Received 17 September 2016
Revised 1 March 2017
1 August 2017
Accepted 29 September 2017

How social entrepreneurship can be useful in long-term recovery following disasters

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper supports the call for using a separate research stream for long-term recovery vs disaster relief in humanitarian studies. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the thematic shift towards service operations during this developmental phase and explores the role of social entrepreneurial organizations. It builds from the literature on service operations management and social entrepreneurship to promote theory in humanitarian operations management.

Design/methodology/approach – This exploratory study uses literature concepts and field data from multiple development case studies of social entrepreneurial organizations and social enterprises in Africa and the Middle East to analyze service operations.

Findings – Clear contributions to the role of social entrepreneurship in providing humanitarian and development services were identified and categorized according to service operations management stages.

Practical implications – This paper has important practical implications. The positioning of social entrepreneurial organizations as humanitarian service providers would open opportunities for new collaborations between donors and social organizations. Mainstream NGOs dominate the scene of servicing local communities; leaving aside social entrepreneurial organizations with substantial room for innovation that they might bring to the sector. In addition, social entrepreneurial organizations' ability to build business models and design sustainability and scalability aspects for their operations may bring long-term development to impoverished communities. Global NGOs as well as government actors who carry out the first three stages of humanitarian operations could plan on working with (or even help creating) social entrepreneurial organizations to help with long-term recovery.

Originality/value – This study examines the implications of two bodies of literature; service operations management and social entrepreneurship on humanitarian operations management research. It concludes with a conceptual framework emphasizing the contributions of social entrepreneurship in planning, development, delivery, and distribution of services in the long-term recovery humanitarian and development operations.

Keywords Development, Social entrepreneurship, Service operations management, Social enterprises, Humanitarian operations management, Long-term recovery

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Humanitarian operations aiming to elevate the suffering of people in need of humanitarian aid often deal with a mix of disaster response and development operations. The four identified stages in humanitarian operations include mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery (Altay and Green, 2006; Kovács and Spens, 2007; Maon *et al.*, 2009; Beamon and Balcik, 2008; Kovács and Spens, 2009; Tomasini and Van Wassenhove, 2009a; Van Wassenhove and Pedraza Martinez, 2012). The last recovery stage can be further subdivided into a short-term transitional phase that comes immediately after the response, and a long-term recovery phase which may continue for years (Holguín-Veras, Jaller and Wachtendorf, 2012).

Long-term recovery has not been studied well in the humanitarian literature, perhaps due to the wider scope and duration that sometimes goes beyond the span of operations management. The focus has been on disaster response and the logistical challenges of delivering and distributing aid during crisis in the short-term. There has even been a back

Journal of Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Management
Vol. 7 No. 3, 2017
pp. 324-349

2042-6747
DOI 10.1108/JHLSCM-09-2016-0035

spillover from the learnings and agility of humanitarian logistics that could benefit commercial supply chains (Charles *et al.*, 2010).

Long-term recovery humanitarian research has been viewed in a developmental context in previous humanitarian research. Long-term actions related to healthcare, education, housing, food aid, crime prevention, and social security are usually needed during the long-term recovery phase (Maon *et al.*, 2009). Slow-onset disasters such as drought, famine and poverty (Van Wassenhove, 2006) create such circumstances that adversely affect communities' social welfare and require development programs against malnutrition, inadequate healthcare and shortage of safe drinking water (Selsky and Parker, 2005; Adivar *et al.* 2010). Activities described as development, aftermath, or recovery and reconstruction are performed in years after disaster in order to improve the life standards of the victims and return to normality (Holguín-Veras, Jaller and Wachtendorf, 2012).

A noticeable thematic shift towards services can be seen in the operations of long-term recovery programs like education, healthcare, social security and human rights among others. Humanitarian development services aim to create the necessary inertia that can cause long-term sustainable impact by creating a localized knowledge spillover (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2009). The focus should be more about "teaching a man how to fish," rather than worrying about logistically supplying the fish.

Service operations management has been neglected within humanitarian research and the literature remains scarce. Oloruntoba and Gray (2009) presented their study on customer service and satisfaction as effective tools to improve the humanitarian supply chains. Schulz and Blecken (2010) used a service provider model in their study on the benefits of humanitarian cooperation. There is a need for closer attention to research like servitisation, service developments, and standardization in the humanitarian research studies (Heaslip, 2013). This call for attention should be specifically important to the long-term recovery phase of humanitarian relief where service operations management prevail.

It is also argued that the local populations have a vital, but less well researched role to play in the overall humanitarian supply chain (Newport and Jawahar, 2003; Oloruntoba, 2005; Perry, 2007; Sheppard *et al.*, 2013). The long-term nature of the humanitarian recovery development stage makes it even more pressing to rely on local resources. This is particularly true of developing countries where a greater involvement of local populations is expected to lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness (Sheppard *et al.*, 2013).

While the role of community-based organizations has been explored in humanitarian and development supply chains (Peredo and Chrisman, 2006; Oloruntoba and Gray, 2006; Kovács *et al.*, 2010), the unique attributes of social entrepreneurship are still not explored (El Ebrashi, 2013; Nicholls, 2006; Mair and Marti, 2006). The spread of poverty, illiteracy, and health problems all around the world necessitate and call for community development interventions which should be examined and approached innovatively and sustainably (Hossain, 2000; Adjasi and Osei, 2007; Seyfang and Smith, 2007; Moulaert, 2010).

The exploration of how social entrepreneurship can help with long-term recovery following humanitarian disasters needs to be pursued. Thus, the main aim of this paper is to explore the role of social enterprises and social entrepreneurial organizations in providing long-term recovery humanitarian services and to highlight the unique attributes that make social entrepreneurs valuable players. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature for service operations management and social entrepreneurship. This section clearly differentiates between a social enterprise and social entrepreneurship, but considers both of them in this paper as potential humanitarian services providers. Section 3 introduces our exploratory research methodology and data set. Section 4 details the analysis and findings of our data. Section 5 discusses the need for service operations

management in local engagement and suggests a framework for the role of social entrepreneurship in providing humanitarian services. Section 6 concludes with key findings, study limitations and future research suggestions.

2. Literature review

The purpose of this study requires studying literature related to both service operations management and social entrepreneurial organizations in humanitarian and development contexts.

