



Social Entrepreneurship as A Strategic Alternative Towards Achieving Sustainable Development - Algeria's Experience as a Model

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Abstract

This study aims to highlight the importance of social entrepreneurship and innovative initiatives in promoting sustainable development in Algeria, through supporting the establishment of economic institutions across various sectors in line with development requirements. It presents a conceptual model of social entrepreneurship and outlines its key models and implementation mechanisms globally. The study also points out that social entrepreneurship plays a significant role in achieving sustainable development in Algeria, thus contributing to the enhancement of welfare and social justice.

Keywords: Strategy, Sustainable Development, Social Entrepreneurship.

Introduction

Sustainability has increasingly become a concern for all businesses, not just social enterprises, as customers, citizens, and policymakers expect improvements in business sustainability performance. In this context, and in alignment with Algeria's adoption of an entrepreneurial approach as a strategic alternative to achieve development and create wealth beyond the hydrocarbons sector, many specialists and experts have called for the need to adopt new approaches within the entrepreneurial framework to address the challenges faced by societies.

In this context, a relatively new concept emerged, known as "social entrepreneurship" or "social enterprise," based on a new type of enterprise now referred to as "new generation enterprises" or "social enterprises." These enterprises are those that not only aim to accumulate profits but also engage in social activities, focusing on available resources and considering them capable of creating investments for the benefit of society.

Study Problem

Algeria is striving to address several major challenges (both internally and externally) to achieve social entrepreneurship through an alternative development strategy that enables it to maintain its energy capabilities, with the goal of achieving sustainable development and improving the quality of life for its population. Thus, the main question arises:

How can social entrepreneurship contribute to achieving sustainable development in Algeria?

Study Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:



- Provide a conceptual framework for both social entrepreneurship and sustainable development.
- Highlight the role of social entrepreneurship in achieving sustainable development in Algeria.

Study Importance

The importance of this study lies in its exploration of a new topic within entrepreneurship. It sheds light on the reality of social entrepreneurship in Algeria and investigates the possibility that its projects can contribute to sustainable development. The study also measures the level of awareness of the culture of entrepreneurship, which could help determine the potential of social entrepreneurship in contributing to sustainable development, especially in the face of current international and local changes that require the mobilization and activation of internal resources.

The Conceptual Framework of Social Entrepreneurship

To understand this concept, it is necessary to address both entrepreneurship and its main models according to the fields of business that have studied this concept. From there, we will discuss the concept of social entrepreneurship and its importance, along with the key mechanisms involved.

Definition of Entrepreneurship

The father of entrepreneurship, Richard Cantillon, who introduced the term "entrepreneurship" into economic theory, believed that an entrepreneur is a person who assumes risks and accepts them. This concept applies to farmers, artisans, and professionals who buy goods at certain prices to sell them at uncertain future prices. According to Cantillon, the entrepreneur bears the risk because they do not know whether prices will rise or fall (Hafsi, 2022).

Models of Entrepreneurship

Many researchers point out that there are four models of entrepreneurship, differing according to the business fields they focus on:

- Enterprise Creation Model: One of the key proponents of this approach is the researcher "Garter," who considers entrepreneurship as the creation of new organizations. It includes the various practices undertaken by the entrepreneur, such as gathering and organizing different resources, whether financial, human, informational, or material, to create a new enterprise (Gartner, 1988).
- Innovation and Creativity Model: The first person to focus on innovation and entrepreneurship was "Schumpeter," who believed that the term innovation refers to the development of a new production method that could lead to changes in product elements and its design method (Schumpeter, 2003).
- Value Creation Model: This approach is led by Bruyat, who argues that entrepreneurship revolves around studying the relationship between the individual and the value they create. The individual is the essential condition for creating



value, as they determine the methods and scope of production. Without the individual, no new value is created (Amabile, 1998).

- Business Opportunity Model: This approach is championed by "Shane & Venkataraman," who define entrepreneurship as the process of discovering, assessing, and exploiting opportunities that allow for the creation of new products and services. The entrepreneur seeks out opportunities that arise from market needs (Fennis, 2023).

