Journal of Human Studies and Social . University Oran2. Vol: 13 .N: 01. 16 /01/2024

ISNN: 2253-0592 EISSN: 2588-199X / Prefix: 10.46315

# Zawiyas facing Covid-19: Social Entrepreneurship in Crisis.

# The case of the Zawiya Alawiya of Mostaganem and the Zawiya Tidjania of Temacine. Algeria

الزوايا في مواجهة كوفيد19: المقاولاتية الاجتماعية للأزمات. حالة الزاوية العلاوية (مستغانم) والزاوية التجانية (تماسين). الجزائر

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DOI: 10.46315/1714-013-001-41	•	

Received: 06/07/2023 Accepted: 16/11/2023 Published:16/01/2024

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### Abstract:

This article aims to highlight the response of religious and/or spiritual institutions to the recent health crisis; we will focus particularly on the solidarity role played by the Sufis Zawiyas in Algeria during the Covid-19 pandemic. The article draws on the approach of social entrepreneurship to crises as recently developed in the literature on associative entrepreneurship in order to explain the characteristics of solidarity activities conducted by the Sufis Zawiyas responding to the health crisis through the theoretical model of social entrepreneurship. We have chosen to present two Zawiyas models (Alawiya and Tidjania), based on internal reports produced by the network of associations sponsored by these Zawiyas on their solidarity work during the Covid-19 crisis.

 $Keywords: Pandemic; Social\ Entrepreneurship; Zawiya\ Alawiya; Zawiya\ Tidjania; Covid-19.$ 

### ملخص:

هدف هذا المقال إلى تسليط الضوء على مساهمة المؤسسات الدينية والروحية في الازمة الصحية الأخبرة، وتحديدا سنركز على الدور التضامني الذي قامت به الزوايا الصوفية في الجزائر خلال جائحة كوفيد 19. المقال يعتمد على مقاربة المقاولاتية الاجتماعية للازمات كما تم تطويرها مؤخرا في الادبيات حول المقاولاتية غير الربحية وذلك لتفسير خصائص النشاطات التضامنية للزوايا الصوفية في الاستجابة للازمة الصحية في ضوء النموذج النظري للمقاولاتية الاجتماعية. اقتصرنا على حالتين من الزوايا الصوفية (العلاوية والتجانية)، واعتمدنا على تقاربر داخلية انتجها شبكة الجمعيات التي ترعاها هذه الزوايا حول العمل التضامني الذي قامت به خلال الازمة. وتوصلت الدراسة الى ان النموذج المقاولاتي الاجتماعي هو الأنسب لتفسير أنشطة الزوايا.

كلمات مفتاحية: الوباء؛ المقاولاتية الاجتماعية؛ الزاوية العلاوية؛ الزاوية التجانية؛ كوفيد .19

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### 1-Introduction

To face the multiple social, economic and environmental problems that have plagued the world since the last Covid-19 health crisis, causing a moral echo of fear and insecurity, is a material crisis translated by the rupture of certain types of drugs and various medical utensils essential for the management of patients affected by the virus (manometer, flowmeter and oxygen concentrators) as well as hygiene products. To control this emergency situation, governments have adopted strict restrictions and an organization of hospital services. Similarly, many initiatives from civil society have contributed par excellence to the various social services whose management of the state has become very difficult. These contributions were able to fill the state or market failure during the Covid-19 crisis, with a crisis-based approach to social entrepreneurship.

Since its emergence in the 1990s, the concept of social entrepreneurship has been constantly evolving. This requires the creation of social enterprises or non-profit organizations with a strong social mission whose main objective is to carry out social innovation projects in various sectors such as health and education, the aim is to find innovative solutions to serious problems in an efficient and sustainable way. Definitions of social entrepreneurship have multiplied in recent years. For some it is seen as an innovative process of exploiting economic resources that aims to catalyze social change by responding to basic human needs in a sustainable way (Mair and Martí.2004). For others, social entrepreneurship is a concept that embraces the concepts of building, evaluating and pursuing opportunities as means of social transformation by visionary and passionate people. (Frank Janssen, Sophie Bacq, François Brouard.2013: p7).