2.1 Service operations management

The performance of service operations is contingent on the design and configuration of the service delivery system through which the service concept is provided to its customers (Frei and Harker, 1999; Verma *et al.*, 2002). Unlike short-term disaster relief, where effectiveness is practically favored over efficiency (Holguín-Veras, Jaller and Wachtendorf, 2012), humanitarian organizations operating in the long-term humanitarian recovery phase should seek balance between efficiency and effectiveness in their execution of activities (Tomasini and Van Wassenhove, 2009a, b). The elements of service strategy related to target market, service concept design, and service delivery systems have been identified as integral dimensions affecting service performance efficiency and effectiveness (Roth and Menor, 2003; Karwan and Markland, 2006; Silvestro and Silvestro, 2003; Ponsignon *et al.*, 2011).

2.1.1 Market assessment. Understanding target markets and their requirements is important for developing any new services (Hart *et al.*, 1990; Deszca *et al.*, 1999). The first stage in the operations of humanitarian services includes identifying the target market and making a proper market assessment. The dilemma of "donor" vs "aid recipient" as the ultimate customer in the humanitarian supply chain has already been heavily discussed in the humanitarian literature (Balcik *et al.*, 2008; Oloruntoba and Gray, 2009, 2006; Charles *et al.*, 2010; Fawcett and Fawcett, 2013). For the purpose of this study, our target market is composed of local beneficiaries receiving the humanitarian aid. Understanding the specific needs of aid beneficiaries becomes especially valuable when taking a customer service perspective to providing humanitarian aid (Oloruntoba and Gray, 2009). Proper market assessment is a critical step in the effective development, delivery and distribution of humanitarian services. This comprises market segmentation based on demographic characteristics such as age, income, and education besides other factors. Remote humanitarian assessment by international donor organizations can lead to inaccurate evaluations and can turn out to be very wasteful and costly (Oloruntoba and Gray, 2006). This is accentuated in the cases where targeted beneficiaries are distant and isolated (Altay *et al.*, 2009). The ability to access local data efficiently and effectively becomes a major concern during this phase. There are also cultural and language barriers that might hinder the comprehensive understanding and proper interpretation of humanitarian needs (Thomas and Kopczak, 2007). Performance of this dimension relies on the ability to appropriately identify customer entities and their respective market needs (Sampson, 2001; Ching-Chow, 2003; Sampson and Froehle, 2006, Hafeez and Aburawi, 2013).

2.1.2 Concept development. The development of a service concept links the features of the service offered to the target market, and defines the "what" of service design (Goldstein *et al.*, 2002). First described by Sasser *et al.* (1978, p. 14) as the "bundle of goods and services […] and the relative importance of each component to the consumer," the service concept conveyed the benefits and value provided to customers (Collier, 1994). In long-term humanitarian recovery programs there is usually sufficient time to plan and design the required services to meet the humanitarian needs (Selsky and Parker, 2005; Adivar *et al.*, 2010). However, the process of planning for humanitarian operations in itself is

costly, challenging and requires a significant amount of dedicated resources (Kovács and Spens, 2009). Service concept development is a comprehensive process that incudes designing for both core and peripheral elements (Roth and Menor, 2003). Designing core humanitarian services includes identifying the proper supporting facilities where the humanitarian services will be provided and determining the physical products that are required to complement the service. Peripheral elements refer to the development of non-core elements that may surround the main service. The service concept can also be seen as a package made up of a set of tangible and intangible elements (Karwan and Markland, 2006). Research has demonstrated that intellectual, organizational, and physical resources like employees, information, and facilities have significant strategic influence on the ability to rapidly and effectively design new services (Sampson and Froehle, 2006; Ponsignon *et al.*, 2011). Finding the proper entities with the ability to design core and non-core humanitarian service elements efficiently and effectively is essential for long-term recovery phase.

2.1.3 Delivery system. The third stage comprises the service delivery system which includes the design choices for "how" the service concept should be delivered to the target markets (Tax and Stuart, 1997; Goldstein *et al.*, 2002; Kwortnik and Thompson, 2009). The main elements of the delivery system in humanitarian services include accessibility to structural resources in terms of capacity and facilities, accessibility to infrastructural resources in terms of human capacity, and skill sets, and the ability to integrate and coordinate between these resources (Roth and Menor, 2003). Accessibility to resources in terms of supply, people, technology, transportation and capacity are commonly cited as humanitarian delivery challenges in disaster relief operations (Kovács and Spens, 2009; Heaslip, 2013). This is still valid for the long-term recovery phase where proper service delivery systems depend on the accessibility of physical, human and organizational resources. Physical resources include the physical facilities, equipment, location, and access to raw materials. Human resources include the experience, insights, training, and education of employees and managers. Organizational resources involve formal and informal control mechanisms, and internal and external relationships (Froehle and Roth, 2007).

2.1.4 Service distribution. The last mile distribution to beneficiaries is a crucial milestone in humanitarian supply chains (Beamon and Balcik, 2008). Reach and access to the right beneficiaries has always been a major concern for national and international humanitarian organizations operating in disaster relief (Van Wassenhove, 2006). The problem becomes even more stressful with the lack of infrastructure in transportation systems and unpaved roads (Kovács and Spens, 2009). Reaching the proper and deserving beneficiaries remains a concern in the long-term recovery phase. Besides the transportation infrastructural issues in many developing regions, there are usually no street signs and names, and even where there are, they are usually only in the local language. The issue of reach relies on the adaptation of a service recovery strategy (Smith *et al.*, 2012). The value of service recovery strategies depends upon the context in which the humanitarian service operates (Mattila, 2001). In this study, we examine reach through proper transportation planning and mode selection. Scale-ability of the humanitarian service and the ability to produce a ripple effect with a minimum investment is important to the sustainability of humanitarian operations (Holguín-Veras, Jaller and Wachtendorf, 2012). Including a sustainability element in humanitarian services is important to the on-going development efforts and distribution (Sanchez-Lopez *et al.*, 2012).

2.2 Exploring the role of social enterprises and social entrepreneurial organizations (SEs)

The long-term humanitarian recovery phase calls for local community development interventions to be approached innovatively and sustainably (Hossain, 2000; Adjasi and Osei, 2007; Seyfang and Smith, 2007; Moulaert, 2010). This section highlights the

local, innovative, and sustainability characteristics of social enterprises and social entrepreneurial organizations.

