on 5, 4 or 3 stars hotels, that are mainly situated in Amman. After the trip the tourists tell people – I saw the history of the Roman empire, of ancient Greece, Byzantine and the modern way of living in the country – but where is the Jordanian society in that? Where is the Jordanian food? What about Jordanian heritage? The Jordanian expertise, that one can learn from and implement? Even if I tried every time to talk about local culture, the visitors weren't able to really assimilate this info because they didn't actually see with their eyes how is the lifestyle in a Jordanian household. They maintained their prejudices of Jordan as a place where people are fanatic,

where there are only camels and the houses don't have fridges or electricity. They even didn't believe I was Jordanian!"

Then, in 2014, Rudaina came up with the idea of Book Agri: an agri-rural tourism business offering a platform for showcasing agri-rural tourism businesses and farm activities and

connecting the visitor with a range of agritourism experiences. She decided to create a project that would allow the inclusion of local society, by making it part of this process and by giving tourists the possibility to buy directly from farmers both souvenirs and food. The idea was presented in a call for proposals by the European Union and managed to win along with 11 others over 400 applications. The project was then registered in the Ministry of Industry and Trade and, since then, it has been constantly growing. Moreover, besides international tourists, Book Agri manages to attract also locals:

“The beautiful thing is that it is loved and accepted by the locals because it helps them to connect to their roots. They bring their children to teach them even basic things as for example that milk comes from goats, or the difference a goat and a cow. Those are funny things, but at the same time bring a sense of sadness.”

Even during the lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the project continued thanks to the diversification of products allowing for a stream of income. In fact, food kept on being produced in the farms and sent to Amman's market branded as Book Agri.

Rudaina is well aware that the Social Enterprise is a new concept for Arab societies and realizes the greater responsibilities that come with it compared to a traditional enterprise:

“You also have more responsibility because for example at this day I work with 30 households, families and farms, including more than 200 people that live with the revenue of the project. I consider them all as partners of Book Agri”.

Engaging in such a project allowed her life to evolve to the next step as she can see the social impact she is contributing to achieve:

“What changed are elements around me, and the life of people that work with me in Book Agri, as they now feel that their efforts are appreciated by everyone. Also, they now have incomes that they receive without the need to leave the house and their families”.

Nevertheless, satisfaction deriving from social entrepreneurship does not come without difficulties. One of the greater challenges for Rudaina was to find the families she could work with, the second was to train them and the third to find financial support to maintain high standards of hygiene.

“This is not an easy job: you are not dealing with objects; you are dealing with people with all aspects of a human being and the fact that every region has its own way of doing things and a different culture (...). Luckily the farmers I am working with didn't take me as a challenge, as a city person that came to impose her rules, but they understood that I went to them with the idea of shedding the light on the rural life without changing anyone or anything”.

Her biggest support came from her husband and children. Indeed, Rudaina and her husband started off with financing the project with their own money.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS:

Rudaina believes that there are no real differences between men and women entrepreneurs, except for the physical aspects:

"I believe that the only difference between women and men are physical. Leading a business is made with the mind, and on this side, we have the same potential. If there is a stupid woman, there is also a stupid man. As there are intelligent women and intelligent men. If you have a passion and strongly believe in your idea, you can do whatever you want, no one can say no to you."

Actually, Rudaina remarks that, if comparing a girl and a boy who just graduated university, perhaps a woman has more abilities that would allow her to become an entrepreneur, considering that she learned to cook, housekeeping and handicrafts. Moreover, women now might have more opportunities because they have more attention and support in this moment. Access to information on the internet is, indeed, of great support in this respect.

MEDUP! SUPPORT:

Rudaina always relies on grants to expand her business. MedUp! grant, although not particularly big, indeed helped her to scale up and to realize her idea.