Nowadays, social activities and initiatives of Sufi (Zawiyas) brotherhoods are carried out in a more formal and modern institutional framework through foundations, associations and organizations serving society. They are always in response to crisis situations developing a new system framed by the concept of social entrepreneurship. Examples include the contribution of the zawiya Alawiya (Mostaganem) by its non-governmental organization International Sufi Alawiyya Association -AISA (NGO)- and its Mediterranean Foundation for Sustainable Development (FMDD) Djanatu EL Arif, as well as the contribution of the Zawiya Tidjania (Temacine) through its cultural association INMAR and the association Temacine to address the Covid-19 health crisis. As a result, what are the characteristics of these contributions to social services that have benefited this transition from confraternity activities, from traditional religious institutions to innovative social entrepreneurial organizations? Consequently, what is the relationship between the social activities of solidarity practiced by the brotherhoods (Zawiyas) and the social entrepreneurship projects as defined by the social and solidarity economy?

To answer these questions, we will highlight the entrepreneurial responses of actors related to the Zawiyas being traditional institutions related to the Sufi ways. As models different from other religious actors in Algeria, the actors of the Zawiya Alawiya and Tidjania have not only developed a religious discourse close to the official discourse, they have developed responses with an entrepreneurial dimension and solidarity with the population. In response to Covid-19, associative networks related to Zawiyas mobilized human and material and intangible resources to address the Covid-19 crisis. Our approach in this article fits within the theoretical framework of the social entrepreneurship of the crisis (Behr & Storr, 2022). In a growing context, crisis entrepreneurship and pandemic entrepreneurship are seen as a unique new form of entrepreneurship (Behr & Storr, 2022). The researchers used the Kirznerien and Schumpeterian model to understand the actors' entrepreneurial approach to American churches in the face of Covid-19. They were able to demonstrate that religious actors were very useful and effective for the local population as they followed an entrepreneurial approach.

### 2- Methods

We will present in an explicit report, the experiences of the contribution of the zawiya Alawiya (Mostaganem) and the zawiya Tidjania (Temacine) to various services (social, medical and educational) during the period of the Covid-19 health crisis (2020-2022) in order to identify the challenges that have overcome and to identify actions in a context of social entrepreneurship of the crisis.

Zawiya Alawiya's contribution is represented by its various organizations and foundations (AISA — ONG, FMDD) in cooperation with Secours Islamique France (SIF) and Saraya Europe associations. Similarly, zawiya Tidjania is represented by the association INMAR and the association TEMACINI in collaboration with other associations (association SHEMS TEMACIN, association of the mosque). Particularly, with the medical society MAGH Assistance, the Algerian Red Crescent and the security and civil protection services.

We have considered these two models of contribution as ideal-type, for the analysis of the constant evolution of zawiya activities as being a traditional spiritual and religious institution; which is in transition to new modern forms represented by non-profit organizations and foundations with strong social interest, in a social entrepreneurship approach.

All the qualitative and quantitative information and documents were sent to us by the leaders of the associations of the two Zawiyas (Alawiya and Tidjania), namely:

Quantitative data: in form, number of material distribution, inventory of materials, medical report of number of detections of the virus, photos, were transmitted to us in file form by representatives of the Zawiya Alawiya (Mostaganem), Mr. Mouley Idriss Bentounes the G-S de (FMDD) Djanatu El Arif

of the National Office and Mr. Mohamed El Amine Zid: the G-S de (FMDD) Djanatu El Arif of the Oran office. The same goes for the zawiya Tidjania Temacine, by Miss Linda Tidjani, the president of the cultural association INMAR. The qualitative data, concerning the details of the management and organization of solidarity activities of the zawiya Alawiya were entrusted to us by the S-G of the (FMDD) Oran Office in maintenance.

### 3- Results: Zawiyas' entrepreneurial actions in the face of Covid-19.

### 3.1- Mostaganem Alawiya's Zawiya in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Before we get to the heart of the matter, it is up to us to present first the zawiya Alawiya and its associative and organizational forms that took charge of the organization of all activities and social initiatives and solidarity to face the impact caused by the Covid-19 health crisis19.