2.2.1 The locality. It is mainly argued that the local populations have a vital, but less well researched role to play in the overall humanitarian supply chain (Newport and Jawahar, 2003; Oloruntoba, 2005; Perry, 2007; Sheppard *et al.*, 2013). The long-term nature of the humanitarian recovery phase makes it even more pressing to rely on local resources. Bolin and Stanford (1998) affirmed local participation and collaboration to be key factors for the success of relief projects. Matopoulos *et al.* (2014) pointed to the importance of gaining local knowledge and networks from local partners and their role in understanding community needs and in the delivery and distribution of service. Sheppard *et al.* (2013) highlighted the importance of the local populations input and considered the benefits of decentralizing the operational decision-making closer to the location of the aid, thereby enabling a more effective response and ensuring improved value for money for the donors. Peredo and Chrisman (2006) asserted the role of community-based enterprises in mobilizing the efforts of community members who actively take the role of "entrepreneurs" to create long-term social and economic development for their communities. They also stressed the fact the solutions to poverty should be locally pursued rather than owned and managed by development agencies, which decrease the sense of ownership and thus interest in participation among various community members in such development activities. While the "local benefits" for the role of community-based organizations have been acknowledged in humanitarian supply chains (Oloruntoba and Gray, 2006; Kovács *et al.*, 2010), the role of social entrepreneurial organizations and social enterprises as local entities are the focus of this study, therefore it is important to identify the existence of such entities in their local settings.

2.2.1.1 Social entrepreneurial organizations and social enterprises. Social entrepreneurial organizations and social enterprises have been associated with long-term change, development, and creating sustainable social impact (Martin and Osberg, 2007; Buckmaster, 1999; Zappala and Lyons, 2009; Trivedi and Stokols, 2011; El Ebrashi, 2013; Austin *et al.*, 2006). The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been prominent in providing aid to disaster relief (Trivedi and Stokols, 2011). NGOs exist in many different sizes and forms (Kovács and Spens, 2009). Both social entrepreneurial organizations and social enterprises lay in the domain of organizations that focus on social value creation with the purpose of creating a sustainable impact. To support this sustainable impact purpose, social entrepreneurial organizations and social enterprises have had different legal structures, different approaches to operations, and different funding structures than typical NGOs (Luke and Chu, 2013; Murphy and Coombes, 2009). Social entrepreneurship has been explored over the past decade, and has been referred to as the establishment of ventures to create social value and impact (Nicholls, 2006; Mair and Noboa, 2006; Martin and Osberg, 2007; El Ebrashi, 2013; Zeyen *et al.*, 2013). Social entrepreneurship's main discourse is on benefiting marginalized groups (Thompson *et al.*, 2000; Nicholls, 2006; Martin and Osberg, 2007; Hockerts, 2015). While they are usually legally registered as NGOs (El Ebrashi, 2013; Alter, 2007), they are differentiated from other pure forms of social movements and charitable giving in terms of their hybrid profit and not-for-profit business models that aim to make them economically sustainable, and their emphasis on novelty and innovation (Austin, 2006; Yunus, 2006; Alter, 2006; Hockerts, 2010; Zahra *et al.*, 2009; Mair *et al.*, 2012; Dees, 1998). Social enterprises on the other hand, are not registered as NGOs, but are for profit private businesses/ventures or cooperatives that operate commercially to fulfill social needs (Dart, 2004; Luke and Chu, 2013; El Ebrashi, 2013; Alter, 2007; Yunus, 2006; Chell, 2007).

Both social entrepreneurial organizations and social enterprises design their business models around revenue generation from core operations and maintain hybrid business models to allow for other funding sources (Murphy and Coombes, 2009; Hartigan, 2006).

While the emphasis of social entrepreneurship might be on innovation, risk taking, and finding new ways to identify business opportunities that serve social goals (Dees, 1998; Mair and Noboa, 2006; Nicholls, 2006; Mair and Marti, 2006; Kirzner, 1979; Schumpeter, 2004; Shane, 2003), social enterprises focus on addressing social needs through on going commercial activities that maintain revenue streams using commercial mechanisms and trading activities (Luke and Chu, 2013; Dart, 2004; Sodhi and Tang, 2011; Dees, 1998). This study considers both social entrepreneurial organizations and social enterprises as potential humanitarian services providers, and does not differentiate between both in terms of data gathering. For the remainder part of the paper we will refer to both entities as social entrepreneurial (SEs) organizations.

2.2.2 Innovation and flexibility. Social entrepreneurship is characterized by using innovativeness in their offerings and business models (Acs *et al.*, 2013; Martin and Osberg, 2007; El Ebrashi, 2013; Schumpeter, 2004). Inventive solutions to current problems have also been a main identity of social enterprises (Chell *et al.*, 2010; Trivedi and Stokols, 2011; Smith *et al.*, 2013; Kerlin, 2013). It is also common for SEs to use innovative and flexible business models (Murphy and Coombes, 2009), so they do not only depend on revenue generation but they also have other sources of funding through applying for grants and receiving donations from the public.

In terms of flexibility, SEs are dynamic and have the ability to re-plan based on local demands (Bornstein, 1998). Takeda and Helms (2006) explained how organizational rigidity inhibited certain organizations from efficiently alleviating the negative outcomes of Tsunami disaster. A call for an entrepreneurial model was needed to identify clear outcomes for activities, assure more informal structures for speedy decision-making, enforce some decentralization of knowledge and authority, and implement informal policies and procedures to enhance efficiency. Kaufman *et al.* (2007) assessed the main attributes of a social enterprise in recovering from post-soviet economic crisis. These characteristics included flexibility of structure, decentralization of decision-making, and innovation, among others.

2.2.3 Sustainability and scalability. Sustainability and scalability of humanitarian services are important to the on-going development efforts and distribution (Holguín-Veras, Jaller and Wachtendorf, 2012; Sanchez-Lopez *et al.*, 2012). Franchising and model replication through partnership with others is one of the most significant behaviors of SEs (Ashoka, 2014; El Ebrashi, 2013), where the goal is to create a systematic social change and inheritance of the developed system to form a new equilibrium (Schumpeter, 2004). SEs therefore view scaling-up, growth, and sustainability as an integral parts of sustainable management and essential to their existence (Light, 2008; Hartigan, 2006; Hockerts, 2006; Robinson, 2006; Boschee, 1998).

Having a unique business model sustains the activities and impact of SEs (Hartigan, 2006; Sagawa and Segal, 2000; Waddock, 1988; Nicholls, 2006). Luke and Chu (2013) asserted that SEs are different from traditional NGOs by their ability to sustain their organization through various revenue streams and business-like planning and operations, as well as hybrid profit and non-profit business models (Murphy and Coombes, 2009). Accessing community funds is one of the interesting sources of income and financial sustainability for SEs. Having a business model and creating financial returns for SEs not only aid in long-term sustainability (Mair, 2006), but also in providing professional service to beneficiaries (Yunus, 2006) who then become customers (Alter, 2006). SEs consider strategic moves to subsidize their services through exploiting profitable opportunities in the core activities of their non-profit venture (Nicholls, 2006; Dees, 1998), or via the establishment and engagement in for profit ventures (Cleveland and Anderson, 2001; Alter, 2007), or through cross partnerships with commercial companies (Nicholls, 2006).