Definition of Social Entrepreneurship

Different views have been expressed about the concept of social entrepreneurship, and several definitions have been proposed. Social entrepreneurship is one of the concepts and phenomena that was practiced and applied before gaining academic attention in the late 1980s. Here are some of the definitions:

Social entrepreneurship is defined as: innovative solutions (successful applications of creative ideas) to social challenges, and more services and products that bring about social change and have a positive impact on society. It is also defined as a type of business that seeks to identify and diagnose social problems and needs, using the principles of entrepreneurship to create, organize, and manage a social venture that brings about the desired social change (Abu-Saifan, 2012). Some perspectives describe social entrepreneurship as a structure that spans several dimensions, including values and behaviors aimed at achieving social goals, where this capacity is reflected in the ability to seize opportunities and enrich social values (Mair & Ignasi, 2006). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines it as "a private entity created for the public good" (Haugh, 2005). This definition indicates that the aim of social entrepreneurship may be to benefit society, not just to maximize individual profits (Tan, 2005).

From the previous definitions, it can be concluded that social entrepreneurship seeks to produce radical new solutions to social problems. These solutions have the potential to revolutionize the entire social system.

The Importance of Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship seeks to create both social and economic value, as well as to promote sustainable social change by offering innovative solutions to social problems. It provides supporting services in various fields, including (Nicholls, 2008):

- Environmental conservation and sustainable development, and participation in alternative and green energy projects;
- Alleviating poverty by empowering the underprivileged, poor, and marginalized groups with the means to work and live decently;
- Offering education and training opportunities, knowledge transfer services, and enabling individuals in the community to engage in social participation effectively;



- Social welfare projects, such as creating jobs for unemployed or homeless individuals, enhancing pathways for the integration of socially excluded people, and providing supporting services for at-risk families;
- Defending and confronting social persecution and promoting human rights (Ben Hakoum, 2020).

Mechanisms of Social Entrepreneurship

The models of implementing the concept of social entrepreneurship vary from country to country, reflecting the dynamic, significant, and vital role of social enterprises at multiple levels. Social enterprises address a diverse range of local development issues and take various forms such as social integration institutions and public service associations, with productive cooperatives being one of the key types. These cooperatives are based on common principles that give them a special character that distinguishes them from traditional economic institutions. At the same time, their operational mechanisms are key to the effectiveness of their activities and their suitability to the unique contexts of local settings. The mechanisms of social entrepreneurship can be summarized in the following table:

Table 01: Mechanisms of Social Entrepreneurship

Mechanism	Content
01. Profit achieves social benefit	Creating economic value to achieve and create social value (employment, solidarity, improved living conditions, etc.)
02. Serving a social group	Addressing social and humanitarian issues and enhancing local responsibility awareness
03. Financial and administrative autonomy	Diversification of funding sources and collective oversight
04. Decision-making as a collective process	Decision-making rights are shared and separate from capital ownership
05. Collective management	Ensuring participation of all members in management through the right to vote and training

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on (Dabbach, 2021).

Sustainable Development

The definitions of sustainable development have varied and evolved since the concept first emerged. Therefore, we will address the concept of sustainable development, its characteristics, importance, and objectives as follows:

Definition of Sustainable Development

According to the United Nations Development Program (1990), development is defined as "the process of expanding the choices available to individuals, including long and healthy lives, access to education, and ensuring a decent standard of living. Based on this concept, the concept of sustainable development relies on the principle of economic development and growth, which has been applied in developed countries over the past two centuries. The



primary focus was on economic growth and real income increases over a defined period" (Barhamoun, 2016).

Among the definitions of sustainable development, we can start with the definition from the International Commission on Environment and Development, formed by the United Nations, which published its report in 1987 titled "Our Common Future." It defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Zakiya, 2018, p. 5).

Meanwhile, Pierce and his colleagues define it as "sustainable economic development aimed at achieving lasting economic gains by maintaining the quality of services and natural resources over time" (Bousslama & Najwa, 2013).

The third principle in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 defines sustainable development as "the necessity of realizing the right to development," where growth should meet the developmental and environmental needs of both present and future generations. Principle four, adopted by the conference, emphasized that "environmental protection must be an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered separately" (Zawia, 2019).

