

Abstract

The main challenge that this study attempts to confront is the lack of information and knowledge about philanthropic trends and practices in Egypt and in return the absence of a reference indigenous development foundation model that is local in essence, modern in structure, and revolutionary in its practical approach towards driving real change in the community it serves. Instead there are a number of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), either secular or religious, which follow an organizational structure that is originally Western and suffers from the absence of a cultural heritage as well as any sustainable financial mechanism that guarantees their continuity and independence while the Arab and Islamic cultures have known financially sustainable and perpetual civic foundations, known as *waqf* (singular; *awqāf* plural) strongly outliving centuries and centuries.

The analytical problem from this perspective involves exploring this rich theoretical philanthropic framework and looking into possibilities of channeling local philanthropic resources towards development and change rather than exhausting it in a vicious circle of charity given as person-to-person aid or through charity programs that rely on distributing food and ad-hoc services by CSOs. This approach involves investing in and building on the results of the surveys and in-depth interviews employed in order to create a new model for the development world that employs all aspects of community and textual strengths as discovered in the communities and brought to light throughout the study process.

In addition to the ground breaking results that are driven out of the study like determining the faith-based nature of giving and volunteering and estimating the monetary strengths of the philanthropic resources and identifying the motives and preferences behind giving, the study's strengths lie in the practical application of knowledge to launch the first community foundation model in Egypt that the grass-roots interviewed helped in orienting the author of this study about its application. Upon fulfilling the field-work, the researcher founded the first Community Foundation to be introduced in Egypt and built its modern structure on the basis of *waqf*, the indigenous sustainable *ṣadaqa* (*ṣadaqa jāriyya*) model. The study revealed the tendency by philanthropists to invest in their less advantaged family members and their community and also that the legislations of *zakāt* favors spending in one's community until meeting all existing needs. Giving and volunteering among Christians and Muslims appeared to be very similar and indigenous *waqf* structure, although it has textual connotation in Islam, it has been applied by Jews, Christians and Muslims, not only in Egypt, but in the Arab region at large, including societies influenced by the Islamic culture like Spain or by a predominantly Muslim communities like Indonesia.

Hence, a model of a secular community *waqf* is established by the researcher to give credibility and to link theory with practice. This community *waqf* model has attracted a strong Board of Trustees that includes prominent figures in the neighbor-

hood of Maadi representing socially responsible business persons, development practitioners and academia. Since the creation of the Ministry of Endowment, this is the first *model* of a *waqfiyya* which is called Waqfeyat al Maadi Community Foundation (WMCF) to be established. Hand in hand with the currently running activities, work with different stakeholders and the government, embodied in the Ministry of Social Solidarity is taking place to do necessary reforms to allow for a more encouraging legal framework that encourages the development of similar models of modern civic *awqāf*. Bringing about investments, whether Islamic or secular, to help create capital and invest on existing resources to benefit the sustainability of growth of the foundation model and its work is being developed by this institutional model. It has a library of over 2000 resources on philanthropy to encourage further research and progress in this field.