In addition, the professional management of volunteers and staff is important for any SE defines its long-term success (Bornstein, 1998; Dees *et al.*, 2002).

The above attributes make SEs interesting options in providing humanitarian services. While there is theoretical evidence that SEs may contribute to humanitarian service operations, empirical research is needed to explore the key attributes of SEs that contribute to the different stages of service operations in humanitarian settings. The research seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. How can social entrepreneurship and social enterprises (SEs) help with long-term recovery following humanitarian disasters?

RQ2. What specific benefits do social entrepreneurship and social enterprises offer to the long-term recovery following humanitarian disasters?

3. Research methodology

This research is applying a qualitative field study research design (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Qualitative research is applied for the exploration and interpretation of concepts, and when few information exists explaining a phenomenon (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). The current research is using a multiple case study approach. According to Yin (2009), case studies provide in-depth and real-life context for exploring certain phenomena. Multiple case studies also provide diversity and further in-depth analysis for certain concepts (Punch, 2005), and the addition of more than one case helps in generalization (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008).

Data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, which are the most widely used tool to collect data for case studies (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). The sampling technique was non-probability convenient sampling. A "replication logic" was applied, which is a reliable sampling strategy used for multiple case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989). Accordingly, data collection was stopped at the point of "Thematic Saturation," or in other words, when additional data are not going to add further insights (Yin, 2009). It is suggested that 2-10 participants are enough to reach data saturation (Schram, 2006; Creswell, 2009). Consequently, ten social entrepreneurs representing ten social enterprises and social entrepreneurial organizations were interviewed from Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Jordan, South Africa, and Lebanon with different legal structures including NGOs, cooperatives, and social businesses (El Ebrashi, 2013; Alter, 2007). Social entrepreneurs living in various countries were identified to diversify the context, which can help in generalization. Those SEs were all identified by Ashoka to ensure credibility, innovation in service delivery, reach, replication, professionalism, and impact. Their established status allowed for gathering data in a development context rather than specifically for areas following a recent disaster, however, the findings should still be useful in the humanitarian context. To insure methodological triangulation (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Eisenhardt, 1989; Coyne, 1997), social entrepreneurs were interviewed and some of them were indirectly observed through attending their meetings and events of delivering their services to beneficiaries. In addition, Ashoka Website was checked to understand the development and business model of each social enterprise. This is in addition to reviewing social enterprises' websites, annual reports, and media releases.

Table I describes the sample of the study and some of the secondary sources used.

Interview questions were developed from the service operations management literature to explore the role of SEs in providing long-term humanitarian services. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential coding (Punch, 2005). Coding is the process of categorizing data by tagging and labeling them, which can further reveal new categories and patterns (Punch, 2005; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008).

Table I.
Sample description

Social Enterprise/Social Entrepreneurial Organization	Country	Legal form	Data collection	Description of Activities
Better Life Association (Ashoka Website; Better Life Association Website)	Egypt	NGO	Interview with the chairperson, attended meetings and trainings with beneficiaries in El Minya (governorate in Egypt)	Securing basic rights of quarry workers working in the informal sector through negotiations with employers. Training and capacity building of quarry workers. Lobbying on changing laws and creating institutions for quarry workers. Social activities for quarry workers and their families including literacy classes and others Researching the needs of quarry workers and their everyday problems to be communicated to the public
Basaysa Village (Ashoka Website; Al Ahram Weekly Website)	Egypt	Cooperative	Interview with the founder, attended meetings and trainings with various community members and beneficiaries in Sharkeya (governorate in Egypt)	Discovering and uncovering untapped financial and human resources in villages in Egypt Mobilizing resources to create social and economic development based on matching local resources with local needs Creating self-sufficient funding mechanisms through community funds Integrating solar energy and clean technologies to serve in developing local villages Involving all members of the community in planning for their projects, as well as recruiting them as volunteers Training community members on various skills and increasing their capacities to train others
Together Foundation (Ashoka Website; Schwab Foundation Website)	Egypt	NGO	Interview with the managing director, attended sewage unit installation and community mapping exercise in Beny Suif (governorate in Egypt)	Creating a low-cost sanitation system for poor villages in Egypt. Tailoring sanitation systems based on household and local needs Mobilizing financial resources to afford the new sanitation system Lobbying on the government to adopt the new technology for sanitation Training community members and CDAs to adopt and implement the new sanitation system
Alashanek ya Balady Association (Ashoka Website; Alashanek ya Balady Website)	Egypt	NGO	Interview with the managing director, attended entrepreneurship training and micro-credit dispersion for beneficiaries in Cairo and Behira (two governorates in Egypt)	Carrying out tailored vocational training for the poor and marginalized based on various sectors' needs Employing the poor in companies and factories and securing minimum wage level and working conditions Changing the norms of how to do business in the private sector through

(*continued*)

Table I.

Social Enterprise/Social Entrepreneurial Organization	Country	Legal form	Data collection	Description of Activities
				lobbying to change the salary structures, as well as insure good working conditions and advancement for the poor Providing microfinance for those who want to start their own business and employ others Coaching and mentoring employees and micro-entrepreneurs Franchising the model in universities in Egypt
mPedigree (Ashoka Website; mPedigree Website; MIT Technology Review)	Ghana	Not-for-profit company/ Social business	Interview with the founder in the US while presenting the business model to potential investors	Researching countries in Africa with the most urgent need to combat counterfeit drugs. Reaching out to pharmaceutical and telecom companies in these countries Establishing infrastructure to allow customers to communicate and validate counterfeit drugs with pharmaceutical companies through SMS
The Small Holders Foundation (Ashoka Website; Small Holders Foundation Website)	Nigeria	NGO	Interview with the founder in the USA while presenting the business model to potential investors	Broadcasting timely agricultural information to farmers in Nigeria Carrying out environmental and agricultural sessions for farmers Updating farmers with the latest prices and seeds' outlets, as well as markets
Sakhra's Women Society Cooperative (Ashoka Website; Schwab Foundation Website)	Jordan	Cooperative	Interview with the founder, attended meetings with women beneficiaries and health awareness sessions	Elevating the capacity of women farmers in Jordan to be leaders and to stand up for their rights Creating cooperatives for women farmers to manage income generating activities as well as trainings for cooperative members Raising health and general awareness of union members Carrying out awareness sessions for husbands on the role of women in the society Lobbying to change the law of land ownership and rental to allow more women participation
Zikra Initiative (Ashoka Website; Zikra Initiative Website)	Jordan	NGO	Interview with the founder, attended one of the touristic trips and meetings with community members	Organizing touristic trips to marginalized areas in Jordan to learn from each other and help communities Investing the proceeds of the trips in the development of these areas Changing stereotypes about local village among urban residents and tourists

