TACKLING GRAND CHALLENGES COLLABORATIVELY: THE ROLE OF VALUE-DRIVEN SENSEGIVING

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we contribute to the understanding of how entrepreneurs can deploy their values to enable joint action of heterogeneous stakeholders. Such an understanding forms a critical endeavor to tackle grand challenges adequately. Building on sensegiving research, we conducted a single-case study of an entrepreneurial initiative that tackles gender inequality in Lebanon which has been successful in mobilizing heterogeneous stakeholders who ordinarily would not collaborate with each other. We find that the values of the founders were pivotal for the initiative's success as those values activated latent values of stakeholders through processes of contextualization and enactment. We subsume these processes under the label value-driven sensegiving. As a result of value-driven sensegiving, heterogeneous stakeholders could make sense of the founders' aspirational vision and the role they could play in it, which paved ways for tackling grand challenges collaboratively. Our study provides insights into the centrality of values for mobilizing heterogeneous stakeholders across boundaries. Therefore, it contributes to the body of work on sensegiving, societal grand challenges, and new forms of organizing.

 Keywords: Sensegiving; values; insider–outsider case study; female entrepreneurship; societal grand challenges; new forms of organizing

INTRODUCTION

The values of entrepreneurs play a key role in making sense of, and giving sense to, societal grand challenges such as climate change, poverty, and gender inequality (Borquist & de Bruin, 2019). Values can be understood as "desirable transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity" (Schwartz, 1994, p. 21). Hence, they can function as a "source of meaning" (Chatterjee, Cornelissen, & Wincent, 2021, p. 3) attributed to grand challenges by entrepreneurs. Values therefore determine not only how important entrepreneurs consider a grand challenge to be (Schwartz, 1994) but also guide their action, i.e., determine how entrepreneurs tackle grand challenges (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004). Due to their transsituational nature, values span geographical, cultural, and sectoral boundaries (Schwartz, 2012). They are thus imbued with characteristics shared by grand challenges, which are understood as ambiguous and complex problems that have multi-faceted and interrelated effects across geographical, cultural, and sectoral boundaries on individuals, organizations, and society at large (George, Ryan, & Schillebeeckx, 2021; Martí, 2018). At the same time, the ability of values to span boundaries also depends on other factors such as social cohesion. More cohesive communities tend to have "more impervious boundaries that are less open or receptive to external information, ideas, and values" (Simons, Vermeulen, & Knoben, 2016, p. 571; see also Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995). Hence, depending on the degree to which values are already manifested in a community, the explicit formulation of values may even accentuate boundaries. These disparate effects of values to cross or accentuate boundaries open up the question of *how entrepreneurs can deploy their values to enable joint action of heterogeneous stakeholders to tackle grand challenges*?

To investigate this research gap, we conducted an inductive single-case study of WTSUP!,[1] an entrepreneurial initiative founded to tackle gender inequality in Lebanon by supporting and empowering women in the Middle East to become technology entrepreneurs. Building on sensegiving research and 21 interviews, complemented by observations and archival data, we studied WTSUP! as a unique phenomenon that succeeded in creating a setting in which people from diverse backgrounds collaborated despite the fact that traditionally these individuals would not have worked together.

We find that leaders can contextualize and enact their values in the spirit of their vision – a process we call *value-driven sensegiving* – and thereby proactively influence which values their stakeholders deem relevant. As a result, stakeholders who share those values can make sense of leaders' aspirational change efforts and envision their role in achieving the leaders' vision. Value-driven sensegiving can thus pave ways for boundary-spanning collaborative activities of heterogeneous stakeholders toward tackling grand challenges. With these findings, our study contributes to research on sensegiving by revealing the role of values in the sensegiving process and demonstrating how value-driven sensegiving can mobilize heterogeneous stakeholders. Our study also contributes to research on grand challenges and new forms of organizing by proposing that value-driven sensegiving can help overcome geographical, ethnic, religious, political, and sectoral boundaries.

SENSEGIVING AS A MEANS TO TACKLE SOCIETAL GRAND CHALLENGES

Tackling societal grand challenges requires the collaboration of stakeholders across boundaries (George et al., 2021). To mobilize stakeholder support, entrepreneurs need to rationalize their mental models in a convincing way (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). Notably, communicating and rationalizing a mental model to stakeholders with the aim of reducing the complexity and ambiguity of a societal grand challenge can be considered a sensegiving process (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995). Sensegiving is defined as the "process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality" (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 442). It is often actively utilized by leaders to direct their interpretive schemes at other organizational stakeholders (Rouleau, 2005). As such, it builds upon research on sensemaking, which is considered a retrospective and interpretive process of the meaning construction of uncertain, equivocal, and ambiguous situations, such as the malpractice of governmental institutions (Brown, Colville, & Pye, 2015; Maitlis, 2005; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Weick, 1993, 1995). Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) describe the connection between sensemaking and sensegiving as an alternating sequence, which starts with a leader's sensemaking of an ambiguous and uncertain situation and proceeds with the sensegiving of their envisioned mental model to other people. This sensegiving is followed by the sensemaking of the meaning of the leader's narratives by those recipients, thereby leading to a further sensegiving effort directed at other stakeholders, who subsequently convert the leader's mental model into action. Hence, sensegiving processes reflect a leader's active attempt to influence her or his stakeholders – as opposed to sensemaking, which is a retrospective process (Bartunek, Krim, Necochea, & Humphries, 1999; Randall, Resick, & DeChurch, 2011).

Dacin, Dacin, and Tracy (2011) have suggested that sensemaking and sensegiving research can provide valuable insights into social impact-related topics. Since its inception in 1991, scholars have continuously advanced this sensegiving perspective (Cornelissen, Clarke, & Cienki, 2012; Daniel & Eckerd, 2019; Hoyte, Noke, Mosey, & Marlow, 2019; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007; Nicholson & Anderson, 2005; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2009). Hill and Levenhagen (1995) have suggested that sensegiving can also be applied to the entrepreneurial processes because the uncertainty and ambiguity of starting an enterprise is similar to the envisioned mental model of CEOs who aim for strategic change. Following a sensegiving process, entrepreneurs articulate the aspired vision of their venture to other stakeholders in order to mobilize resources or convince them to become involved (Cornelissen et al., 2012). In this context, previous research has shown numerous forms of sensemaking and sensegiving, such as narratives (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007; Stjerne, Wenzel, & Svejenova, 2022), metaphors (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995), gestures (Cornelissen et al., 2012), framing and decoupling (Fiss & Zajac, 2006), and other forms of communication. However, despite the great potential of values for making sense of and giving sense to ambiguous and complex events, such as grand challenges, our understanding remains limited of how entrepreneurs can actively utilize values to mobilize

stakeholders across boundaries to collaboratively tackle grand challenges. Thus, working at the intersection of research on sensemaking, sensegiving, and societal grand challenges, we draw on the unique case of WTSUP! to examine the following research question: *How can entrepreneurs deploy their values to enable joint action of heterogeneous stakeholders to tackle grand challenges?*

METHODOLOGY

Research Setting: The Lebanese Context and the Case of WTSUP!