RUDAINA'S TIPS FOR A YOUNG, ASPIRING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

In Rudaina's opinion the secret to success is to make the project your priority, to persevere and to maintain the continuity. She advises to have patience because a social entrepreneur needs twice as much patience compared to a traditional business owner. Moreover, a social enterprise should be transparent and respectful with the social and environmental context where the enterprise is inserted. A social entrepreneur should not impose a model or a system with superiority. Instead, Rudaina stresses that it is important to highly value and take into account the interests of all the parties, to be intelligent, gentle and to respect boundaries.

"If I have to say a slogan it would be: If you have a dream, go for it and never stop, and that nothing comes easily. No one finishes the ladder from the first step! You have to start from the first step and when you arrive, you arrive, and this is the important."

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FUTURE PERSPECTIVES:

Rudaina sees her business expanding in the future:

"I see Book Agri bigger and more successful. In the next two years we will focus on advertising our new project in Karak specifically."

Live Love Recycle: the story of George Bitar

CASE STORY

MISSION

"Creating jobs, cleaning the country, and giving an easy tool for people to recycle"



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: LIVE LOVE RECYCLE

Live Love Recycle app allows users to order an e-bike to come to their home and pick up recyclables for proper disposal.

FOUNDERS: 1
WOMEN: 0
YOUTH: 1



NAME: George Bitar

GENDER: Male

COUNTRY: Lebanon

"IN 2015, THERE WAS THE GARBAGE CRISIS IN LEBANON: WE HAD GARBAGE EVERYWHERE IN BEIRUT AND THIS WAS NOT THE CITY I WANTED. I EITHER HAD THE OPTION TO GO ON THE STREET AND PROTEST, OR FIND A SOLUTION. INSTANTLY, WITHOUT EVEN THINKING OF DOING AN ENTERPRISE OR EVEN A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE I DECIDED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT"

George, from Lebanon, was leaving abroad, in Mozambique, for the past year. He was earning a good salary but, still, he was not satisfied with his life. He decided to return to Lebanon, and everything changed when he suddenly took up a mission that he felt was calling him to action:

"I decided to come back to Lebanon and when I came back there was the garbage crisis in Lebanon. This wasn't the Beirut I wanted. It's my city, it's the city where I was born and spent 99% of my life, so I didn't want it to be full of garbage like it was. And instantly, without even thinking about it, without even thinking of doing an enterprise or even a social enterprise I decided to do something about it. I either had the option to go on the street and protest or find a solution. I wanted to recycle."

George contacted all the NGO's, all recycling companies in Lebanon, but none of them was available at the time: they were all busy and it was hard to reach out to them. So, he decided to create the application "Live Love Recycle", a kind of Uber but for recycling where one can, at any time, request a pickup. Today there are more than 20 thousand people in Lebanon using it. The app is still free, and it is intended to remain so in order to encourage more people to recycle.

It took George almost three years to find the funds to start operating. Then he finally found financial support from the German government and other organizations including a Lebanese NGO called Live Love Beirut, which is the NGO he is now working with. The project is allowing thousands of people to recycle and to remove tons of recyclables from going in the land fields and

polluting the Mediterranean Sea. The business keeps on increasing and it is now expanding its area of service. It is also enlarging the types of items to be recycled so, today, instead of collecting only plastic, cans and metal, it is collecting clothes, nylon, white glass and more.

George is earning less money than when he was living in Africa, yet, he is much happier with his life:

"Since I started the business I am always on the phone! Now at least I am happy. You remember when I told you that when I was in Africa, I was making lots of money, but I didn't feel fulfilled. Now I may not gain the money I used to gain in Africa, but at least I am happy and that's the most important for me now. "

The project did not stop even though it was harshly hit by the Beirut port explosion, on August 4th, 2020. George himself was injured: he lost 4 litres of blood. His family was also injured, his home and his cars were destroyed. His office and machines were damaged, some project team members were injured as well. Nevertheless, Live Love and Recycle project relentlessly continued on its mission: they have installed a recycling station in the devastated area, where people can come and put all the recyclables. Also, the social enterprise is creating much needed new jobs in the area. For example, today they have two persons just sorting the clothes and distributing them for free to people in need. More, the project is now diversifying its revenues by producing and selling carafes.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS:

"As a man in today's world we are much well treated than women, but for me I look at women as the same. It's not about if you are a man or a woman, it is about if you believe in your idea."

