

**Eideh, Shaban H. A. \* The role of the state in providing an adequate environment for social entrepreneurship: a case study of Palestine. Institute of Sustainable Development, Faculty of Arts, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem, Palestine. (Master Thesis - November 23, 2013).**

## **Abstract**

The study explored the role of the State of Palestine in providing an adequate environment for social entrepreneurship in Palestine through the creation of a conducive legal and institutional framework. Indeed, social entrepreneurship can play a significant role in resolving social problems in Palestine, a country continuously suffering poverty, unemployment and the marginalization of women, amongst others, to the Israeli occupation. The study is of interest to the Palestinian Authority (PA) because it contributes to finding alternatives for the alleviation of the above mentioned social problems.

The study followed a qualitative approach. Interviews were used as the primary tool for collecting data from a designated sample representing different governmental, non-governmental and private sector organizations, in addition to individuals with a particular background on social entrepreneurship. The case study approach has been chosen to better identify all the aspects related to the role of the PA in facilitating social entrepreneurship in Palestine.

The study found that social entrepreneurship in Palestine in general rather comes from institutions such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and not from the state itself. The PA could provide an institutional framework for social entrepreneurship activities. However, such an institutional framework would rely on external funding and it lacks coordination. Also, the term “social entrepreneurship” is mostly absent from the PAs plans, strategies and laws. Even though the PA provides a certain legal framework for social entrepreneurship activities and projects, this does not facilitate and give privileges to vulnerable groups such as the poor, unemployed and women, as opposed to high investment projects.

The study concludes that, to date, the role of the PA in providing a legal and institutional framework for boosting social entrepreneurship in Palestine has not been comprehensive enough.

As a result, social entrepreneurship in Palestine has not been able to serve as a strategy to promote women's empowerment, alleviate poverty or reduce unemployment.

The study recommends the successive governments of Palestine to adopt social entrepreneurship in all of its components as a strategy to achieve women empowerment; alleviate poverty and reduce unemployment rates in Palestine. It is argued that the current and future governments of Palestine should have social entrepreneurship as a priority in their agenda, making any legal arrangements necessary to mobilize and organize social entrepreneurship as well as any necessary institutional changes to coordinate, mainstream, facilitate, support and encourage social entrepreneurship so it can be used as a strategy to bring the country forward in terms of development.

**Key words:** Social entrepreneurship, Palestine, empowerment.

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