For sustainable development to be achieved, the environmental context must not be ignored, and the destruction and depletion of natural resources must be prevented. There should also be a technological transformation in the industrial and technological base, focusing on more effective use of natural resources and reducing environmental degradation caused by industrial, urban, and population growth witnessed in recent years. This aims to achieve a balance in the consumption of natural resources to meet the goals of sustainable development (Farahtia, 2018).

Characteristics of Sustainable Development

There are four key characteristics of sustainable development (Bousslama, 2018):

- The concept of sustainable development is distinguished from ordinary development by its greater complexity and multiple interconnections, especially in relation to the environmental and social aspects of the development process.
- The main goal of sustainable development is to meet the needs of the poorest groups, aiming to reduce global poverty.
- Sustainable development places special emphasis on developing cultural aspects and preserving the unique cultural heritage of each community.
- The elements of sustainable development cannot be separated, due to the strong interconnections between its quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Thus, sustainable development seeks to achieve a balance between the ecosystem and the economic system, contributing to maximizing growth in each system without negatively affecting one system's growth on the others.
- Sustainable development considers preserving the biophysical environment through its essential components, such as air, water, soil, and other natural resources (Tari, 2020).



Importance of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development serves as a bridge between current and future generations, ensuring the continuity of human life and providing a decent living for the generations to come. It also ensures the fair distribution of resources within each country and between different nations. The importance of sustainable development lies in reducing the gap between developed and developing countries, playing a significant role in reducing economic dependency on foreign countries, enhancing the distribution of production, protecting the environment, achieving social justice, improving the standard of living, raising education levels, reducing illiteracy rates, providing capital, and increasing national income. To achieve these priorities and reduce this gap, we must develop a well-thought-out and clear strategy to leave a strong legacy for future generations. (Abu Nasr & Mohammed, 2017).

Goals of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development aims to achieve a set of goals, including (Al-Heiti & Al-Muhandhi, 2008):

- Achieving a better quality of life for the population: Sustainable development seeks to improve the quality of life of the population, both socially and economically, by focusing on qualitative growth rather than quantitative growth, in a fair and acceptable manner.
- Respecting the natural environment: Sustainable development focuses on the relationship between human activities and the environment, working to develop this relationship in a way that is integrative and harmonious, while acknowledging the importance of natural systems as the foundation for human life.
- Raising awareness of environmental issues: Sustainable development works to increase people's awareness of environmental problems, encouraging them to actively participate in finding appropriate solutions, through their involvement in the preparation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of sustainable development programs and projects.
- Achieving rational utilization of natural resources: Sustainable development emphasizes the rational use of natural resources, recognizing their limited nature, and avoiding their depletion or destruction.
- Linking modern technology to serve community goals: Modern technology is linked to community goals by enhancing people's awareness of the importance of technology in the development process and how to use both available and new technologies to improve the quality of life in society and achieve its objectives. This also stresses the need to avoid environmental risks and negative impacts or to control them by providing appropriate solutions.
- Making appropriate and continuous changes in the needs and priorities of society: Sustainable development aims to make appropriate and continuous changes in the needs and priorities of society in a way that aligns with the community's capabilities,



allowing the necessary balance to activate economic development and manage all environmental issues while finding suitable solutions.

Social Entrepreneurship and Its Role in Achieving Sustainable Development

What reflects the efforts and commitment of countries to their local or global sustainable development program are the plans and programs outlined as promising horizons that can confront challenges and meet the requirements of achieving sustainable development. This is especially true if it aligns with the strategic directions of governments, such as the entrepreneurial approach in Algeria. The theoretical link between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development is evident through an analysis of their current reality in Algeria, using a model for designing entrepreneurship as a mechanism for sustainable development through the social dimension and the key determinants that contribute to the growth of social entrepreneurship as outlined below:

Social Entrepreneurship as a Key Pillar for Sustainable Development

Social entrepreneurship relies on the principle of social utility, directing the work of various social entrepreneurship models towards bridging the gap between material benefits or profits in commercial enterprises and public benefits in public institutions. Social utility is related to the positive social, environmental, and economic impacts of social enterprises on their target social groups and the broader community. (Mair & Marti, 2006).