(*continued*)

Social Enterprise/Social Entrepreneurial Organization	Country	Legal form	Data collection	Description of Activities
IkamvaYouth (Ashoka Website; Ikamva Youth Website)	South Africa	NGO	Interview with the founder in the US while presenting the business model to potential investors	Providing tutoring classes to marginalized students in schools Working on the career counseling of students, in addition to health awareness Organizing extra-curricular activities like science labs Organizing volunteers and ex-learners to tutor students Replicating the model with the government and universities
Souk El Tayb (Ashoka Website; Souk el Tayb Website; Jamali and Khoury, 2012)	Lebanon	Social business	Interview with the founder, and attended one of the festivals and farmers' markets	Organizing an inexpensive organic food market. Integrate Lebanese heritage and culture Providing a hub for small farmers to show case their proceeds directly, and thus keep most of the profits to themselves Serve food cooked from farmers' proceeds based on the Lebanese cuisine Organizing awareness sessions in schools about organic food

Table I.

4. Data analysis and findings

Twenty common concepts evolved as a result of coding the ten case studies. These concepts and their operationalization are summarized in Table II.

Evidence for SEs' contribution to the different stages in service operations management was found and the concepts were matched to the activities of each stage as presented in Table III. Insights to additional benefits that emerged from the data were also recorded and matched to the relevant stage. The table also presented examples for typical quotes and observations used in coding of the data.

Concepts	Operationalization
1. Understanding local market	The ability of SEs to capture the cultural and social structure of local markets, and how business is done and relationships are established
2. Ability to access local data	The ability of SEs to obtain data from local markets that are not formally published but only available through informal relationships with the local community
3. Needs assessment	The ability of SEs to assess and understand the needs of local communities in terms of services required
4. Access to local networks	The ability of SEs to create links with and relationships with the main constituencies of local communities including community leaders, families, local NGOs, local government, and others
5. Contextual market understanding	The ability of SEs to understand local needs in the context of national needs, and how local solutions can be linked to national policies
6. Ability to design core services	The ability of SEs to design social services directly meeting local communities' needs
7. Ability to design complementary services	The ability of SEs to design peripheral services
8. Designing supporting facilities	The ability of SEs to create facilities or infrastructure in support of services provided
9. Innovativeness in service design	The ability of SEs to create new services not previously offered in local communities or on a national level
10. Business model development	The ability of SEs to create economically and financially sustainable business models
11. Access to local facilities	The ability of SEs to make use of local facilities available at the government and local providers
12. Access to local human resources	The ability of SEs to access and utilize local human resources including youth, community groups, and others
13. Integrating and coordinating resources	The ability of SEs to mobilize and coordinate local resources for service provision
14. Building public and private partnerships	The ability of SEs to create networks and relations with governmental, non-governmental entities, and local businesses
15. Volunteer and staff management	The ability of SEs to professionally manage organization's human resources including staff and volunteers
16. Reaching the right beneficiaries	The ability of SEs to identify and target beneficiaries that are most in need
17. Sustainability	The ability of SEs to create systems by which social impact can be sustained beyond the existence of SEs' service provision
18. Scalability and replication	The ability of SEs to increase the size of operations to reach more beneficiaries, as well as guide others to copy the organization's model to reach other beneficiaries not yet served
19. Outcome measurement and impact analysis	The ability of SEs to quantify and qualify impact on beneficiaries and communities at large as a result of service provision
20. Owning flexible policies	The ability of SEs to create internal procedures and structures that are flexible enough to be tailored to the needs of local communities

Table II.
Operationalization of the main concepts that evolved from data

Table III. Social entrepreneurial organizations in providing humanitarian services

Service operations management stages	Service Operations Management Activities	Evidence found for SEs' Contribution to Activities	Evidence found for additional benefits associated with SEs	Typical quotes from social entrepreneurs and observations (examples)
Market assessment in humanitarian services	Understanding target market Ability to access local data in targeted region Ability to carry out market assessment given cultural barriers	Same as identified in service operations management activities	Access to local networks Understanding local needs in the context of national needs	"We have volunteers from the community itself who help us with social assessments" – Salah Arafa, Basaysa "Our social organization is embedded in the community in Upper Egypt, so we know all the problems and opportunities to work on" – Sameh Seif, Together Foundation In one of the trips with Zikra initiative to one of the rural and remote areas in Jordan, we found strong local rapport with community members. Rabea Zureikat (the founder) and his team were able to coordinate with the local municipality, other NGOs, and community leaders to attend the event While attending one of the meetings with Souk El Tayb, Kamal Mouzawak (the founder) and his team were discussing new strategies to reach more farmers in remote areas through networking with local community development agencies
Concept Development for Humanitarian Services	Ability to design core service elements Ability to design non-core service elements Identifying proper supporting facilities Formulating the necessary records and communication materials	Same as identified in in Service Operations Management Activities except for "Formulating the necessary records and communication materials", where there was no evidence from data	Innovation through finding new solutions to social problems - Business model development	"We continuously innovate to find new ways to protect people in Africa from counterfeit products. We were the first ones to use IT solutions to protect patients" – Bright Simons, mPedigree "It is very important to generate profits, because this is how we sustain our social services and increase the benefits to farmers" – Kamal Mozwak, *Souk El Tayb* In the staff meeting of Better Life Association, Maher Bushra (The founder) was discussing with his team the implementation of micro-credit programs (non-core programs) for the families of quarry workers in order to motivate them to be included later on in the quarry awareness programs (core programs). - The team of a new entrepreneurship program at Alashanek ya Balady Association were discussing the key messages they will use in their next campaign in Behira "In order to install tailored-made sewage systems, we utilize local clay

(*continued*)

Table III.