For George personally there should be no gender difference, however he does recognize that there are, indeed, social differences. In his opinion, only few women manage to create enterprises in the region. Live, Love and Recycle tried for years to welcome women in its team, but it was hard to find women that could drive the e-bike in Lebanon. Nonetheless, partnering with Live Love Beirut allowed the project to create jobs even for women. They are recruited and trained to prepare hot meals for the collectors every day. On a positive note, George sees that many competition opportunities are now opening for women in Lebanon.

MEDUP! SUPPORT:

George is grateful for the opportunity to benefit from MedUp! support:

"The MedUp fund really came at a much needed time. We thank MedUp and the organizations that were behind it, like Oxfam".

With the help from Oxfam, Live, Love and Recycle received 10 thousand euros, which are helping them to continue on building their platform. Unfortunately, following the Beirut explosion, everything was delayed. Nonetheless, MedUp! mentors are helping Live, Love, Recycle to keep expanding.

In order for this to happen, George is looking for further support:

"As Live Love Recycle we want to keep on expanding and we are looking for someone to help us in building and continue on pushing what I call a dream".

George foresees that Live Love Recycle will be needing around 50 thousand USD to scale up and replicate its model nationally and world-wide. Also, more technical advice is needed to help them to become more financially sustainable. More, George wishes to be given the opportunity to access to international networks in order to create synergies and partnerships:

"I know that Oxfam is well connected all over the world, so I would love to meet someone in Oxfam that could help us replicate with their powerful connections and everything they have. First, we would like them to listen to us: we can sit with them and give them the full vision of Live Love Recycle and how we could implement it in different areas of the world together with the help of Oxfam. I wish we will be able together to clean our only home which is Earth."

TIPS FOR A YOUNG, ASPIRING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

George firmly believes that a social entrepreneur should stick to his ideas and mission as much as he/she must be able to adapt to constant change. His tip for a young, aspiring social entrepreneur, in fact, is to:

"Believing in his ideas, stick to them. If you have an idea keep it and build on it, but also listen to what people tell you, take advice from people and be flexible also to adapt to any situation, even if you are changing a big part of your project it's ok, just adapt to the situation by being agile and flexible. Take the opportunities but always keep in mind why you started this. We started for a need, if the need changes, we will adapt. Keep in mind that I started to clean my country and then I discovered that actually it is not a local issue but a global issue."

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FUTURE PERSPECTIVES:


Live, Love and Recycle aims at expanding to other areas of Lebanon. They are also creating a website to support self-financing. Given the hard political and financial situation in Lebanon, the project wishes to move its base abroad, while still aiming at expanding within the country. Live, Love and Recycle's dream would be to continue on creating new jobs, scale up and replicate its model at the global scale.

Educall (Education For All): the story of Yassine Ettayal

CASE STORY

MISSION


"Providing quality education to all children"




SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: EDUCALL

Educall offers tailored pedagogical and playful educational programmes for all children facing learning difficulties in school or in accessing quality education

FOUNDERS: 2
WOMEN: 1
YOUTH: 2





NAME: Yassine Ettayal
GENDER: Male
COUNTRY: Morocco

"I FOUND THAT SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP COULD SERVE IN RESOLVING SOCIAL PROBLEMS. THAT'S HOW I GAVE UP ON THE IDEA OF BECOMING AN ENGINEER: IT WOULD HAVE SURELY GIVEN ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN WELL AND TO PROVIDE FOR ME AND MY FAMILY, BUT BEING A SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR IS THE TOOL THROUGH WHICH I CAN PROVIDE FOR MYSELF AND HELP A LARGE PORTION OF SOCIETY"

Yassine Ettayal dreamt of becoming an engineer. Being a social entrepreneur wasn't his objective at the beginning. The course of his life events led him to Enactus, a Moroccan student Social Entrepreneurship incubator and accelerator and also a MedUp! project South Mediterranean partner. Yassine was introduced for the first time to the concept of social entrepreneurship and, since then, engaged in many social projects as an extra-curricular activity.