Economist Jean Gadrey pointed out that the social utility of organizations contributes to social harmony and achieves social solidarity at multiple levels, especially at the local level by strengthening neighborhood social ties. This reinforces the collective conditions for sustainable human development, such as improving access to education, healthcare, environmental safety, and governance mechanisms.

The role of entrepreneurship in supporting sustainable development can be highlighted through the following points (Dabach, 2021):

- **Social Entrepreneurship as a Tool for Self-Employment and Social Justice:** This is rooted in its collective nature, widespread presence, and the diverse fields and mechanisms it employs, including the use of wages for the distribution of produced wealth. It also involves engaging multiple local parties, especially public institutions that provide support and facilitation.
- **Social Entrepreneurship as an Effective Tool for Creating Jobs:** Social entrepreneurship is a practical and alternative tool for creating jobs for members or social groups within the institution, and subsequently, individuals and communities who benefit from training and development opportunities.
- **Promoting Access to Employment for All Social Groups:** Social entrepreneurship helps enhance and facilitate access to jobs for all social groups, particularly in contexts where public employment policies are weak and economic and political crises are frequent in most parts of the world.
- **Social Entrepreneurship as a Framework for Innovation and Value Creation:** According to Nicholls (2005), social entrepreneurship is a collection of innovative



and effective activities. Its strategic goal lies in designing solutions for social market failures while creating new opportunities for producing social value using a wide range of resources and organizational forms.

- **Commitment to Collective Work and Integration of Local Social Values:** Social entrepreneurship also strengthens collective work and integrates local social values such as cooperation and solidarity among different segments of the local community. Furthermore, it serves as a space for the participation and contribution of multiple active stakeholders, including public institutions, associations, and private enterprises, which are linked to social enterprises through partnerships and collaborations in various activities and sectors.

A Conceptual Model for Social Entrepreneurship as a Mechanism for Sustainable Development through the Social Dimension (Hindawi & Khamaikhm, 2022):

- **Social Values Regarding Entrepreneurship:** This includes societal beliefs about entrepreneurship as a good professional choice, whether entrepreneurs have high social status, the extent to which media represent the entrepreneurial spirit positively in the economy, and whether starting a business is easy.
- **Social, Cultural, Political, and Economic Context:** Represented through the national conditions and framework, including project financing, government policies, entrepreneurship programs, entrepreneurship education, research and development, business infrastructure, and the legal and material environment, alongside local market dynamics, income regulation, and cultural and social standards.
- **Individual Traits:** This includes demographic characteristics (such as gender and age), self-perceptions (such as perceived abilities, perceived opportunities, fear of failure), and motivations for starting any business (whether driven by necessity or opportunity).
- **Entrepreneurial Activity:** This includes various stages in the business world (emerging, developing new products, seeking new markets). The potential impact, which has positive effects on economic growth (job creation, social welfare, introducing innovation, and globalization), depends on the type of activity, such as early-stage entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, or entrepreneurial activities for employees. The specialized literature also focuses on identifying factors that can stimulate entrepreneurship to design appropriate economic policies (Méndez et al., 2021).

As illustrated in Figure 1, the social context encompasses all factors related to society and its culture, as well as the overall prevailing social system. More specifically, the social context represents the social environment that influences management activities and practices. This context includes variables such as social structure, cultural elements, social systems, educational and cultural composition, as well as population size and demographic characteristics (Hendawi & Khmakhm, 2022).



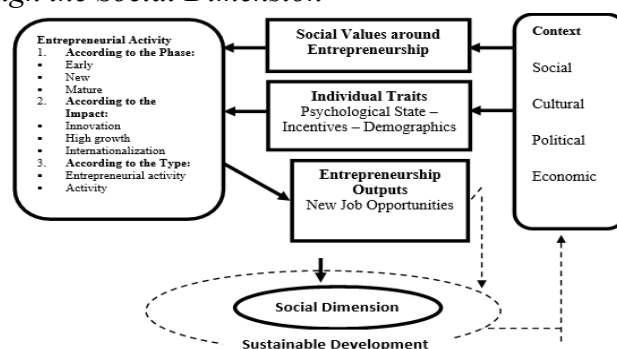
Given the impact of social structures and relationships between individuals, as well as the characteristics of social and cultural organization in society, it is expected that these will influence organizational structures and institutional relationships. The rules, measures, and foundations that govern all forms of organization—whether public bodies, institutions, or business ventures—are affected by the social structure of the society. Since the culture of a society carries values, customs, traditions, and attitudes that significantly impact the social formation of individuals and consequently their behavior, it is natural to observe a specific relationship between culture and the managerial activities of organizations operating within that culture (Scott, 2013).