-Alawiya Brotherhood (zawiya): Founded in 1920 by Sheikh Ahmed Mustapha el Alawi. He is considered by Augustin Berque as the only spiritual master of the 20th century in relation to his knowledge of divine reality (A. Berque, 1936). He is recognized by his unique thought from the dogmatic, spiritual and liturgical point of view (A. Berque, 1936). His fraternity is growing in the Maghreb, the Middle East and Europe. It is now led by Sheikh Khaled Bentounes. This Sufi brotherhood has always played an important role in the social, educational, educational, political and journalistic fields (Fouad Khatir, 2016) through el Balgh el Djazairi. The brotherhood (zawiya) Alawiya has come a long way to become one of the most important Zawiyas at the local level first, then national and international.

-The Mediterranean Foundation for Sustainable Development, Djanatu al Arif: Created in 2007 in Mostaganem (Debdaba) whose objective is to implement all possible actions to promote sustainable development and public awareness. It is a cultural center and a forum of discussion open to any person or organization interested in environmental protection, in a spirit of responsible citizenship. The foundation federates, in the form of a national network through 14 offices under the general direction of the Mostaganem office (Algiers, Oran, Sidi Bel Abbes, Mascara, Hassi Ben Okba, Tlemcen, Relizane, Arzew, Bejaia, Bordj Bouariradj, Sétif, Batna, Ghriss). The foundation proposes various activities with three permanent axes supported by volunteers of the foundation. The first axis is designed for the training of children and young people on the responsible management of terrestrial resources and ecological gestures developed by workshops in spring and summer and many activities in this kind of activity, projects for the rehabilitation of Argen trees supported by the organization of replanting campaigns in the country. All the activities of the foundation aim at the development of the social and solidarity economy in Algeria.

-Alawiyya Sufi International Association (AISA -NGO): Founded by Sheikh Khaled Bentounes. It works for reconciliation to contribute to peace and sustainable development, also in cooperation

with the different communities, especially religious leaders; to inspire compassion in human beings through reconciliation and solidarity. This association is also engaged in complementary missions aimed at contributing to the development of peaceful and inclusive human societies, namely: advocating the universal values contained in the International Day of Living Together in Peace (Resolution A/RES/72/130), to governments around the world, through partnership actions with international institutions and civil society. In particular, implement initiatives for gender equality, social and cultural progress, environmental protection, and more generally respect for the living world and promote education in the culture of Peace and preventive mediation to peacefully resolve conflicts.

# 3.2- Social and humanitarian activities and initiatives of the Zawiya Alawiya community and organizational actors during Covid-19.

In March 2020, WHO, UNICEF and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) publish guidelines outlining key considerations and practical measures to avoid contamination in different sectors of society (WHO, 2020), namely: detection, screening, treatment, and isolation to track cases of the virus and mobilize the population to deal with the situation. In this case, countries need to take a whole-of-government, civil society approach and develop a comprehensive infection prevention strategy to save lives and minimize impacts. Algeria quickly took steps at the highest level of the state to respond to this health challenge, creating an intersectorial crisis cell under the Prime Minister's presidency. In particular, a Monitoring and Coordination Commission at the Ministry of Health and a Scientific Committee designed to monitor the evolution of the pandemic. The Minister of Health, Population and Hospital Reform, Abderrahmane Benbouzid, said at the 74th session of the World Health Assembly, that there is "a failure in all health systems, including the best organized and most effective system, which shows us that we were not prepared for a health catastrophe of this magnitude" (Algeria press, 2023).

As a result, during the second wave of Covid-19, the population of Algeria experienced an outbreak of Covid-19 contamination. The recovery of the pandemic has led to a sharp increase in deaths, due to the lack of oxygen therapy equipment and concentrators in most hospitals across the country. Chaos lacks of oxygen, patients are sent home and others are dying.