"I found that social entrepreneurship could serve in resolving social problems. That's how I gave up on the idea of becoming an engineer, because I was telling myself that being an engineer would have surely given me the opportunity to gain well to provide for me and my family, but being a social entrepreneur is the tool through which I could resolve a social problem, thus providing for myself and helping a large portion of society: people that would benefit from the solution I am providing for this specific social problem."

At Enactus, Yassine quickly acquired skills for social business management, he gained experience in field studies for need assessments and soon became a team leader. Educall started as a social project in Enactus. He was working on the project with ten other team members. In 2015, when Yassine finally got his degree and became an engineer, he started thinking about creating his personal social enterprise. He reunited with all the team members that worked on the project and asked them who was ready to make it his/her life project. Two of them were ready to take this step: himself and his associate Nada. Since in Morocco the status

of social enterprise is not yet legally recognized, they decided to create an S.r.l. and officially started their adventure on June 29th, 2015.

"My life really changed after starting this project. My mindset changed because, before, I saw myself as an individual, as a person that could not be able to make a big change outside of its restricted social circle that includes family and friends. But now I am sure that even

as an individual I can create a movement of positive change in my region, district and even country. So, the first impact was on me on an individual level: I discovered that I have a voice and the power to create job opportunities for people around me and a positive change."

Aiming to provide quality education to all children, independently of their social and economic background, Educall has accompanied, to this date, 1.250 children. The project offers tailored educational programme for children facing learning difficulties in school. It is both a pedagogical and a playful educational program supporting the Moroccan schooling. More, Educall offers differentiated payments:

"Those who can afford the whole price pay it, but there are families that can pay a lower price and children that we admit for free, based on the income. Children should care only about their studies: we discuss financial matters with the parents and we always try to include everyone coming to us."

In addition to the expertise in the educational field that Yassine had acquired during his experience at Enactus, he decided to gain more credibility and legitimacy by starting a PhD in Educational Technology. This allowed to make the most of his university studies as an engineer by combining education and technology.

Before the lock down due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Educall focused more on in person workshops, principally in the cities of Rabat and Casablanca. Nevertheless, they considered the lock down period as an inspirational challenge. They were able to develop new working models and switched mostly online, although trying to maintain some hybrid workshops (alternating in-person and online).

"Instead of complaining as I would have done in the past, I turned the pandemic into an opportunity to implement my idea, mobilizing and involving many other people with the same vision as mine. And that's the best part in this adventure: every day brings an opportunity to learn and to experience new things. Five years might seem a lot, but they passed very quickly, and we are aware of the fact that the way is still very long because the results of our work will show in 10 or 20 years from now. We need much patience and resilience".

Educall also started a project named "Learn from home" involving and training many volunteers to help children of all grades and extended their offer from 2 to more than 33 cities in Morocco. Yassine believes this pandemic made parents realize that technology can also be an educational tool.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS:

"Unfortunately, this is a real issue. Surely many efforts have been made to promote feminine entrepreneurship, but much is still needed to reduce the gap. We will need to reach a point where we can overcome the gender division: right now, we focus more on the quantitative aspect without giving attention to the qualitative side, for example speaking about opportunities, salaries, workload, etc."

However, on the positive note, Yassine explains that in their experience, they were able to access some supporting organizations because they have a woman in the team. For

example, they have been accompanied by the organization named “*Les femmes chefs d’entreprise au Maroc*” which accepts only associations where at least one of the associates is a woman.