Gender inequality is one of Lebanon's main socioeconomic challenges (Terjesen & Lloyd, 2015). The country is ranked 145th out of 153 in the gender gap index (Global Gender Gap Report, 2020), thus lagging behind most states in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA). Due to patriarchal cultural norms (Bastian, Sidani, & El Amine, 2018), Lebanon struggles in terms of gender equality in education, labor representation, political representation, economic rights, and marriage rights (Metcalfe, 2008). A further challenge lies in Lebanon's unstable economic development, which peaked in an economic collapse in 2020 caused by years of mismanagement and corruption (Youssef, 2020). Lebanon is a melting pot of different cultural, ethnic, and religious groups. Tensions between these various ethnic groups and religious creeds have additionally burdened the country's socioeconomic and institutional development (United Nations & World Bank, 2018).

Against this backdrop, WTSUP! is unique because its two founders brought together stakeholders from different ethnicities, religions, and socioeconomic, institutional, political, and professional backgrounds who otherwise would never have met nor collaborated. These differences pertained both to the various collaborators from Lebanon itself, which included female entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship accelerators and funders (e.g., banks, venture capital institutions), NGOs (e.g., women's advocacy groups), research institutions, influential individuals (e.g., politicians, ambassadors, high-profile and successful female entrepreneurs), government institutions, and media outlets, as well as to the two distinct geographical settings at hand (i.e., the MENA region and Nordic countries). The two founders of WTSUP! shared extensive work experience in conducting start-up events and business activities in Finland, as well as in developing countries such as Lebanon and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). As formulated in a concept note, the mission statement positioned WTSUP! as a mission-oriented initiative that aimed to challenge established Lebanese structures and encourage independent free thought among Lebanese women through entrepreneurship and cross-country collaboration:

> The core values of WTSUP! ... aim to promote women entrepreneur inclusiveness, educational and cultural exchange between the Nordic/Scandinavian countries and Lebanon, and cross-cultural entrepreneurship research. When combined, these values serve to plant the seed for a more bold and creative culture of innovation and entrepreneurship among Lebanon's women. By empowering women to reach their life and business goals, WTSUP! ... aims to enable budding women entrepreneurs to take full advantage of the combination of ecosystems; including

knowledge, networking, and technological exchanges and transfers. This Nordic-Lebanese partnership is also expected to create a new crop of female entrepreneur role models that will inspire and empower future generations of women in Lebanon and in the wider region. (WTSUP! Concept Note)

Data Collection

Our study is based on rich data collected from inquiry and examination, including interviews, observation material, and archival data (see Table 1). The sum of our data allowed us to explore the emergence of the entrepreneurial initiative at hand by both "following forward" and "tracing back" (Langley & Tsoukas, 2010, pp. 11–12). *Interview data* were collected from August 2019 to January 2020. We conducted 21 interviews which lasted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes (907 minutes in total). The interviews started with broad questions designed to understand the interviewee's role within the initiative and the reasons for their involvement, as well as their experiences of its launch. We further asked them to reflect on perceived individual and collective benefits, their views on WTSUP!'s potential influence on gender inequality, and the unstable economic situation in Lebanon. The interviews are complemented with *observation data*, which include video material of pitches by female entrepreneurs, as well as key notes and presentations held at an organized side-event at SLUSH 2019 in Finland. Collected observation material comprised 99 minutes of video material. Besides interviews and observations, we collected 698 pages of *archival data,* which include internal documents (i.e., concept notes, project descriptions, e-mails) as well as external documents (i.e., website content, presentations). Internal documents thereby span a time period from the inception of the WTSUP! initiative (in 2018) until the implementation of its pilot event (February 11–13, 2019) and beyond (ending

Table 1. Data Sources.

Interview Data		Observation Data		Archival Data	
Interviewee	*Number/min*	*Site*	*min*	*Key Documents*	*pp*
Founders	5/274	Start-up event Finland (organized Slush side-event)	99	WTSUP! concept notes and project descriptions	294
Entrepreneurs	4/141			Internal communication	20
Funders	1/45			Website and presentations	25
Volunteers	7/291			GEM Reports (2016–2018)	227
NGO Managers	2/80			Lebanon reports/ articles (gender)	19
Entrepreneurship Hub Manager	1/39			Newspaper articles	113
Research Institution Manager	1/37				
TOTAL **Interviews**	21/907	**TOTAL** **Observations**	99	**TOTAL** **Document Pages**	698

in April 2020). In addition, we collected Lebanese and international newspaper articles, and international reports documenting Lebanon-related statistical data and country comparisons.

Insider–Outsider Perspective

Studying sensegiving requires an interpretive approach and, hence, demands "involved interaction with informants" (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 435). According to Maitlis and Christianson (2014), sensegiving should be studied by using unconventional methods, such as an insider–outsider perspective. This perspective combines the insight of a knowledgeable participant–observer within the organization (often one of the researchers) with the fresh perspective of an outside researcher (Sharma & Bansal, 2020).

In line with these suggestions, our study is designed as a joint project of external researchers with outsider views and insights from the founders of the case, who are simultaneously also scholars. Having no connection to the WTSUP! initiative, the outsider researchers were exclusively involved in the data collection process and conducted the interviews. This procedure served to reassure interviewees that the insider researchers would not have access to the data and that all gathered data would be anonymized. This procedure allowed the outsider researchers to maintain scholarly distance. In their role as primary informants, the insider researchers provided full access to the WTSUP! data and kindly agreed to be interviewed, thereby revealing numerous meaningful insights into the case. As entrepreneurship scholars, they functioned as true double agents in the sense that they were simultaneously familiar with the practicalities of launching a new initiative which tackled societal grand challenges as well as being profoundly informed about the conceptual issues of entrepreneurship. Nevertheless, due to their key involvement in the launch of WTSUP!, they did not participate in the data analysis and were only involved after the data had been analyzed, offering post-hoc, overarching "metacommentary" (Gioia, Price, Hamilton, & Thomas, 2010, p. 8), which was essential for the research team in order to avoid insider bias. This research design allowed us to give voice to knowledgeable insiders "who could best articulate the rationales for conceptions and actions" (Gioia et al., 2010, p. 8) that affected the inception, launch, and development of this new initiative to tackle societal grand challenges collaboratively.