The social dimension contributes primarily to instilling various values in individuals, especially entrepreneurial values, from the early stages of their upbringing.

When analyzing managerial behavior and its relationship with the social and cultural context, the clear impact becomes evident when studying values and behavioral patterns such as resignation, low ambition, immediate gratification, strict class systems, ongoing conflict, and disparities in wealth and power distribution within society. These traits and characteristics that may exist in some societies leave their mark on the organization and management in these societies, where some or all of these traits are prevalent, including nepotism, authority, and oppression (Hendawi & Khmakhm, 2022).

Additionally, the social dimension involves contributing to the development of an individual's personality by fostering psychological stability, creativity, innovation, and risk-taking, transforming the individual into an initiator who believes in the societal values of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial activity begins when the necessary stages are overcome, based on the business environment and its degree of influence. Thus, we take the first step toward realizing our small project in practice, contributing to serving society, whether in the present or future, by creating new job opportunities to combat unemployment and promote entrepreneurship (Mair & Marti, 2006). Entrepreneurship aims to provide value to individuals and improve their quality of life through innovation, providing a steady income and opening more opportunities for contribution and development (Terjesen, Hessels, & Li, 2016), as shown in the attached figure:

Figure 1: Conceptual Model for Social Entrepreneurship as a Driver for Sustainable Development through the Social Dimension



Source: Hendawi & Khmakhm, 2022.



Determinants in the Development of Social Entrepreneurship

Those involved in the development of social entrepreneurship face numerous challenges, the impact of which varies by country. However, these challenges are present worldwide. The main challenges that hinder the progress of social entrepreneurship include the legal framework, supporting infrastructure, social innovation support, funding, training, promotion, and evaluation criteria for social entrepreneurship, as follows (Goudjil, 2020):

A. Legal Framework

The legal framework represents a significant challenge in developing social entrepreneurship because the current legal forms for economic or social institutions cannot fully adapt to social entrepreneurship institutions. Social entrepreneurs currently either use the classic business model for profit-oriented economic institutions or the forms of associations, institutions, cooperatives, non-profit organizations, or participatory management models. Each of these forms has its advantages and disadvantages regarding economic opportunities and ease of management. Finding the correct legal form that allows for the pursuit of both economic and social goals as defined by social entrepreneurship seems complicated. However, specific laws have emerged, especially in Europe. For example, purpose-driven companies (Belgium), social cooperatives (Italy), and cooperative companies for collective interests (France). Still, they have not yet achieved significant success. In France, in 2009, there were only 144 agreements in this framework, where conflicts of interest often arise, and the problem of aligning these social entrepreneurship institutions with the applied tax policy remains. In Algeria, the existing laws do not differentiate between various activities of social associations, treating both productive associations and non-productive ones, such as folklore associations, with the same laws, making it difficult to promote social entrepreneurship (Defourny & Nyssens, 2017, pp. 2475-2477)..

B. Supporting Infrastructure

Although Algeria has a large number of bodies and programs through which social entrepreneurship can be developed, they have not yet achieved the desired effectiveness, particularly with the existence of the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and Community Affairs, the Social Development Agency, the Microcredit Agency, and the Zakat Fund under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The Ministry of Solidarity, through its directorates in each state, addresses the social problems faced by vulnerable groups in society at two levels (Goudjil, 2020).

Regarding social activity (Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and Community Affairs, 2020):

- Organizing and applying direct aid for disadvantaged groups, especially in cases of disability;
- Managing state social assistance.

Regarding national solidarity (Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and Community Affairs, 2020):



- Encouraging all measures that promote national solidarity through donations, wills, and their organization;
- Determining the needs in the field of national solidarity, evaluating and measuring its impact;
- Organizing the distribution of information related to local solidarity programs;
- Ensuring the implementation of laws and regulations in the field of national solidarity;
- Organizing and evaluating national solidarity programs aimed at deprived social groups, activating and coordinating them, and measuring their impact periodically.

