

Enabling Social Innovation in Egypt



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Country Snapshot



Social innovation: "the processes and outcomes of developing novel approaches to address societal challenges facing people and planet." ¹

This snapshot provides a descriptive, non-exhaustive overview of key elements shaping Egypt’s social innovation ecosystem.

- ✓ Direct focus on social innovation
- 🔗 Connected but indirect focus on social innovation
- ✗ No focus on social innovation

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK



Official Definition of Social Innovation 🔗

Egypt lacks a formal legal definition of social innovation. However, national policy documents and development strategies reference concepts aligned with social innovation, such as inclusive entrepreneurship and sustainable development. ²



Government Body for Social Innovation ✓

No single agency leads social innovation, but responsibilities are spread across multiple institutions:

- Ministry of Social Solidarity oversees NGOs and community development.
- MSMEDA supports inclusive business through finance and training.
- The National Council for Women targets innovation through gender empowerment programs. ³



Government Strategy for Social Innovation ✓

While no dedicated SI strategy exists, Egypt’s Vision 2030 and National Human Rights Strategy integrate inclusive development, civil society engagement, and youth participation—indirectly fostering social innovation. ⁴



Policies, Laws & Regulations ✓ 🔗

Several enabling frameworks indirectly support SI:

- NGO Law 149/2019 liberalized civil society regulations.
- MSME Law 152/2020 provides tax incentives and credit access.
- ESG frameworks, including the EGX ESG index (2010), promote corporate social responsibility.
- NACDW legislation (2023) enhances civil society-government partnerships. ⁵



Official Statistics 🔗

No SI-specific statistics exist, but related data include:

- Over 50,000 NGOs registered.
- Studies estimate ~135,000 social enterprises employing 1.2 million people. ⁶



Government Programs

Programs fostering SI include:

- Fekretak Sherketak: startup support via Egypt Ventures.
- MSMEDA’s “Aziza” and Mastoura: finance and training for women-led enterprises.
- NACDW: coordinates 30,000+ NGOs in service delivery.
- Youth initiatives like the Social Innovation Leaders Program integrate SI into education. ⁷

ECOSYSTEM



Stakeholders

Key enablers include:

- Ashoka Arab World and Nahdet El Mahrousa: incubation and leadership.
- GESR by Misr El-Kheir Foundation: support for impact ventures.
- Enactus Egypt: student engagement in social innovation. ⁸



Support Initiatives

Notable programs:

- UNDP Accelerator Lab and Social Innovation Hub for Women.
- Flat6Labs, RiseUp Summit: platforms connecting innovators and investors.
- British Council and EU programs (e.g. MedUP!) strengthen capacity and networks. ⁹



Collaboration, Events & Awards

- NACDW and FinTech Sandbox showcase government-NGO and gov-startup collaboration.
- Events: Egypt Entrepreneur Awards, RiseUp Summit.
- Awards increasingly highlight SI themes and impact startups.

FINANCE



Financing Schemes

No SI-dedicated fund exists, but:

- Egypt Ventures and MSMEDA provide blended finance.
- Microfinance reaches 3.6M+ clients.
- Impact investors like EAEF and Sawari Ventures support inclusive startups.
- Crowdfunding and philanthropy (e.g. Sawiris Foundation) offer grants to social enterprises. ¹⁰



Financing Inclusivity

Women and youth are financing priorities:

- 68% of MSMEDA community loans go to women.
- CBE mandates 20% of bank lending to SMEs..



Public Awareness of Social Innovation

Low but growing. Youth interest and competitions (e.g. Enactus, Hult Prize) help popularize SI. The term remains less understood among the general public.⁶



Research ✓ 🔗

- AUC and Heliopolis University integrate SI into curricula and research.
- British Council, EMNES, and local academics produce SI mapping studies.
- Practitioner research remains limited but expanding.²



Education & Human Capital ✓ 🔗

- University entrepreneurship courses include SI modules.
- Enactus and Creativa Centers promote applied learning.
- Training gaps in critical thinking and impact measurement remain.



Entrepreneurship



Business Environment

Legal identity ambiguity persists for social startups.



Innovation Capacity

GII 2023 rank: 86/132.¹¹



Social entrepreneurship prevalence

GEM shows strong entrepreneurial intent (~55%).¹²



Social & Environmental Consciousness



Solidarity

Strong informal giving



Political participation

Low (EIU Democracy Index ~3.2/10).¹³



Volunteering

Low formal volunteering (CAF rank: 116/119).



Sustainability

EPI 2024 rank: 99/180, but environmental awareness is increasing.¹⁴