Service operations management stages	Service Operations Management Activities	Evidence found for SEs' Contribution to Activities	Evidence found for additional benefits associated with SEs	Typical quotes from social entrepreneurs and observations (examples)
				that is available in rural areas in Upper Egypt to build the basic infrastructure" – Sameh Seif, Together Foundation
Delivery System in Humanitarian Services	Ability to access structural elements Ability to access infrastructural elements Ability to integrate delivery elements	Same as identified in service operations management activities	Building partnerships Professional management of staff and volunteers	"Volunteers are our asset, so we have to invest in them to become professional educators. They raise up minds" – Joy Olivier, Ikamva Youth "We have invested in our relationships and partnerships with local NGOs in order to build databases of quarry workers and their employers" – Maher Bushra, Better Life Association
Service Distribution in Humanitarian Services	Ability to reach the right beneficiaries and last mile distribution-Overcoming transportation and infrastructure problems	Same as identified in in Service operations management activities, except for "Overcome the specific infrastructure and transportation problems to distribute their products/ services," where there was no evidence from data	Scalability of humanitarian efforts through model replication Sustainability of humanitarian efforts Measurement of impact Policy flexibility and dynamism	"The radio broadcasting is able to reach thousands of farmers in Nigeria and even beyond" – Nnaemeka Ikegwuonu, Small Holders Foundation."The impact is the most important thing we look at. It is how we change the institutional environment that matters for women farmers" – Zeinab Moamany, El Sakhra Women Cooperative "We don't only want the organization to live and grow. What is more important is to spread the idea on a bigger scale to be adopted by other organizations" – Mohamed El Kamel, Alashanek ya Balady "Our mandate is to deal with underprivileged women who are small holder farmers. However, we had to include in our policy the provision of services to men in order to gain community support; especially from the husbands of our women beneficiaries" – Zeinab Moamany, Sakhra Women Cooperative "We knock the doors and reach the poor in Ghana in order to increase their awareness about our services, and that they can use our solutions to protect themselves and their families" Salah Arafa, founder of Basaysa, was training community leaders on how to establish agricultural cooperatives using the Basaysa model (model replication). In one of the meetings attended with Rabea Zureikat, he was training community leaders on hospitality skills in order to be able to organize trips for tourists later on without his intervention (sustainability)

4.1 Market assessment variables

The data showed that SEs had operational strengths in assessing the humanitarian needs assessment, access to knowledge, and market understanding, which are crucial for understanding the target market (Balcik *et al.*, 2008; Oloruntoba and Gray, 2009). The data provided evident examples for effective and efficient needs assessment done through the participation of community members due to the ability of SEs to access local networks (Bornstein, 1998; Nicholls, 2006). Social entrepreneurs consider the community itself as the best source for information regarding needs and wants (Sheppard *et al.*, 2013; Matopoulos *et al.*, 2014; Bolin and Stanford, 1998). The Basaysa project included community members in the needs assessment of their own community, as well as in planning and idea generation of various projects based on this assessment. Together Foundation's experience in rural areas made it able to identify villages in Upper Egypt that are in immense need for its new low-cost sewage system, and tailor the sewage system based on the needs assessment of communities. Community members themselves voiced their needs and participate in the design of the sewage system.

Market understanding is found to be different from simply understanding the local needs, whereby social entrepreneurs were able to understand the local problem in its bigger national context. The development model created by social entrepreneurs was more embedded into the social and economic system (Ashoka, 2014), and thus can gained more support from various stakeholders such as the government and donors. In the case of Alashanek ya Balady, the organization was able to create a development model that would solve the problem of unemployment among blue collars in Egypt. The organization focused on the blue collars' unemployment problem due to the organization's understanding of the "big picture" for this specific group's employment, income, education, and training needs. After understanding the national context, the organization then tailored its programs to the local needs and demands.

SEs also benefited from their strong networks to access knowledge about various communities' needs (Hockerts, 2006; Perrini and Vurro, 2006; Hartigan, 2006). The Basaysa case showed the power of networking in creating foundations for community partnerships and building knowledge in order to start off community projects. The social enterprise was able to design its development plan in the village not only through formal assessment but through informal networking with community leaders and other groups including youth and women. Chatting with the head of the village or youth sitting in coffee shops, or even with elders playing cards in the streets helped the enterprise obtain the necessary information and the "buy-in" of community members. The case was also similar in mPedigree, where Bright Simons and his team had a wide array of local networks that made them able to access community development agencies, pharmaceutical companies, and local pharmacies.

4.2 Concept development variables

Data showed that social enterprises and social entrepreneurial organizations had operational strengths not only in designing core and non-core elements of services, but that they also did that innovatively (Acs *et al.*, 2013; Schumpeter, 2004; Martin and Osberg, 2007; El Ebrashi, 2013). An example for designing innovative services includes Ikamva Youth, which innovated a parallel education program in the form of tutoring classes for marginalized children in South Africa, to elevate the academic standard of students in school using art and intellectual activities. While this was the core program, Ikamva Youth designed complementary services to the program to include career counseling as demanded by the local community and had better impact on children's education, which was then integrated into the mainstream education system in South Africa through partnership with the Ministry of Education. Zikra in Jordan innovated the "volun-tourism" model, whereby

tourists coming to Jordan are taken into "community tours" in Jordan to learn about local communities, have fun, and volunteer. For example, tourists go for a trip to a local farm in Jordan, where they learnt about farmers' customs, picking vegetables and fruits from the farms, cooking with community members, and buying from their products and proceeds. The non-core elements of the program included training programs for "tourists" on participatory approach to development and arts and craft workshops.

In addition, these organizations put much emphasis on designing a business model for the services offered that would ensure financial sustainability (Luke and Chu, 2013; Dart, 2004; Austin, 2006; Hartigan, 2006; Waddock, 1988; Nicholls, 2006; Trivedi and Stokols, 2011). The SEs showed unique behaviors when it came to utilizing resources and decreasing costs. Ranging from depending on volunteers to deliver services (e.g. Ikamva Youth); leveraging resources by utilizing premises used in core programs to generate income (e.g. Alashanek ya Balady); or using available facilities in the community to deliver the services such as public halls (e.g. Sakhra Women Cooperative), SEs utilized the available resources to decrease costs of operations and generate new revenues. In addition, SEs explored in this study were able to generate revenues from their core activities in order to sustain their operations.

Alashanek ya Balady, for example, that provided professional services to the private sector offers highly trained blue collars with focus on feedback looping. The organization takes feedback from employers every month for the first three months to make sure that the services are deemed satisfactory. The same is done with blue collars to make sure that they received the contracted salary and that they were treated with fairness. The business model of Alashanek ya Balady is based on the fact that employers pay a certain fee to Alashanek ya Balady to access trained blue collars, and enjoy the employment services offered. Souk El Tayb created the first local market for farmers in Lebanon, where farmers can sell directly to customers and thus keep all the profits to themselves. The farmers' market also included opportunities for farmers to sell cooked food and other proceeds. Souk El Tayb in turn takes a percentage of the profits from farmers displaying in the market. In terms of lowering operational costs, Sakhra Women Cooperative, Ikamva Youth, and Together Foundation all utilize community and young volunteers, access public utilities to organize events and trainings, and depend on word of mouth among community members instead of investing in marketing activities.