Despite these efforts, these resources have not been successful in solving the social problems faced by most segments of society. The management of these programs is characterized by centralization, lack of oversight, guidance, and follow-up.

C. Entrepreneurial Culture in Algeria

- Level of Entrepreneurial Orientation Among Youth: This remains weak due to several cultural legacies, primarily the economic system applied after independence, which was based on central planning, where the only entrepreneur was the state, and individuals worked as employees in government institutions. Additionally, the primary goal of social entrepreneurship, which serves society rather than generating personal financial returns, does not align with the interests of many people (Haddad & Messaoudi, 2020).
- General System in Algeria: This system is considered a major obstacle to developing social entrepreneurship, especially in light of the lack of interest from the state and public institutions in encouraging young people and developing their creative capacities from a young age so they can build their future independently, without relying on state-provided income or government jobs (Ait Aoudia & Oussalah, 2022).
- Business Environment in Algeria: The business environment is among the most important reasons for the weak entrepreneurial activity in Algeria. According to the World Bank's Doing Business Report for 2019, Algeria ranked 157th out of 190 countries (World Bank, 2019). Bureaucracy is one of the main features of the economic activity, as obtaining various permits takes a long time, hindering entrepreneurs from completing their projects. Additionally, there is a lack of economic information.
- Weak Promotion of Entrepreneurship: The development of a culture of social entrepreneurship cannot be achieved without a national strategy that involves various economic, social, and political actors through incentivizing laws, political support, incentives, rewards, media promotion, coordination of government departments' efforts, an encouraging education system, financing, support bodies, and follow-up and evaluation (Haddad & Messaoudi, 2020).



D. Financing Issues

Financing the creation and development of social institutions presents a significant challenge, as is the case for classical institutions. Despite the existence of several sources for financing social institutions, such as grants, contributions, charitable investments, and specific program investments, the type of funding that social projects receive often depends on several factors, including their level of maturity, reputation, legal structure, and availability of capital markets for non-profit institutions. Moreover, the growth of these institutions is often hindered by a lack of funds or difficulty accessing funding from classical economy financiers, which is a concern for social entrepreneurs, especially since they compete with for-profit institutions for these funds (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006).

Although financial resources to finance social institutions are available in Algeria, there are significant complications in the financing mechanisms due to bureaucracy, poor oversight, and follow-up.

E. Training

In addition to capital, human capital must be capable of meeting the significant aspirations of social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs should possess the technical skills that profit-driven institution managers have, while also mastering the social field at the same time.

The transition of social institutions from the establishment phase to the sustainability and growth phase cannot be achieved without human capital capable of achieving this goal by combining competencies in the economic and social management of these institutions (Chell, Nicolopoulou, & Karatas-Ozkan, 2010).

In Algeria, there are no specialized bodies or centers focused on training in the social work field, despite some current initiatives under certain international programs focused on social entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

The entrepreneurial approach has become, now more than ever, the most effective way to achieve development in various fields. This is particularly evident in light of the new approach followed in this study, which primarily aims to implement social and environmental considerations for the emergence and spread of entrepreneurial initiatives. These initiatives aim to preserve the economic value that ensures the continuity and expansion of the social project's impact, even if its primary goal is not profit-driven. This allows even third-sector organizations, such as the solidarity and social economy sector, to integrate and contribute to driving development across its multiple dimensions alongside the public and private sectors. Furthermore, it enables access to unused community energies, which are constrained by challenges that have prompted the international community to agree on addressing them. This is within the framework of a balanced long-term plan that incorporates goals integrating various dimensions of sustainable development until 2030.



Algeria's approach towards rethinking mechanisms to support vulnerable social groups and addressing essential needs, which precede public allocations of national wealth, can provide an opportunity to exploit these resources to support cooperatives. By accompanying them, we can reinvigorate their developmental roles and revitalize them. This can be done within the context of a legislative and regulatory framework and a historical foundation for cooperative activity in Algeria. This offers a starting point for revitalizing, supporting, and developing cooperative work while contributing effectively to spreading the culture of social entrepreneurship in local communities and encouraging its establishment

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