In this context of crisis, the association AISA ONG mobilized with other civil society partners to find an innovative way to solve this emergency. Within the framework of social entrepreneurship and the solidarity economy, a large order of oxygen therapy equipment and concentrators designed to be delivered directly from China to Algeria, at the initiative of Sheikh Khaled Bentounes. For this action, he launched a donation campaign in collaboration with the Secours Islamique France (SIF) for the purchase of oxygen concentrators, in order to subsidize hospitals that lack oxygen therapy

equipment at the national level. As part of this humanitarian action against the Covid-19 pandemic initiated by AISA- NGOs, SIF and Djanatu El Arif, 239 oxygen concentrators including 09 concentrators of 05 liters, 210 of 10 liters and 20 of 20 liters were delivered directly from China to Algeria. Distribution to hospitals and associations at the national level was carried out at the initiative of (FMDD) Djanatu El Arif — Mostaganem. She also initiated a grant donation for the Algerian Red Crescent.

This action is mainly characterized by the submission of economic performance to the criteria of the general interest, thereby prohibiting the redistribution of profits to members and/or capital holders. This means that the recovered material must be reinvested in other situations based on need or retained in the reserve. In this case, the distribution of oxygen concentrators takes the form of a subsidy to EPH and EPSP. Regarding associations, distributed concentrators are designed for people affected by the virus being placed in the home by the loan system, which is implemented through procedures established by each association. The material is the exclusive property of Djanatu el Arif, The procedures established for the loan consist in providing a document of identity of the beneficiary and a moral guarantee (surname, first name and contact details of the referring doctor) followed by a medical opinion and a loan form. As a result, 12 EPHP and 06 EPSP benefited from 95 oxygen concentrators of type 10 and 20 concentrators of type 20 liters at national level. the Friends of the Sick of El Abiod Sidi Cheikh, Bechar, Beni Abbes and Adrar; the El Fadjr Blida Association; the Association of the Accompanists of the Sick Ouargla and the Ghardaïa Association of Love and Charity.

Concerning the 17 offices of Djanatu El Arif at national level all benefited from 05 10-litre oxygen concentrators, apart from the Mostaganem National Office, which has 19 10-liters and 05-liters type concentrators and the Algiers by 10 concentrators of 10 liters. The Mediterranean Foundation for Sustainable Development, Djanatu El Arif, is responsible for the organization of the campaign for the distribution of concentrators and other medical devices at the national level from 09 September 2021 to 29 January 2022.

### 3.3- Tremaine's Zawiya Tidjania in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Tidjania Brotherhood (Zawiya) has always contributed to the development of society in several aspects, especially the symbiotic aspect. This made zawiya a structural body organized in relation to society. It therefore constitutes a disciplined hierarchical organizational scale which has made it a refuge for society in the most serious crises, thanks to its spiritual structure based on love and charity. In this regard, we cite as an example the Tidjania Brotherhood in Darfur, Sudan, which has contributed to social assistance services by creating shelters within the zawiya for abandoned and homeless children known as "schamassa". Which means permanently exposed to the sun (Moussaoui, Radji. 2021. p: 255). The founder of this initiative, Sheikh Sidi Ibrahim El Tidjani, also

invested in 1987 in the creation of training workshops for young people in the zawiya who could learn several trades such as masonry and carpentry (Moussaoui, Radji. 2021. p: 255). Today, the Temacine Zawiya Tidjania has notably contributed to humanitarian actions through these associations to address this emergency. In this context, it is up to us to present the Tidjania zawiya of Temacine and its associations.

Zawiya Tidjania of Temacine: Founded in 1805 by the Khalifa Sayed Al-Hadj Ali Al-Tamasini (1765-1844) at the request of the grand master Sheikh Sidi Ahmed Al-Temacini. The headquarters of the zawiya is in the Tamlahat administrative district of Touggourt, 650 km from the capital and 500 km from the city of Ain MAD. Since its foundation, all the successors of the first Khalifa Sidi Mohamed El Aid (1844-1875) to the 7th Khalifa Sidi Ahmed (1927-1978) have relied on the approach of science, social action and worship (Adjilat Y,2021). Since Dr. Muhammad Al-Eid Al-Tijani was appointed Khalifa de la zawiya de Temacine in 2000, by virtue of its scientific position, it has integrated in the zawiya a recent scientific orientation.