Data Analysis

We moved between data collection, analysis, and prior literature to generate insights throughout each analytical step, which included (1) developing an in-depth case description; (2) identifying and corroborating key empirical actions and events with data; (3) coding data to develop core constructs; and (4) developing a theoretical model. Although the data analysis is described in four discrete steps, in practice this was a highly iterative process.

In the first step, the three outsider researchers developed a rich chronology of events of how WTSUP! emerged as an entrepreneurial initiative to tackle grand challenges (Langley, 1999). We particularly made use of archive data, utilizing

concept notes, executive summaries, and internal communication documents in order to relate the decisions and actions of the founders and stakeholders. In the second step, the case description was used to identify the decisions and actions that determined the inception, launch, and development of the initiative, as well as their potential impact on gender inequality and economic development in Lebanon. During discussions between the outsider researchers at this early stage, we were astonished by how rapidly the WTSUP! founders could mobilize a diverse set of stakeholders who, under normal circumstances, would not collaborate with each other, as well as by the role played by the WTSUP! founders' values in this mobilization. We found this intriguing and created coding memos to record initial observations and patterns.

In the third step, the three outsider researchers engaged in several iterative cycles of open coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994), where we analyzed the data that described founders' values and how stakeholders were mobilized to tackle grand challenges collaboratively. By cycling through the data we identified 22 first-order codes. We then searched for relationships between our first-order codes so as to identify how the founders' values had driven a sensegiving process that resulted in joint action on solving grand challenges. At this stage, we began to iterate between the distinct sources of data and the literature by comparing our emerging findings to suggestions from prior literature on sensegiving, new forms of organizing designed to tackle grand challenges, and the role of values. In this way, we created nine second-order themes.

In the fourth and final step, we increased the level of abstraction to form an initial view of the relationship between the aggregated theoretical dimensions. We hence arranged theoretical concepts, iterated between the data, the literature, and the emerging dimensions to examine their fit (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This led to the refinement of our constructs, up until the point when we believed to have fully captured the complex relationship between the relevance of the founders' values in mobilizing heterogeneous stakeholders, the activities involved in bringing WTSUP! to life as a new form of organizing, and the change in joint action on tackling grand challenges. In Fig. 1, we provide our data structure as a visual display of the process described above.

WTSUP! – A CASE OF VALUE-DRIVEN SENSEGIVING

In order to understand how values are deployed to enable joint action of heterogeneous stakeholders, we explored how sense was given to tackling gender inequality collaboratively in the case of WTSUP!, and the role played by values in this process. Specifically, we find that the founders influenced which values stakeholders deemed relevant by contextualizing and enacting those values to propose their vision of positive societal change toward greater gender equality in Lebanon. In this way, latent values shared by heterogeneous stakeholders were activated and subsequently mobilized by making stakeholders realize that they shared those same values (i.e., value-driven sensegiving). This activation of latent values then influenced how stakeholders made sense of the founders' aspirational
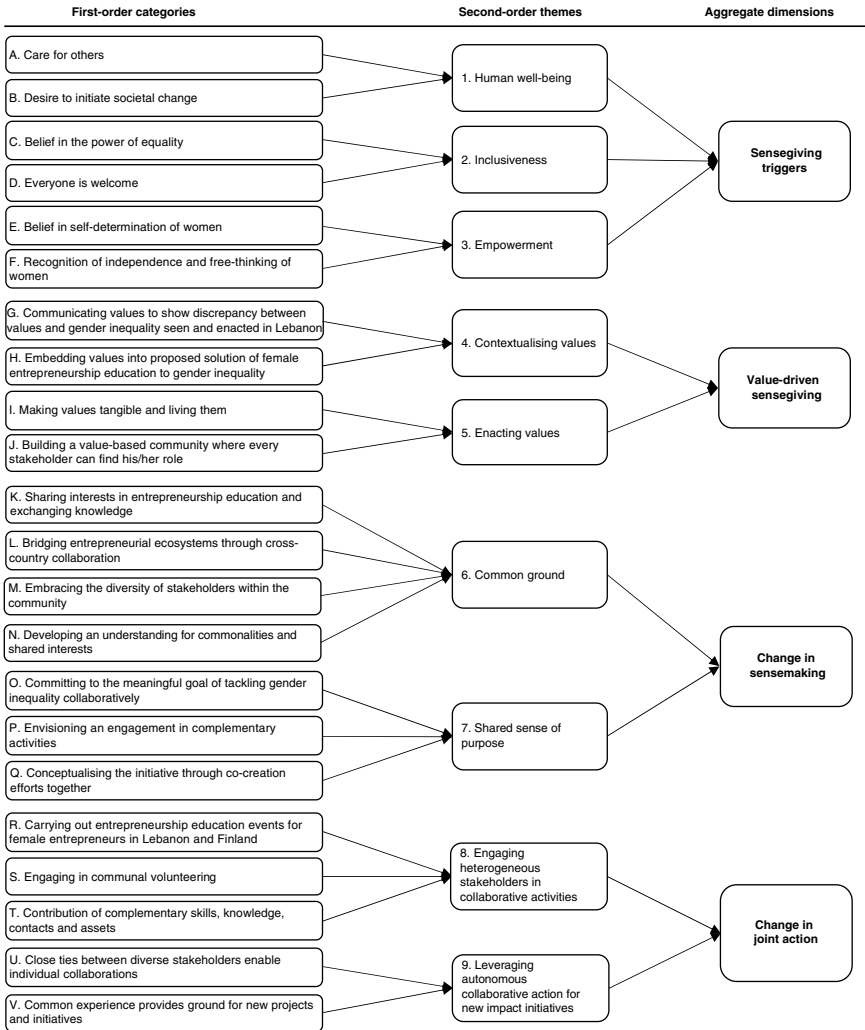
First-order categories	Second-order themes	Aggregate dimensions