With regards to gender inequality, Yassine believes that it is important to start working with children from a very young age. For this reason, they created a program “She can”, not addressing only girls, because it is crucial that also young boys become aware of the problem. The program focuses on three levels: the first level is identity. Girls need to be comfortable in their identity as females, without seeing any problem in that and knowing that they have the right to raise their voices on social matters. The second is the body level. Working with children aged between 5 and 12, it is essential to raise awareness on body changes that occur at this age. Hence, since families often don’t take the time to address these topics with their children, Educall calls in professionals to explain that body transformation is normal and is something to be accepted. The last level is the social one. The focus is on teamwork and in showing young girls that they have a social support system they can rely on.

MEDUP! SUPPORT:

Without MedUp! support, today Educall project would have come to a halt:

“MedUp! was as a windfall for us. It came in the perfect moment. Without the help from MedUp! we were probably going to stop the project in this very difficult period. Both financial and technical support were essential”.

MedUP! provided the expertise to better manage their financial plan and avoid mistakes. In particular, Educall was facing some strategic obstacles to overcome. For example, they had to decide if to maintain their center in Agdal, if and how to switch their working model, and other business strategy dilemmas.

“Just having someone listening to us was of great help. Being isolated is the worst enemy for an entrepreneur. It is true that from your mistakes you can always learn, but it is also true that you can lose a lot”.

MedUp! support allowed Educall to financially survive to the Covid-19 pandemic. Now their objective is to move to the second level, and they are confident that MedUp! will take them there:

“Our objective is that Educall before MedUp! should not be the same as Educall after MedUp!. I am confident that we will reach our goals because all the means to do so are there: technical support and coaching that for me are the most important aspects. Financial support is important as well, but I would classify it as a second degree”.

TIPS FOR A YOUNG, ASPIRING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Yassine’s motto for a young, aspiring social entrepreneur would be:

“Do what you love to do, love what you do. And passion is what allows the world to progress. If I am passionate about something I will do my best to make it the best thing ever”.

Moreover, Yassine advises to be resilient: embarking in the social entrepreneurship journey is not easy and patience is essential. He prefers to address this adventure as an investment, rather than as a sacrifice. In his own experience, Yassine spent time on working on the project, more than going out with family and friends. This allowed him to develop a personal relationship with the project:

“I can say that the more you are connected to your project, the more you make it progress, because obstacles are real. The beauty of this work is that it gives you the opportunity to not specialize on a specific topic, but you develop an expertise on many different fields. You never stop learning. So: resilience, perseverance, and strong belief in the project”.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FUTURE PERSPECTIVES:

“In two years, I can say that I see Educall in main cities, but also in small villages, both physically and through project partners or co-working spaces. I am aware that this might sound ambitious but consider what we were able to reach in such a short period of time during a global pandemic! As feasible objective we can aspire to be in at least 6 of the 12 Moroccan regions”.

More, Yassine aims at reaching both public and private schools. They found it extremely difficult to integrate into the bureaucracy of the public domain, even though they originally supposed that public school were going to be their main target. Conversely, Educall is gaining credibility with private establishments, trying to make it easier to access the public educational system, considering that they want to focus on children that can't afford a private education.

Educall also works with the “Moroccan league for children's protection” and wish to be present in all their centers in the future. Educall envisages to expand its team by adding new expertise and opening up for new horizons.

Build Palestine: the story of Lama Amr

CASE STORY

MISSION

"Build a global community that is connected to and supports the most innovative and impactful projects in Palestine."



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: BUILD PALESTINE

Build Palestine connects social entrepreneurs and no profits with resources and opportunities to make a social impact in Palestine

FOUNDERS: 3
WOMEN: 1
YOUTH: 3



NAME: Lama Amr

GENDER: Female

COUNTRY: Palestine

"I AM NOT LIKE MY PEERS THAT WORK FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR. I HAVE MORE POSSIBILITIES IN LIFE AND I FEEL CLOSER TO PEOPLE THAT WORK IN ANY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS BECAUSE I REALLY FEEL I HAVE THE MEANS TO HELP PEOPLE AND THAT'S WHAT I REALLY ENJOY. THIS IS WHAT REALLY CHANGED IN MY LIFE"

Lama Amr is not the founder of Build Palestine, but she joined the team since the very beginning. During her last year of University, majoring in Business and Administration, she started off at Build Palestine as a young volunteer, conducting events and some social media work. She soon fell in love with what the organization does and, sure enough, she became a Crowd Funding Campaign Manager in December 2017. The year later, in 2018, she was promoted to Chief Operations Officer and now leads all the operations in Palestine.