INMAR Association: It is a cultural association to promote women and children, chaired by Linda Tidjani. The association offers cultural, creative and craft activities for the women and children of Temacine by organizing sewing workshops and cultural events in a competitive environment.

The Zawiya Tidjania Temacine Cultural Group: Under the general coordination of M<sup>r.</sup> Amar El Tidjani, this cultural group is responsible for the scientific, digital and audio-visual coordination of all cultural and scientific activities and events of the zawiya.

### 3.4- Humanitarian initiatives and actions of associations related to the zawiya Tidjania Temacine.

On March 10, after the announcement of the quarantine process, an urgent meeting of Zawiya executives was set up, to operate within a systematic scientific framework on how to deal with the crisis that evokes strengths and weaknesses and propose effective solutions for society in this crisis (COVID-19). The first thing that Dr. Muhammad Al-Eid Al-Tidjani did was to develop a practical program, as the volunteer training process was banned due to the health crisis. Fortunately, many training methods of volunteering were presented to young people at the zawiya initiative before the crisis arose on the training process. As a result, six services were created by the Zawiya Cultural Grouping, under the coordination of Dr. Mohamed El Aid El Tidjani and the leaders of associations, namely:

- Volunteer Service Coordinators: Dr. Muhammad Al-Eid Al-Tijani and association leaders.
- Health and awareness services: INMAR association, EL Temacini association, El madrassa el Qurania de la Zawiya Koranic School, SHEMS Temacine association.
- Psychological Services: INMAR Association
- Support Services: Neighborhood Committees, Algerian Red Crescent Authority and Zawiya Medical Group.
- Regulatory services: Zawiya Tidjania cultural group with volunteer associations.

After the structure was set up, several missions were assigned to each team. Indeed, the work began with the first process of organizing the first awareness campaigns followed by sterilization and disinfection of public places and supports to families in need to ensure economic security including 8 thousand baskets were distributed for the month of Ramadan. Similarly, the Zawiya

Cultural Group was able to monitor educational programs by providing training and lessons on websites. In addition, the association INMAR has set up a special group for Ramadan lessons, a program for children in a virtual competitive setting. In particular, the Shams Temacine Association supplied the production of 5000 masks or bibs to the Zawiya Tidjania sewing workshop designed for free distribution.

In July 2020, the Zawiya Tidjania of Temacine organized a remarkable rapid detection operation of the virus in southern Algeria. The INMAR Association was responsible for organizing this virus detection campaign. This operation had a positive impact on the soul of citizens, which brought the community out of panic and limited the spread of COVID. For the effectiveness of the rapid detection process, the association mobilized special teams of doctors and psychologists. Also, the EPSP of Touggourt benefited from 13 Oxygen Manometer at the initiative of the cultural group of the Tidjania zawiya of Temacine.

The campaign to detect individuals with Covid-19 has been supported by the INMAR association in cooperation with Medical Company MAGH Assistance. This action is established by one of the means available under the name TODR (quick orientation test) with the aim of detecting and selecting as many suspects as possible in order to raise awareness of the extreme seriousness of the situation and to send information for prevention to individuals and society. This action is appreciated by the Health Committee of the Temacine Zawiya Cultural Group, which also supported it.

July 16, 2020: the medical delegation of the company MAGH Assistance of Algiers is welcomed by the office manager of the delegate of Daïra of Touggourt, the representative of the zawiya cultural group Tidjania Amar El Tidjani and the director of the INMAR Association Miss Linda Tidjani. The campaign took place over two stages over two weekends. The first stages between 17 and 18 July 2020, which allowed 900 tests to be carried out in the localities of Temacine, Blidet Omar, Touggourt. The second stage was established between 23 and 24 July 2020, of which 600 individuals were tested in the localities of Temacine and Taibat. The association also organized an additional campaign on July 27, 2020 at the headquarters of the Zawiya Tidjania cultural group of Temacine conducting 50 tests.