A. Care for others

B. Desire to initiate societal change

1. Human well-being

C. Belief in the power of equality

D. Everyone is welcome

2. Inclusiveness

Sensegiving triggers

E. Belief in self-determination of women

F. Recognition of independence and free-thinking of women

3. Empowerment

G. Communicating values to show discrepancy between values and gender inequality seen and enacted in Lebanon

H. Embedding values into proposed solution of female entrepreneurship education to gender inequality

4. Contextualising values

I. Making values tangible and living them

J. Building a value-based community where every stakeholder can find his/her role

5. Enacting values

Value-driven sensegiving

K. Sharing interests in entrepreneurship education and exchanging knowledge

L. Bridging entrepreneurial ecosystems through cross-country collaboration

M. Embracing the diversity of stakeholders within the community

N. Developing an understanding for commonalities and shared interests

6. Common ground

O. Committing to the meaningful goal of tackling gender inequality collaboratively

P. Envisioning an engagement in complementary activities

Q. Conceptualising the initiative through co-creation efforts together

7. Shared sense of purpose

Change in sensemaking

R. Carrying out entrepreneurship education events for female entrepreneurs in Lebanon and Finland

S. Engaging in communal volunteering

T. Contribution of complementary skills, knowledge, contacts and assets

8. Engaging heterogeneous stakeholders in collaborative activities

U. Close ties between diverse stakeholders enable individual collaborations

V. Common experience provides ground for new projects and initiatives

9. Leveraging autonomous collaborative action for new impact initiatives

Change in joint action

Fig. 1. Data Structure.

vision for Lebanese society and enabled them to envision which role they could play in implementing it, as common ground and a shared sense of purpose was created among them (i.e., change in sensemaking). In acting upon the founders' change efforts, heterogeneous stakeholders engaged in boundary-spanning collaborative activities which paved ways of tackling gender inequality collaboratively (i.e., change in joint action). Drawing on these findings, Fig. 2 displays a model of value-driven sensegiving that illustrates how sensegiving is triggered and the changes that arise as a consequence thereof; and Table 2 provides additional quotes that illustrate our theoretical constructs. We report our findings along the four main elements of Fig. 2.
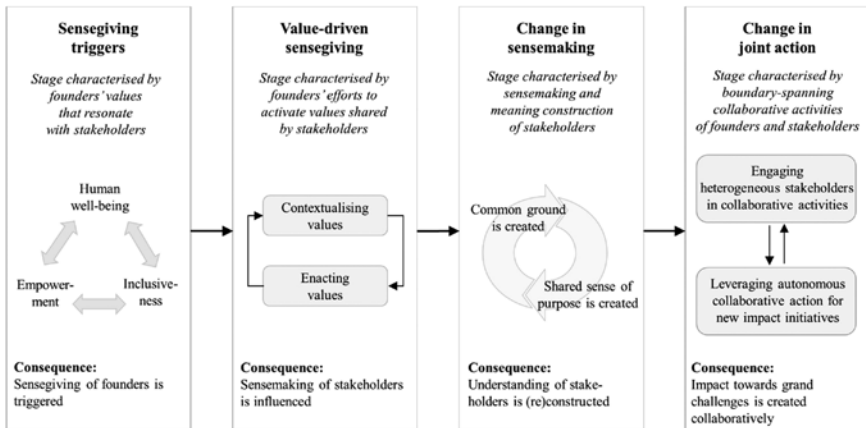
Fig. 2. Model of Value-driven Sensegiving, Change in Sensemaking and Joint Action.

Triggers of Value-driven Sensegiving

Our analysis shows that sensegiving was triggered by distinct values that were anchored in the founders' world view and resonated with stakeholders. Indeed, already upon their initial meeting in November 2018, the two founders felt deeply connected by their shared belief in the importance of supporting women and, especially, female entrepreneurs in Lebanon, which they viewed as highly relevant in order to tackle the challenge of gender equality. Our analysis suggests that, in the founding days of WTSUP!, both founders based their activities on three types of values which were latent among stakeholders and acted as a precursor to value-driven sensegiving: human well-being, inclusiveness, and empowerment.

Human well-being: Both founders were deeply motivated by caring for others. As a Lebanese expatriate living in Finland, Founder #2 wanted to broaden the opportunities of his compatriots who, unlike him, did not have the privilege of living in a developed country. Reporting that "there is often carried some guilt in them that they have left their families or have abandoned their country" (Founder #2), founding WTSUP! fulfilled his wish to give something back to Lebanese society. This caring attitude resonated with a group of stakeholders who believed that the founders "really care about us and really want to help" (Stakeholder #10). Stakeholders also reported that the founders exhibited a compelling "desire to create change" (Stakeholder #15), especially for female entrepreneurs; and they were attentive to the fact that the founders' hope for social progress "engaged people a lot more than events usually do" (Stakeholder #13).

Inclusiveness: Both founders were also driven by inclusiveness, which they understood as an essential stance in terms of showing openness and being welcoming to diverse people while treating them as equals. Inclusiveness was also grounded in the founders' belief that grand challenges are a concern for everyone, simply because "we are equal in this boat" (Founder #1). As became evident in the respectful and egalitarian manner of communication and interaction with the various stakeholders, the founders believed that anybody who was willing to

Table 2. Dimensions, Themes, Categories, and Quotes.

Second-order Themes and First-order Categories	Representative Quotes
Aggregate Dimension: Sensegiving triggers	
1. Human well-being	
A. Care for others	"It is about helping each other without financial incentive." (Founder #1)
	"During the WTSUP! meetings there was a giving-back culture." (Stakeholder #8)
B. Desire to initiate societal change	"In North Korea, I learned that impact can be made through Nordics (…). My question is: Is there another way to dedicate your expertise? Then push it towards changing societies not that it would be on you (…). It is the people who you have the privilege to work with." (Founder #1)
2. Inclusiveness	
C. Belief in the power of equality	"It is about the equality which is having the blast in this region and that should be utilized much more." (Founder #1)
	"We are not structured and not hierarchical. Of course, some decisions are probably on me, but I rather make them as a group. Especially these people, they know when to say this is not your territory, which is very good." (Founder #1)
D. Everyone is welcome	"The spirit of WTSUP! is based on openness, trust, and collaborative action." (WTSUP! 2020 Executive Summary)
	"They maintained a policy of openness, of open communication and they very carefully managed the expectations of all parties involved." "(Stakeholder #6)"
3. Empowerment	
E. Belief in self-determination of women	"The entrepreneurial potential of the youthful MENA region remains widely untapped – especially among women, many of whom cannot gain access to education and the labour market." (WTSUP! 2019 Seed Funding Application)
	"The organizers believe that each individual has unique communication strengths and abilities. By recognizing individual strengths, methods such as storytelling, acting, audio-visual communications, and other forms of expression will be encouraged and supported." (WTSUP! 2020 Global Report)
F. Recognition of independence and free-thinking of women	"Changing the structure and also to encourage and empower independent and free-thinking among the women in Lebanon and there is no better tool than to take control of their destiny, economically and socially." (Founder #2)
	"It is an initiative bridging the Northern European and MENA region's start-up ecosystem to support local growth, to solve socio-economic challenges and to promote equality." (WTSUP! 2019 Partner Brief)