Build Palestine, a no profit but working more as a start-up, is a crowdfunding platform offering a support system for social entrepreneurs and no profits in Palestine. They help them to get connected to resources, such as financial resources, expertise, and volunteers from global communities who wish to make an impact in Palestine. They create connections between Palestinian grass route organizations and supporters from around the world. Although she works hard, Lama could not imagine herself in any other career:

"I work 18 hours a day! I am not like my peers that work for the private sector. I have more possibilities in life and I feel closer to people that work in any other organizations because I really feel I have the means to help people and that's what I really enjoy. This is what really changed in my life".

She considers Palestine as a "donor dependent community": most of organizations in Palestine depend on international help to conduct the programs on the ground. However, without other funding alternatives, this forcibly influences their project design around the proposals and

donor requirements instead of the real issues on the ground.

What particularly encourages her to accomplish her work, is being aware that Build Palestine is able to escape this logic mainly thanks to crowdfunding:

"Crowd funding for us was a chance for alternative funding for organizations in Palestine freeing them from all the regulations and restrictions that come with the aid they receive. I

really enjoy that I don't feel restricted. Even with my work, or with any project I work with, they feel the freedom of actually solving what they do want to solve and not what the donors want them to solve. This is because those are donations from individuals who just want to support impact and don't want to impose any kind of agenda. This is why I work in Build Palestine”.

Lama is well aware of the challenges of working in this sector, since the social entrepreneurial ecosystem in Palestine is quite new. She stresses that there is no legal infrastructure for social enterprises in Palestine, the government is not supportive, access to funding is not easy and the whole economic-political situation in Palestine is not very friendly to social enterprises. She says that the only way for a social enterprise to survive in Palestine is to either respond to people's basic human needs or to access international markets, which is also not very easy.

As much as she tries to encourage social entrepreneurs, Lama argues that an enabling social entrepreneurial ecosystem is simply not in place in Palestine:

“With no legal structure and no government to support them I feel like sometimes I push them to the edge, which makes me feel bad. But I know that if there were a better environment for social enterprises in Palestine, this would actually be the solution. Social enterprises do what the government is not doing, and they are playing the role of so many missing pieces in the community. So, this is why I think that the next stage in my life will be to work on strengthening the ecosystem and in building a better environment for these entrepreneurs”.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS:

Lama recognizes that, on a cultural perspective, she faces issues as a woman. Ramallah, where she lives now, is considered the capital of Palestine, people are more open, and she feels she doesn't face discriminations. Conversely, Hebron, her birthplace, is a conservative city where it is not very acceptable that a woman does not live with her family and moves to another city for work. Her family knows that she is living in another city to follow and accomplish her dreams, but still suffers from the community's judgement. Most of Lama's peers are married with 3 or 4 kids at her age. Nonetheless, looking on at her own personal benefit and perspective, Lama can't deny that she is actually benefitting from more opportunities *because* she is among the few women in this sector:

“In any program that is looking for gender equality or for diversity, I get the opportunity because I am one of few. And why are there few women? Because the community is not very supportive for this kind of work or towards any woman who is accomplishing her dreams in general. Society is the big challenge”.

