

Social Entrepreneurship in the Haitian Context

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Extended Abstract

According to the International Monetary Fund (FMI) in its article entitled "Haiti: the economic context", Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world. Its economy, which is essentially based on agriculture, is very vulnerable to the vagaries of the weather. Two-fifths of Haitians depend on the agricultural sector, mainly small-scale subsistence agriculture. The country is also heavily dependent on international aid and diaspora remittances. And according to the World Bank, the unemployment rate has stood at 14.5% since 2020.¹ As we can see from the previous data, a large majority of the population remains in the enormous inability to meet their social and environmental needs, including the need to eat, access to education, care, housing, energy, and especially the need to find a job. This proves that there are many needs that have not yet been met by the state and that it would require the intervention of other bodies intended to meet them. Thus, it is said, that 'social entrepreneurship is a form of entrepreneurship whose main vocation, in addition to the creation of social enterprises, to provide responses to social or societal needs, not yet met by the State and / or by the commercial sector.² This form of entrepreneurship, in the service of the general interest, covers all the economic initiatives of companies, with social or environmental purposes. It consists of reinvesting most of the profits of these companies to contribute to sustainable development. The latter refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (Ms. Gro Harlem Brundtland, 1987).

So, considering these statistical data, how could we effectively address these problems mainly linked to unemployment and poverty in Haiti? How could the social entrepreneurship help in the Haitian context? Or in other words, to what extent can social entrepreneurship lead Haiti towards sustainable development?

To answer these different questions, we will first look at the historicity of social entrepreneurship, its guiding principles, and the conditions favorable to the creation of social enterprises. Then, we will analyze the evolution of the concept of social entrepreneurship and its successes in different societies and make the link with the Haitian context. Our reflections will continue the challenges of promoting social entrepreneurship in Haiti. And finally, we will suggest recommendations that can serve as possible solutions.

The term "social entrepreneurship" dates to the early 1980 and appeared during the 1990s in Europe and the United States with differentiated approaches. With its emergence in the United States, organizations aimed at providing support to individuals who bring about change in society, such as Ashoka, have sprung up. Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1950), an Austrian economist naturalized in the United States who pioneered the understanding of social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship fits perfectly into the "RSE approach", or corporate social responsibility (ISO 26000).

In 2011, the European Union proposed a text to define "RSE", which is "the voluntary integration of the social and ecological concerns of companies into their business activities and their relations with their stakeholders. Because being socially responsible means not only fully meeting applicable legal obligations, but also going beyond and investing "more" in human capital, the environment and stakeholder relations. Basically, the idea is to encourage companies to have a positive impact on employees, society, and the environment. The idea of "RSE" emerged in the 17th century in the United States and commerce grew rapidly. Very early on, American companies saw the means to develop new business opportunities.

For this, basic observations must be made. In terms of economic responsibility, when the employee is better paid, they will have more opportunity to consume. If he feels good and involved in the success of the business, he works harder

and better. In the legal and ethical field, resources must be guaranteed while respecting citizens and the environment; philanthropy helps to heal the image. Customers must be loyal. A company that respects “RSE” stands out from the competition. To formalize this concept, 99 countries helped define the ISO 26000 standard which will be adopted in 2010. The ISO 26000 standard adopts seven (7) main principles with the corporate governance at the center, which must be transparent and independent. These criteria must consider the diversity of the situation in different countries, Fair and honest with customers, respect for the environment by committing to find solutions to pollute to a minimum, societal commitment: taking part in the training or the well-being of citizens, Respect human rights, optimize relations and working conditions; Respect good business practices which can stimulate growth by paying its suppliers, respecting its commitments, etc. We can summarize this basic principle with the three (3) “Ps”: People, Planet, Profit.

Social entrepreneurship is a social economy initiative. So, According to Grameen Lab social entrepreneurship has its following fundamental or guiding principles.

1. The mission of social enterprise should be to reduce poverty or tackle a challenge of health, education, access to technology or pollution, the main goal should not be never profit maximization.
2. the company must be economically and financially viable and sustainable. It should not depend solely on government grants or donations.
3. investors will be reimbursed only the money of their loan, no dividend will be paid.
4. When the loans are repaid, the profit remains in the business. It will be devoted to the massification or improvement of the service or product.
5. the company must demonstrate environmental awareness.
6. employees are paid according to market rates, but they benefit from the best working conditions; Because they operate in a social enterprise that respects the principles of ergonomics much better as a science of work.
7. motivation must be positive. We do not start a social business because we feel guilty or to appease our conscience! You must have real motivation and not to have coverage.

Social entrepreneurship has been very successful in other countries where it has evolved and it continuously helps meet social or societal needs, not yet met by the state and / or the commercial sector. This is no longer a reason to seek to emerge in Haiti because there are so many urgent social and environmental needs, not yet met by the state. The Haitian state has resigned from its responsibilities and still shows incompetence in the face of these basic problems in the sense that those responsible are not really motivated to solve them. He only practices corruption when he sees the people dying. They sometimes appear to be heartless. The emergence of entrepreneurship would be a better way to achieve sustainable development without having to put everything on the responsibility of the state, which can never in reality solve everything. Government posts will never be enough to prevent a lot of the unemployed. For this, we need organizations whose purpose is to create jobs especially for the long-term unemployed and for people with disabilities. Thus, if we manage to create a good quantity of truly social enterprises in the country which will devote themselves to this mission, we will have answers or solutions to the situation of unemployment, poverty, deforestation, and poor waste management. One corporate group could take waste management as a responsibility, another group could focus much more on social needs. ONGs contribution is not sufficient. Indeed, with these kinds of governance that there are nowadays in Haiti, to talk about sustainable development we must think about creating social enterprises in addition to the contributions of certain “ONG”. So, we must promote social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs will need a great deal of leadership in these initiatives. Given that the State constitutes a source of corruption, could we proceed without the intervention of its officials, where conscious and honest citizens would come together to properly identify the necessary needs and achieve the creation of social enterprises to satisfy what need when making investments? Have you already seen a social enterprise in Haiti?

Webography

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Près de 3,000 tonnes de déchets par jour menacent la ...

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