Aggregate Dimension: Value–driven sensegiving

4. Contextualizing values

G. Communicating values to show discrepancy between values and gender inequality seen and enacted in Lebanon

"[WTSUP!] is a place where people are given the opportunity, the chance, the privilege, to share their knowledge with others but also to learn. A lot of the experience is emotional, it is one of discovery, discovery of the other, maybe another culture, discovery of oneself, discovery of a new place." (Founder #2)

"In countries like Lebanon, women are in a not so privileged positions in society. If there was more female entrepreneurship, women would become more visible; they would have more economical opportunities." (Stakeholder #15)

"What matters is the values and what I see as progress or as good or as beneficial. From my perspective it so just happens that the values we have here in the Nordics, I believe, would benefit the society in Lebanon." (Stakeholder #11)

H. Embedding values into proposed solution of female entrepreneurship education to gender inequality

"Entrepreneurship has shown to enable peacebuilding, particularly in the Middle East (…) as entrepreneurship can contribute to conflict transformation." (WTSUP! 2019 Seed Funding Application)

"The beauty about WTSUP! is that it is well catering to a niche of the Lebanese women entrepreneurs who would actually cut across the social structure. So, it was catering for women in tech entrepreneurship but as well for women from rural parts of Lebanon which could be disadvantaged in terms of skills, in terms of knowledge, in terms of access to opportunities." (Stakeholder #6)

5. Enacting values

I. Making values tangible and living them

"Openness and trust are the binding forces that unite the networks that form WTSUP!." (WTSUP! Executive Summary 2020)

"Just sitting with someone and treating them like your peer, versus in Lebanon, we don't have that. So, if a mentor is coming, they make you always feel they are superior and that gets in the way of being honest of talking about your mistakes. (…) When I talk to the WTSUP! team, even the small things they point out and they tell you, that is interesting, good job." (Stakeholder #2)

J. Building a value-based community where every stakeholder can find his/her role

"The WTSUP! team is a unit." (Founder #2)

"When you can trust quite blindly, then you will find yourself in a role that makes sense in an occupational sense." (Founder #1)

"I heard about this Beirut thing and that there is a three-day programme, and they are looking for volunteers as mentors. I was instantly sold. Like, that is my thing, I wanted to be involved. It represents my worldview, my values and that is why I jumped instantly in." (Stakeholder #11)

Overarching Dimension: Change in sensemaking

6. Common ground

K. Sharing interests in entrepreneurship education and exchanging knowledge

"What I liked about the presentations is that I am learning from people abroad. They are just telling us about their companies and what they do and that is something that I am always interested in knowing, what start-ups all over the world are doing, how are they doing business, how do they grow and how do they scale." (Stakeholder #8)

"Finnish entrepreneurs could learn or at least could observe resilience [in Lebanon]." (Stakeholder #1)

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued)

Second-order Themes and First-order Categories	Representative Quotes
L. Bridging entrepreneurial ecosystems through cross-country collaboration	"Once people are all together in one physical space, that is the key place where these two ecosystems come together." (Stakeholder #14) "You see a lot of effort that comes with flying in industry experts from abroad to talk about every single facet of this entrepreneurship process, of the product-building process, of the legal entity-building process." (Stakeholder #5) "Technology is beyond geographical boundaries." (Stakeholder #3)
M. Embracing the diversity of stakeholders within the community	"The people are amazing, what can you say. It is really, really great to be a part of it." (Stakeholder #13) "They interacted with different people and different ideas, you could listen and critically appraise." (Founder #2)
N. Developing an understanding for communalities and shared interests	"Connecting with her and knowing the struggles that she has been through, how she thinks (…). I felt like this is an opening to either friendship or business opportunity and I think it is like a concrete example of what WTSUP! is trying to accomplish by bridging both ecosystems." (Stakeholder #2) "Entrepreneurship education for women, supporting women, that is something I am really happy to help with." (Stakeholder #12)
7. Shared sense of purpose	
O. Committing to the meaningful goal of tackling gender inequality collaboratively	"What makes it successful, I believe, is the commitment of a certain group of people who share the same purpose, share the same values and share the same kind of goal of meaningfulness." (Stakeholder #11) "It is really nice to be part of a project that actually has a sense of purpose." (Stakeholder #10) "Whenever there are opportunities like this and I feel like there are people who are serious and have potential, and can bring in something meaningful, I am always ready to help out." (Stakeholder #3)
P. Envisioning an engagement in complementary activities	"What contributed to that success was the ability to bring together credible partners, cross-section, from the private sector, from the public sector, from the social sector. They sit together at one table and work out an event that could cater for women entrepreneurs in technology from different parts of Lebanon." (Stakeholder #6) "You see things in a different perspective, you get to know different people from different areas and industries and that kind of fuels your own creativity and, at the same time, you feel very powered around these people." (Stakeholder #13)
Q. Conceptualizing the initiative through co-creation efforts together	"Whatever idea I have, if I can explain why, we do it – that is very powerful." (Stakeholder #10) "Although we were at the core of the organization, WTSUP! could not have happened without everybody combined in the way that we did." (Founder #2)

Aggregate Dimension: Change in joint action

8. Engaging heterogeneous stakeholders in collaborative activities

R. Carrying out entrepreneurship education events for female entrepreneurs in Lebanon and Finland

"The best benefit of WTSUP! is to showcase role models and kind of make sure that there are these opportunities for these female entrepreneurs and their companies." (Stakeholder #14)

"I think this exchange of ideas, getting new perspectives is quite beautiful. I saw massive growth in the participants during the WTSUP! three-day program in terms of presentation skills, the ability to explain their business idea, the kind of trust in themselves." (Stakeholder #15)

"Start-up, not War Stories, from Beirut." (WTSUP! 2019 Presentation Title at SLUSH Event)

S. Engaging in communal volunteering

"WTSUP! is a volunteer platform to begin with." (Founder #2)

"Under circumstances like this I know that the curators (…) get very serious and put so much time and effort into it." (Founder #1)

"Giving back and volunteering are essential instruments of sustainable cultural and societal progress." (WTSUP! Global Report 2020)