While the SEs had a defined set of revenue streams from their core operations, some still maintained hybrid business models where they accepted grants and donations (Murphy and Coombes, 2009; Hartigan, 2006). Accessing community funds was one of the interesting sources of income and financial sustainability for SEs. For example, Together Foundation fundraised 2,000 Egyptian pounds from each household in one of the villages in Upper Egypt to install a sanitation unit. Similarly, Basaysa was able to create a micro-credit fund for local farmers in Delta through fundraising one hundred pounds from each individual in the village. Although the beneficiaries of those villages are poor, community members contribute to those projects because they will benefit from the services offered by such funds (e.g. obtaining micro-credit or accessing clean sanitation services).

4.3 Delivery system variables

Data revealed that SEs have operational strengths when it comes to the delivery of service through unique facilities, as well as having strength in building partnerships (Thompson *et al.*, 2000; Hockerts, 2006; Perrini and Vurro, 2006; Hartigan, 2006), and managing staff and volunteers professionally (Yunus, 2006; Alter, 2006; Nicholls, 2006; Dees, 1998; Cleveland and Anderson, 2001; Dees *et al.*, 2002).

mPedigree delivered its service through a specially designed technological facility. It was able to partner with pharmaceutical and telecom companies in Ghana (and then in other

countries in Africa) to put a special barcode on medications in public pharmacies in Africa in order to verify if a certain medication is counterfeit. Customers send an SMS or e-mail with the barcode through a specially designed on-line and off-line application on mobile phones. The system then checks if the barcode is registered and thus the medication is not counterfeit. Another example is the Small Holders Foundations, which was able to deliver information regarding prices of seeds, weather, trading, and others instantly through introducing a radio channel specially dedicated to farmers in Nigeria.

Social enterprises and social entrepreneurial organizations showed talent in building private and public partnerships (Hartigan, 2006; Nicholls, 2006). Community engagement was amplified in the case of Basaysa, where it adopted a participatory approach in designing its community programs, and all community groups took part in brainstorming, planning, and even delivery and financing. Alashanek ya Balady in Egypt and mPedigree in Ghana were both able to mobilize various private partnerships. Alashanek ya Balady partnered with the private sector to secure jobs for the poor, mPedigree partnered with telecom companies as well as other companies to sponsor the SMS sent by customers to verify various medications.

Professional management of volunteers and staff is important for any social enterprise or social entrepreneurial organization (Bornstein, 1998; Dees *et al.*, 2001). Ikamva Youth education model depends on the efficient management of volunteers, which actually decreases organization's costs as well as maintain the "giving" spirit in the program. Children graduating from various educational programs are then recruited as volunteers in the program to "give back" to other children in need. Volunteers are offered various training programs, and are allocated on different children groups according to the assessment of their skills. Together Foundation and Alashanek ya Balady focused on the capacity development of their staff as the front-liners for service delivery. As trainings and coaching sessions were expensive for SEs' to pay for, they usually depended on scholarships and pro-bono services from international organizations, multinational, and local companies.

4.4 Service distribution variables

The data showed that SEs have operational advantages in terms of reaching the right and intended beneficiaries (Holguín-Veras, Jaller, Van Wassenhove, Perez, Wachtendorf, 2012; Holguín-Veras, Jaller and Wachtendorf, 2012; Sheppard *et al.*, 2013; Van Wassenhove, 2006), sustainability (Sanchez-Lopez *et al.*, 2012), and scalability (Holguín-Veras, Jaller, Van Wassenhove, Perez, Wachtendorf, 2012; Holguín-Veras, Jaller and Wachtendorf, 2012), in addition to outcome measurement and impact analysis (El Ebrashi, 2013; Austin *et al.*, 2006) and owning flexible policies (Takeda and Helms, 2006; Light, 2008; Bornstein, 1998; Trivedi and Stokols, 2011).

The ability to reach the right beneficiaries is evident in all SEs under study, which usually depends on their strong networks in local communities. For example, Better Life Foundation managed a database of all quarry workers in El Menya by have strong networks with various local community development agencies and quarry employers. Health and labor rights awareness sessions were carried out in the nearest public places and at employers' premises to insure proximity to quarry workers. Zikra initiative targeted marginalized Jordanians, who live in remote areas in Jordan. The "volun-tourism" service is designed so that tourists ride specially rented buses for the program to go and spend the day with marginalized Jordanians at and around their homes, where they also do some agricultural activities with the marginalized on their own lands.

Flexible policies were evident in the case of Alashanek ya Balady. The organization gives room to its branches in different cities to decide the micro-credit model based on local culture and needs. For example, the interest rate charged in slum areas in Cairo is lower than that charged in other areas due to persistent poverty level in slums. In one of the cities in

Lower Egypt, the branch is implementing a partnership model for financing the poor rather than giving out credit, as the local community does not want to borrow for religious and cultural reasons. Together Foundation usually adopts a participatory approach in financing the sewage system, where the local community shares in financing the installation and maintenance costs. However, in very poor villages, another strategy is adopted through multi-partnerships with the government and external donors.

In terms of scalability, for example, The Small Holders Foundation's radio channel reaches thousands of farmers in Nigeria. The radio channel is specifically tailored to the needs of small farmers, whose productivity decreased in the previous years due to neglection from policy makers and NGOs, as well as lack of information and access to markets. By reaching those small farmers, they were able to market for their products through the radio channel, and receive valuable information regarding various environmental and agricultural aspects. mPedigree's system for the verification of counterfeit provides an opportunity to the poor in Ghana and across many countries in Africa to verify if a certain medicine is counterfeit. Sakhra's Women Society Cooperative is able to reach thousands of poor female farmers in Jordan through its various training and finance services. Together Foundation's sewage system reaches thousands of poor farmers in hundreds of villages across in Egypt.

Model replication is one of the most important criteria to qualify as a social entrepreneur in order to scale (Ashoka, 2014; El Ebrashi, 2013). mPedigree is able to franchise the model to countries outside Ghana (India and South Asia) through partnerships with NGOs and the private sector. Ikamva Youth is also able to replicate its education model focusing on school children and create a duplicate with some modifications to be applied in universities. Together Foundation replicates its model through training other NGOs on how to construct its sewage system in other villages in Egypt. Alashanek ya Balady franchises its entrepreneurship and employment model through training other NGOs as well as opening student franchises in universities.

Outcome measurement (or change on the individual level) and impact analysis (change on the community level/local/national level) are very important parts of social entrepreneurship (Ashoka, 2014; El Ebrashi, 2013; Austin *et al.*, 2006). On the outcome level, the Basaysa project measures performance based on the percentage of women successfully passed the illiteracy eradication classes, youth who were able to find jobs after graduating from training programs, and alike. On the impact level, the enterprise looks at the long run change in the society due to the various community interventions. For example, the Basaysa village started to grasp the importance of education after the project's various interventions, and thus the rate of university graduates as well as PhD holders started to increase. Another example is Alashanek ya Balady, where performance measurement on the outcome level is attained through measuring the percentage of youth employed after a vocational training program and the minimum salary received. On the impact level, Alashanek ya Balady measures performance through its ability to change the salary structure of certain factories and companies in Egypt, where any blue collar not even trained through Alashanek ya Balady would receive a fair salary.