MEDUP! SUPPORT:

Lama is very satisfied with MedUp! project:

"My experience with MedUp was very delightful. Both the capacity building trainings conducted here in Ramallah were amazing, I learned a lot. And all the toolkits they produced for us I personally used to build programs in Palestine. This year we have produced the social innovation bootcamp which is an online week program where people with ideas come in, they go in this intensive bootcamp, and they come up with ready business model for a social enterprise. All the materials were built on the tools that were provided by the MedUp! project. I have learned a lot from the mentors, Alberto and all the ones that visited Ramallah. Also, the peer exchange was useful because our partner in the UK visited us in February. I didn't get the chance to go to the UK because of Covid-19 pandemic, but the relationship was really useful. I feel more confident working in the space after I took the program, for sure. It was really helpful".

Besides the know-how that MedUp! provided, the project was also helpful for Build Palestine in terms of creating partnership opportunities for them:

"When the MedUp project came and also put all the ecosystem players in one room, this was really powerful because it built relationships and partnerships. It gave perspective to everyone on what this is, why it is important and why we should have enterprise support organizations specifically for social entrepreneurs, this made other organizations understand our work".

TIPS FOR A YOUNG, ASPIRING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

"Try and fail, it's fine. You have to try in order to become better".

Lama thinks that Social Entrepreneurship should be introduced in universities and students should be encouraged to give it a try.

"This is a path that people are afraid of selecting actually, because everyone wants to be stable, to get a good job and be paid. It is not easy and not very compensating as well, I work a lot and I get paid just fine, not as an executive, although my role is an executive, because we have very limited resources. It is not an easy path, but it is very rewarding on a personal level and on an emotional level as well. I would encourage them to try, even starting with small initiatives here and there which will lead them to realize if they want to take it as a path or not. I would suggest everyone should try doing something and just explore it as an option".

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FUTURE PERSPECTIVES:

For Lama is not easy to envisage one single future perspective for Build Palestine as they have many options in front of them. Instead she can say for sure what Build Palestine will not become and that would be transform into grant givers. They will still be using crowdfunding and other unconditioned financial means to remain free from international aid ties. She states that Build Palestine does not intend to become another incubator or accelerator, because in Palestine there are many. Instead, they want to use what already

exists on the ground: building partnerships and supply chains for social entrepreneurs and working with other organizations in Palestine to strengthen the ecosystem.

“I think the main role of Build Palestine is how we can use whatever we have and build whatever we don’t have. The second thing is that we want to keep providing social entrepreneurs with the resources they need to become successful. We will keep specializing in this space”.

BC Distribution: the story of Hugues Blin and Mohamed Ali Chebil

CASE STORY

MISSION

"Promote Tunisian high-end agricultural products creating partnerships and growing together with farmers and breeders all together"

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: BC DISTRIBUTION



BC Distribution connects Tunisian farmers and breeders with the final customer creating a value chain and partnerships and selling both online and in stores

FOUNDERS: 2
WOMEN: 0
YOUTH: 2



NAME: Mohamed Ali Chebil
and Hugues Blin
GENDER: Male
COUNTRY: Tunisia

"I SAW THINGS THAT I NO LONGER WANTED TO PARTICIPATE IN AND I TOLD MYSELF THAT INSTEAD OF BEING IN A COMPANY THAT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE WHAT I AM, I BETTER CREATE AN ORGANISATION THAT LOOKS LIKE ME AND MY VALUES WHICH ARE LESS FOCUSED ON FINANCIAL PROFITABILITY AND MORE ON THE SOCIAL ONES"

Hugues and Ali were both working in the oil and gas sector in Tunisia and Congo. They were not satisfied with the negative environmental and social impacts of their jobs. Instead, they wished to turn to something that could match their moral values:

"I saw things that I no longer wanted to participate in and I told myself that instead of being in a company that didn't look like what I am, I better create an organization that looks like me and my values which are less focused on financial profitability and more on the social ones".

Their journey as social entrepreneurs starts in 2013: they noticed that there were no high-end Tunisian products in the food industry. Conversely, all high-end products were imported. They figured that there was a missing link between the farmer and the final customer and that could be done by implementing good marketing strategies. So, their idea was to create a value chain and partnerships. They now have a processing unit and also work on distribution; they have their personal retail and are now selling both in their stores and online.