T. Contribution of complementary skills, knowledge, contacts, and assets

"Let's join hands and try to create an impact as big as possible." (Stakeholder #9)

"Collaborative action is reflected in the way stakeholders from Scandinavia and Lebanon are emboldened to take ownership and initiative toward achieving common values-driven goals." (WTSUP! 2020 Global Report)

"For 2021–2022, WTSUP! is planning events for Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Furthermore, it aims to incorporate new tracks with further expanded social objectives including, e.g., Youth Entrepreneurship and Senior Entrepreneurship." (WTSUP! 2019 Partner Brief)

9. Leveraging autonomous collaborative action for new impact initiatives

U. Close ties between diverse stakeholders enable individual collaborations

"Everyone we met was an inspiration. New friends, stronger bonds, lots of experiences." (WTSUP! 2019 E-Mail between Stakeholder #1 and Founder #1)

"When we travelled to Finland, we were having already the revolution in Lebanon and it was very nice to share this experience with everyone who was there. I felt like they felt a lot with us and with what we are going through. This empathy was extremely nice. You feel like that this other side of the world knows exactly what we are going through. So, I believe that this part, this sharing-the-experience part, impacted me." (Stakeholder #1)

V. Common experience provides ground for new projects and initiatives

"I feel like (…) I can reach out to more people because I made enough connections with the people from WTSUP! und everybody knows a lot of the people involved. I am sure that, whenever I need somebody, somebody knows someone." (Stakeholder #2)

"Co-creation [between stakeholders] happens during the events and finally after them." (Founder #1)

contribute to their cause was welcome to join their initiative, regardless of their educational or professional backgrounds:

I don't like to watch background in education and alike. All are welcome. (Founder #1)

Empowerment: The founders' values were complemented by empowerment, which they believed was crucial in strengthening gender equality and improving the inclusion of women in Lebanon. As opportunities for women and their social inclusion into society as well as the economy were perceived to be severely limited, the founders believed that they needed to support the independence and self-determination of women by "changing the structure and also to encourage and empower independent and free-thinking among the women in Lebanon (…) economically and socially" (Founder #2). Stakeholders perceived the founders' quest for empowerment as "channelling everyone's own strength" (Stakeholder #13) for long-term positive impact.

Value-driven Sensegiving

Our findings reveal that the founders' values functioned as triggers in initiating a process of sensegiving, which eventually influenced the sensemaking of stakeholders and provided the impetus for their engagement. As this process was chiefly driven by the values discussed above, we label this "value-driven sensegiving" which, we find, is characterized by the founders' efforts to activate values shared by a group of heterogeneous stakeholders. While some of the shared values we identified could be directly activated, some values were rather latent and thus had to be revived by the activities of the founders. Notably, our findings suggest that value-driven sensegiving is not a way of convincing people with other values, but rather a way to mobilize them by making them realize that they share certain values.

Contextualizing values: The founders' contextualized their values in terms of the societal problem at hand by embedding them in the WTSUP! mission, which conveyed the values they viewed as relevant in tackling gender inequality in Lebanon. In the mission statement, the founders communicated their values (i) to show the discrepancy between their values and the gender inequality that pertained in Lebanon; and (ii) to embed the values into their proposed solution of entrepreneurship education for female entrepreneurs to create positive societal change. Regarding the former, using the values of human well-being, inclusiveness, and empowerment as a lens enabled the founders to portray the challenges experienced by women in general, and female entrepreneurs in particular, in an equalizing and unifying way that was meaningful to heterogeneous stakeholders. For example, stakeholders shared the founders' view that "in countries like Lebanon, women are in not so privileged positions in society" (Stakeholder #15). Furthermore, in order to create positive societal change for the women, what "matters are the values and what I see as progress or as good or as beneficial" (Stakeholder #11).

Regarding the latter contextualization, the founders' values of inclusiveness, human well-being, and empowerment were key to the proposed solution to the

severe problem posed for individuals and Lebanese society by gender inequality: entrepreneurship. Based on the founders' extensive work experience in conducting start-up events and business activities at home and abroad, and combined with their scholarly backgrounds in the field of entrepreneurship, they were well aware of the potential for transforming individuals and societies through entrepreneurship. Believing in its positive impact of change efforts, the founders approached potential funders by arguing that "entrepreneurship has shown to enable peacebuilding, particularly in the Middle East (…) as entrepreneurship can contribute to conflict transformation" (WTSUP! 2019 Seed Funding Application). Anchored in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial action, the founders made a group of stakeholders realize that they shared certain values and strongly identified with the WTSUP! mission. For example, being helped "to develop as an entrepreneur, regardless of what you do specifically" (Stakeholder #3) was highly valued by some stakeholders, while others shared the founders' reasoning that entrepreneurship could contribute to changing Lebanon into a more equal and just society for women:

> The beauty about WTSUP! is that it is well catering to a niche of the Lebanese women entrepreneurs who would actually cut across the social structure. So, it was catering for women in tech entrepreneurship but as well for women from rural parts of Lebanon which could be disadvantaged in terms of skills, in terms of knowledge, in terms of access to opportunities. (Stakeholder #6)

Enacting values: Besides contextualizing values, the founders also placed great emphasis on making their values tangible and practicing them, which not only created positive experiences in interactions with stakeholders but also served to build trust. The group of stakeholders drawn to WTSUP! displayed great heterogeneity in terms of backgrounds, and they were captivated by the strong value-based community that the founders sought to build:

> Almost every single individual that I met that was a part of WTSUP! is there, genuinely, because they really care about entrepreneurs and they really want to share the knowledge that they have. That was a beautiful, beautiful thing. (…). A lot like a family feeling, almost. (Stakeholder #5)

The value of inclusiveness was enacted by the leadership style of the founders. Stakeholder #10 stated that "what fascinated me the most is [Founder #1] and the way he leads projects, which is very unique in his sense, as he uses a completely nonaggressive style" that "creates a lot of trust and a lot of safety" (Stakeholder #10). Indeed, the founders believed that practicing those values crafted positive experiences that could help to establish the "WTSUP! team as a unit" (Founder #2) while also allowing each stakeholder to find his or her own role in WTSUP! because "when you can trust quite blindly, then you will find yourself in a role that makes sense in an occupational sense" (Founder #1).