### 4- Discussion:

### The entrepreneurial spirit of the Zawiyas in the face of Covid-19.

We note that the actors of religious and/or spiritual institutions (Zawiyas) Alawiya and Tidjania, have perfectly ensured the economic, social and psychological needs of individuals during the Covid-19 crisis in the spirit of social entrepreneurship. It is not only seen as an engine for responding to crisis situations, it is also seen as a system for adapting to future emergencies (Shepherd & Williams, 2020). The humanitarian actions carried out by the association INMAR and the cultural group (zawiya Tidjania, Temacine) in particular, by AISA —NGO and the foundation FMDD Djanatu El Arif (zawiya Alawiya, Mostaganem) Urged capacity for self-organization in the society argued by the concept of "community's capacity for self-organization" (Sttor, Haeffele, Lofthouse, Hobson, 2021).

As a result, the entrepreneur's ultimate goal is to provide all basic and luxurious needs of everyday life. On the other hand, during times of crisis and pandemics in particular, it faces the challenge of ensuring the continuation of production of basic products such as food, clothing as well as other essential needs to combat the pandemic (Sttor, Haeffele, Lofthouse, Hobson, 2021) medical materials and equipment and hygiene products. In this crisis situation, a form of hybridity is created between the entrepreneur of the market who invests in the production for a profit and the social entrepreneur who invests in the purchase of these products for the social interest mobilizing the leaders, innovators and civil society actors through the organization of donations and charity campaigns. In this context, we can affirm that among the initiatives of various actors of civil society in Algeria, the AISA- NGO organization and the FMDD Djanatu El Arif have effectively and sustainably ensured the essential need for oxygen therapy materials to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition, the INMAR Association and the Zawiya Tidjania Cultural Group have contributed to reducing the impact of isolation (Sttor, Haeffele, Lofthouse, Hobson, 2021) by developing ways of entertainment in educational settings; the aim is to maintain contact and communication between individuals. This initiative is very important for the mental health of individuals during crises, alleviating the psychological vulnerability caused by confinement that have left traces on well-being and experiences of stress, boredom and depression (Moutassem-Mimouni B, Mimouni-Meslem, D, 2022). The contribution of the Alawiya and Tidjania zawiya actors to the spirit of social enterprise and the resolution of the problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic have highlighted their needs for an equal regime and infrastructure that provides space for their actions. In particular, they highlighted the important role of volunteerism that will absolutely have to be evaluated in Algeria, in order to better integrate it in the achievement of the "Sustainable Development Goals" for the year 2030 to which Algeria has been committed since 2015 (Mihoubi N, 2022).

### 5-Conclusion.

The 2020-2022 periods will continue to be affected by the Covid-19 crisis. It is therefore a global crisis, unpredictable and exceptionally fraught with consequences. Triggered by a health crisis, the pandemic quickly became a source of political, economic and social crises that encouraged the growth of social entrepreneurship as a new approach to social innovation during the pandemic. Supported by various actors of civil society; especially the actors of institutions religious and/or spiritual defined by the Zawiyas who were able to fill the state and market failures during the Covid-19 crisis. These actors are faced with several challenges that can be classified into several elements, namely the legal context, accompanying infrastructures and support for social innovation. Legal recognition is a serious problem that paralyzes the activity of associative and organizational actors, who are interested in the solidarity economy in the context of social entrepreneurship. It is therefore necessary to develop a new institutional framework in Algeria, guaranteeing the possibility of pursuing social and solidarity actions within the framework of social entrepreneurship. Referring to the legal forms of the social economy, which can be similar to the Algerian legislative system. Either we go to the classic form of private enterprise for profit, the idea that the market can help solve social problems in the form of non-profit organization. Either towards forms of the type of

associations, foundations, cooperatives or mutual, non-profit organizations. This can be established through the creation of cross-cutting laws promoting the creation of new statutes such as social enterprise and public utility enterprise. The Zawiyas need a new status to continue their millennial solidarity actions, without a doubt, concrete measures are needed to ensure a promising future for social entrepreneurship.

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