Sustainability and business orientation is necessary for SEs' scale up and continuity (Light, 2008; Hartigan, 2006; Hockerts, 2006; Robinson, 2006; Boschee, 1998; Mair, 2006). Sustainability is not only taken from the profitability perspective, but it is also about the ability of SEs to implant a new system in the community which can then be operational without further intervention from SEs. Sakhra's Women Society was able to create the first Arab farmers' union, which is in itself a sustainable strategy to defend the rights of farmers in Jordan on the long run. Sakhra's Women Society was able to sustain its impact in Jordan through lobbying on the government to change the law of farmers' union. Based on Sakhra's continuous efforts, the law now allows farmers who rent agricultural lands – not only who

own them – to join the farmers' union. Accordingly, the percentage of women farmers joining the union increased from one percent to eight percent after the change of the law. Better Life Foundation did the same thing, as it was able to create the first syndicate for quarry workers in Egypt and change laws related to the organization and rights of quarry workers; ensuring the sustainability of the vision of the organization on the long run.

5. Discussion

Findings indicate that SEs have considerable potential in providing humanitarian services. As such, Figure 1 highlights the operational advantages of social enterprises and social entrepreneurial organizations to humanitarian service operations. While SEs go in-line with most of the operational advantages needed by humanitarian service operations, SEs stand out in their ability access and coordinate local networks, understand local needs contextually, design core and non-core services innovatively, business model strategies, building partnerships, managing human resources professionally, model replication, and outcome and impact analysis. Accordingly, there is significant reasoning why SEs might be considered as new players in humanitarian services operations, due to their ability to develop new services, create financial sustainability and scalability for services, assess the impact of these services, and manage the organization professionally to reach local networks as well as capitalize on human resources.

6. Conclusion

This paper supports the call for separate research streams for disaster relief and long-term recovery in humanitarian studies. The contrast between the two operational environments entails that they be treated independently. Service operations management is prevalent in the recovery development stage due to its long-term impact and lasting effects. The role of the local communities in the long-term development stage was emphasized and the contribution of SEs was explored. Ten Ashoka social enterprises and social entrepreneurial organizations from Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Jordan, South Africa, and Lebanon were examined. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and secondary sources. Results showed evidence of SEs' ability to access local data and understand the local needs, their ability to design services based on beneficiaries' needs,

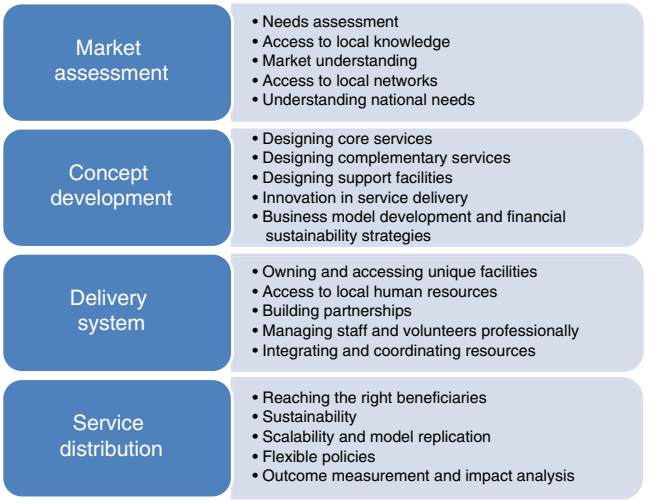

Figure 1.
The contribution of SEs to humanitarian service operations

as well as design auxiliary services, and the ability to deliver various services through specially designed facilities, policies, and multi-partnerships. Accordingly, those SEs are able to reach many customers through various means and providing sustainable services various to community members.

The data also showed additional benefits that were not initially expected in terms of networking in local areas, understanding local needs in the context of national needs, innovation through finding new solutions to social problems, business model development, innovation in service delivery, policy flexibility and dynamism, professional management of staff and volunteers, measurement of social impact, and franchising and replication. This study explored the role of SEs in providing operations in humanitarian services and concluded with key attributes and benefits that identify SEs as key players in providing humanitarian services in the long-term recovery phase.

A framework that highlights the different stages of providing operations for humanitarian services is presented with the relevant activities highlighting the role of the SEs. Preliminary results indicate that positioning SEs in the long-term recovery phase can add additional benefits in terms of well designed, tailored services that can reach a wider spectrum of beneficiaries professionally and sustainably.

This paper has important practical implications. The positioning of SEs as humanitarian service providers (HSPs) would open opportunities for new collaborations between donors and social organizations. Mainstream NGOs dominate the scene of servicing local communities; leaving aside SEs with substantial room for innovation that they might bring to the sector. In addition, SEs ability to build business models and design sustainability and scalability aspects for their operations may bring long-term development to impoverished communities. Global NGOs as well as government actors who carry out the first three stages of humanitarian operations could plan on working with (or even help creating) SEs to help with long-term recovery.

Further confirmation to the identified attributes and additional benefits of SEs in humanitarian contexts is required for each service operations stage. Future research should focus on positioning SEs as prominent HSPs and relevant stakeholders in humanitarian supply chains by comparing their capabilities to other players in the local communities. Another interesting stream of research is to compare the operational advantages of SEs as HSPs to other legal entities and to investigate if the legal structure affects the suggested framework.

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Appendix. Interview questions (semi-structured interview)

(1) How do you describe the target group served by your organization?

(2) Does this target group live nearby or in remote areas? How do you reach them?

(3) What are the core services provided to this target group?

(4) Do you provide any other services not focused on your core services?

(5) How do you design your services? In other words, what is the process you follow in order to come with a new service.

(6) How do you make sure that the services designed are needed by community members?

(7) What are your key performance indicators? How do you measure impact?

(8) What is your financial sustainability strategy?

(9) What is your cost center? How do you decrease cost of operations?

(10) Who are your key (primary and secondary) stakeholders? How do you manage them?

(11) Do you have a strategic and operation plan? How many times per year do you update them? Do you employ many changes in these plans?

(12) What is the size of the organizations (HR wise)? How do you manage your staff and volunteers?

(13) How do you reach your beneficiaries? And how do you make sure that they deserve your services?

(14) How do you grow? And how do you do that efficiently; or it is usually costly?

(15) Do you plan to withdraw from the communities you serve anytime soon? Explain.

(16) What will the community do if you withdrew with your services? How do you insure the sustainability of your impact?

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