Through processes of contextualizing and enacting, the values of the founders became essential elements in mobilizing stakeholders, especially those "people and organizations who share the same values and understand the bravely experimental, yet extremely high-quality nature of WTSUP!" (WTSUP! 2020 Executive Summary). Indeed, in our interviews many stakeholders reported that they felt magnetically drawn to the founders' values and change efforts:

I heard about this Beirut thing (…). I was instantly sold. Like, that is my thing, I wanted to be involved. It represents my worldview, my values and that is why I jumped instantly in. (Stakeholder #11)

Notably, the values were shared by diverse stakeholders from different backgrounds, such as investors, who stated that they "believe in the equality and rights and, you know, in opportunity" (Stakeholder #6), and volunteers who articulated "entrepreneurship education for women, supporting women, that is something I am really happy to help with" (Stakeholder #12). As stakeholders saw their own values reflected in WTSUP!, they grasped the "big potential for WTSUP! and big potential for slowly shifting the societies by doing this work" (Stakeholder #15), which we find initiated a change in sensemaking.

Change in Sensemaking

Our analysis shows that value-driven sensegiving and, in particular, the activation of values shared by stakeholders influenced how the heterogeneous group of stakeholders made sense of the founders' aspirational vision of greater gender equality in Lebanese society through entrepreneurship education for female-led technology start-ups. In figuring out the meaning of an engagement with WTSUP! for them and by envisioning which role they could play in it, common ground and a shared sense of purpose was created among heterogeneous stakeholders.

Common ground: With the activation of their values, stakeholders began to envision the meaning of the founders' change efforts for them in the context of Lebanese society. Stakeholders imagined themselves to be working "hand-in-hand to make this program a success" (Stakeholder #4) and "to continuously be part of and support everything that is going to help my country as a whole" (Stakeholder #3). In particular, the founders' values and their vision to "create and support social progress and well-being between two regions unfamiliar with one another: Scandinavia and the Middle East" (WTSUP! 2020 Executive Summary) created common ground among heterogeneous stakeholders. Many stakeholders reported fascination with the founders' efforts to provide entrepreneurship education and to foster cross-country collaboration between Finland and Lebanon, as they believed that entrepreneurs in developed and developing countries faced similar challenges when launching and growing their ventures:

What was really fascinating to see is what other people on other sides of the world are facing. Of course, we have bigger problems in Lebanon but, the problems that have to do precisely with start-ups, they are kind of the same: raising the capital, getting the tech talents, hiring the right talents, expanding into new markets. (Stakeholder #1)

Bridging those two geographical spaces was thought to generate the advantage of "bring[ing] the local entrepreneurial ecosystem a little bit closer together" (Stakeholder #14) while enabling stakeholders from both countries to learn from each other. Stakeholders who believed that "there is a lot that we can take and a lot that we can bring from Lebanon" (Stakeholder #2) highly valued this two-way knowledge exchange. The knowledge exchange was also prompted by stakeholders' wish to learn from Finland as a leading Nordic country. For example,

business advisers admired Finland for its "very mature and well-established eco-system for entrepreneurs" (Stakeholder #7), which shaped their interest in engaging in cross-border collaboration. Others expressed their desire to "bridge the gap" (Stakeholder #1) between Lebanon and more developed nations by transferring international expertise and creating exposure for Lebanese start-ups:

> The more we can get international expertise to Lebanon, the better it is for entrepreneurs. One is to get the expertise, to learn from new faces, from new ideas, from new mentors, and two is to give exposure to Lebanese companies to external markets. This is what WTSUP! brought to the table. (Stakeholder #4)

Embracing diversity within the heterogeneous group of stakeholders was a core effort of the founders built into many WTSUP! activities. Hence, it also became key in building common ground between them. The conducted activities provided a lot of space to connect with people and praise their respective talents and skills. Such spaces were, for example, integrated in the WTSUP! event programme which included numerous slots for mentoring, networking, and social gatherings, both during the official programme and as part of inclusive and informal evening activities. In this way, stakeholders were able to develop an understanding for commonalities and shared interests, while creating respect and appreciation for one another. In a number of cases, stakeholders later reported that this established connection went beyond the professional domain and even developed into personal friendships:

> Connecting with her and knowing the struggles that she has been through, how she thinks (…). I felt like this is an opening to either friendship or business opportunity and I think it is like a concrete example of what WTSUP! is trying to accomplish by bridging both ecosystems. (Stakeholder #2)

Shared sense of purpose: Besides the creation of common ground, stakeholders also ascribed meaning to sharing a sense of purpose by joining forces to create positive impact toward greater gender equality in Lebanon. Indeed, stakeholders perceived empowering women as a common global challenge, stating that "it is not only in Lebanon, I have to say – when I say empower women, it should be world-wide" (Stakeholder #9). Numerous stakeholders reported that they believed the initiative's success was mainly driven by the commitment to a meaningful goal by a heterogeneous group of stakeholders who all shared a higher sense of purpose:

> What makes it successful, I believe, is the commitment of a certain group of people who share the same purpose, share the same values and share the same kind of goal of meaningfulness. (Stakeholder #11)

Besides committing to an initiative with a meaningful goal, many stakeholders sought to understand the effect of their engagement in WTSUP! on themselves and which role they could play in it. Rooted in the initiative's strong focus on co-creation activities, stakeholders reported envisioning an engagement in complementary activities that enhanced the contributions made by others. Through a "self-organized" (Founder #2) method of working together, stakeholders were able to revise their understanding of WTSUP! by actively bringing in new ideas. This approach was highly valued by the stakeholders as a form of inclusion and empowerment,

as pointed out by Stakeholder #10: "Whatever idea I have, if I can explain why, we do it – that is very powerful." As such, some stakeholders envisioned themselves adopting "the role of the supporter, or the sponsor, and quite possibly an advisor" (Stakeholder #6), thereby enabling the implementation of programme activities, such as mentoring or networking, by providing funding for the event. Other stakeholders imagined contributing activities in event production and promotion or providing mentorships, local know-how, and access to stakeholders or premises. For example, both experienced and novice Lebanese entrepreneurs envisioned providing "access to stakeholders and partners here in Lebanon" (Stakeholder #5), while foreign stakeholders saw themselves "bring[ing] in companies and organisations from Berlin to join WTSUP! as partners" (Stakeholder #14).

Change in Joint Action

Our findings reveal that the change in sensemaking of stakeholders paved ways for tackling gender inequality in Lebanon collaboratively as joint action was initiated among them. Once heterogeneous stakeholders were united through common ground and shared a sense of purpose, they engaged in collaborative activities which allowed them to successfully create positive impact. At the same time, autonomous collaborative action was leveraged that led to the emergence of new impact initiatives, thereby tackling societal grand challenges in more holistic ways.