"It was not just about creating a project to make business, it was more about making it something sustainable and social without the self-pity side. It is really about smart social working, consisting in creating partnerships and growing together with the breeders and the farmers all together. Our specific role is to do marketing and sales, and their role is to produce good products".

Their lives changed radically. Indeed, they gained much as for personal success and satisfaction with their own lives. However, they remark that, during the first years of entrepreneurship, it is easy to mix personal and professional life: much work and challenges await ahead.

“The difficulty is to wear many different caps, so the producer’s cap, the human resources cap, the marketing cap, the commercial cap, the financier one all in the same day becomes a bit difficult”.

In their case, a major challenge in Tunisia is accessing the financial aid which is necessary for the project to grow. Also, Hugues and Mohamed point out at another challenge in Tunisia which is unfair competition deriving from commercial parallel circuits that they believe to be very strong in the country. They also mention their difficulty in creating solid relationships with farmers and breeders. Hugues and Mohamed stress that it is a population that is quite fearful, and it is not easy to create long lasting trust relationships with them. Nonetheless, they were able to formalise relations with the suppliers who have created patents in order to work with them legally. They maintain a sustainable and equitable relationship with their suppliers by working on action plans over one or two years, hence, generating an important social impact.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS:

Hugues and Mohamed believe that, in Tunisia, it is actually easier for women to access funding opportunities than for men. More, same challenges and opportunities are there for both women and men in leading a business.

“In the daily management I think there are no differences, but what is funny is that in Tunisia it is easier to access funding opportunities when you are a woman. Other than that, there are not differences in leading a business. It is completely asexual to run a business!”

MEDUP! SUPPORT:

Hugues and Mohamed are very satisfied and grateful for the support they received from MedUp!. More, considering the hardships due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, the project’s grant was even more helpful, even though they received a lower amount than what requested. In fact, they were able to make a great part of their planned investments and accelerated their business growth.

“MedUp! was awesome! It was of big help, even more considering this somewhat exceptional year. Everything was amazing, they are very present and even during the pandemic we have been closely followed by Afef”.

They would give the following suggestion to further improve the project support: instead of providing a general support mainly on the management aspect, a more targeted supervision also on the financial, marketing and commercial aspects would be very useful for start-ups. In fact, Mohamed and Hugues, noticed how other social enterprises supported by MedUp! have little or no knowledge at all on these more specific aspects.

“The only thing is to add a bit more of marketing, commerce and finance and not only focus on the general aspect of project management. We personally are pretty mature on this because we have been working for 7 years now and we both have done our studies on this,

but we found some projects in MedUp! where the owner is for example an engineer, with an amazing idea, but has no idea on how to manage the other aspects”.

TIPS FOR A YOUNG, ASPIRING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Hugues and Mohamed recall that when they started, back in 2013, no one believed in them, no one was able to see the potential of high-end products from the Tunisian food industry:

“Everyone we met tried to discourage us. Except for us and my wife, everyone laughed at our idea at the beginning.”

So, even if having a mentor would be very useful, a social entrepreneur should mainly count on himself and on his self-confidence and believe in his own idea:

“The ambivalence of entrepreneurship is that you have to be very self-confident, but at the same time question your choices every two minutes”.

“I also work on the conversion of small enterprises in SME, and what I see is that there are many people with amazing ideas and projects but that are not able to manage money. They either are afraid of making mistakes and, in this way, they slow their growth, or they are too extravagant, and they end up bankrupt because there is no more money”.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FUTURE PERSPECTIVES:

In 2 years from now, BC Distribution foresees to open a new factory, 2 new stores and a website for online commerce that can manage 70 orders per day. This year they wanted to open 3 other stores but, instead, they ended up closing one due to the Covid-19 pandemic. On a positive note, they managed to open a website which should give the impulse for the next store openings, by indicating the most promising region which is more represented by clients.