Engaging heterogeneous stakeholders in collaborative activities: By joining forces with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, the founders were able to unify "people to work together who normally would not work together in Lebanon" (Founder #2). Indeed, both the founders and stakeholders engaged in boundary-spanning collaborative activities as they implemented a unique event in Beirut in February 2019 and a wildly popular side-event on "Entrepreneurship & Peace" co-hosted with United Nations representatives at SLUSH 2019 in Finland. At those events, stakeholders who had successfully launched and grown Lebanese technology ventures became active by "do[ing] a personal offer" (Stakeholder #8) and sharing entrepreneurial stories with the aim to give hope and inspire others. In providing guidance to entrepreneurs, Nordic and Lebanese experts were able to encourage local talent while developing its "brainpower and giving the opportunity [to entrepreneurs] to be of use to the country" (Stakeholder #13). This focus on the strengths of individuals allowed the event participants and, especially, the female entrepreneurs to recognize their potential and role in transforming Lebanese society, as one female entrepreneur explained:

> You see how people are reacting. They are like "wow." (…) "That is not how we thought," you know, "[what] women in the Arab world do or are capable of." (…) It gave me a lot of push to carry on because you feel like people are counting on your strength to do something. (…) You feel like you have a certain message to tell the rest of the world. No, that is not just what we do, it is not just wars and fighting. (…) We establish our own businesses, and we try to make it and we have the same problems as start-ups as you. (Stakeholder #1)

Stakeholders who demonstrated a "mindset of giving" (Founder #2) also engaged in communal volunteering. Volunteering became a unifying and leveling experience among the stakeholders that "put everybody on the same level and

even the speakers were taking in information rather than just trying to give it to the people – everybody tried to learn from each other" (Stakeholder #13).

As reported in many interviews, this "giving" generated numerous positive emotions, which were reinforced by the high valuation accredited by founders, organizers, and participants to notions of collaboration and openness:

> It was so easy to collaborate and cooperate with the organizers. They maintained a policy of openness and open communication, and they very carefully managed the expectations of all parties involved. Everybody was into making this happen and turning it into success. (Stakeholder #6)

Notably, contributed skills, knowledge, contacts, and designated assets were complementary to one another, and this resulted in activities that tackled the actual aspirations which the founders had aimed to achieve with the WTSUP! mission. Many stakeholders also reported that they wanted to sustain and perpetuate the impact that WTSUP! had initiated and agreed to collaborate beyond the event in 2019. Concretely, "in 2020 and beyond, the goal [was] to increase the reach and grow outside of Lebanon to strengthen the impact of WTSUP!" (WTSUP! 2020 Partner Brief) by expanding into Saudi Arabia and Jordan, while the content of the event was planned to be extended so as to include *Youth and Senior Entrepreneurship*. This expansion was based on stakeholders' complementary expertise, background knowledge and access, as well as on their common aim to strive for and engage in greater equality and economic development in the MENA region by furthering the initiative's impact.

Leveraging autonomous collaborative action leading to new impact initiatives: Planning and implementing the WTSUP! event collaboratively enabled the development of close ties between stakeholders who "would like to maintain our friendships" (Stakeholder #6). The close ties between the stakeholders provided the grounds for the emergence of autonomous action because individual stakeholders could "reach out in the future" (Stakeholder #2) and "ask for help" (Stakeholder #1). Here, many stakeholders reported that they "met some people who then have been supporting me otherwise – I think that added a lot of value for all the WTSUP! people (…), as this exchange is quite beautiful" (Stakeholder #15).

Due to the fact that everyone involved agreed that "there is no single answer to a problem" (Founder #2), a broad landscape for creating solutions outside of Lebanon's traditional normative practices and mindsets was established. Seen as a "breath of fresh air" (Founder #1) in Lebanon, autonomous collaborative action emerged in form of new activities among stakeholders who had previously been involved in WTSUP!. Selected stakeholders autonomously initiated new initiatives that strengthened individuals' paths and concomitantly paved the way for positive societal change by tackling grand challenges in several spin-off projects:

> I think it is a concrete example of what WTSUP! is trying to accomplish. She wants to translate her books into Arabic, and I want an entrance to the ecosystem in Finland. This way we can collaborate. Now that we know each other, I can actually reach out to her and she can reach out to me and that was one of the highlights to me. (Stakeholder #2)
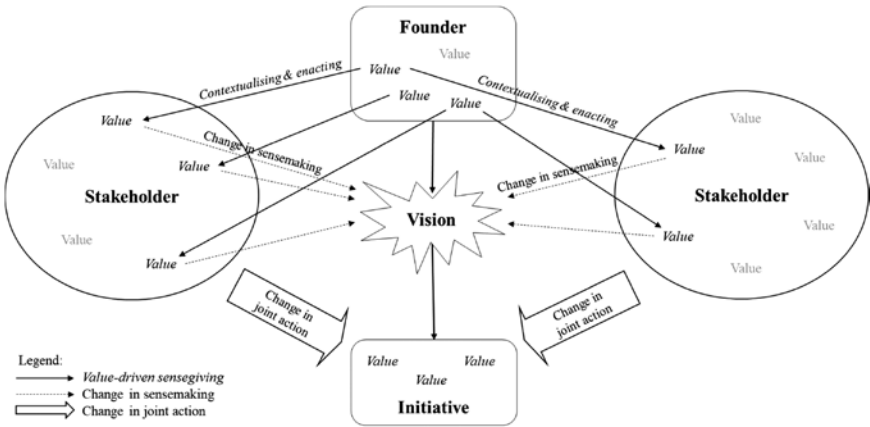
Fig. 3. A Conceptual Model of the Relevance of Values for Initiating Joint Action.

DISCUSSION

We set out to investigate how entrepreneurs can deploy their values to enable joint action of heterogeneous stakeholders to tackle grand challenges. In order to address this research question, we applied a sensegiving perspective and conducted an inductive single-case study of an entrepreneurial initiative that was launched to tackle gender inequality in Lebanon in a collaborative manner. Fig. 3 illustrates the relevance that values played in this process. Our findings contribute to research on sensegiving and new forms of organizations that tackle societal grand challenges collaboratively.

Sensegiving Through the Deployment of Values

We contribute to the sensegiving literature by demonstrating the important role of values in sensegiving processes. We introduce a new process of sensegiving, which we call "value-driven sensegiving" because it is facilitated by a strong influence of values. It describes a process of contextualizing and enacting values for attaining a vision of leaders. By contextualizing and enacting values in the spirit of their vision, leaders can proactively influence which values their stakeholders deem relevant. As a result, stakeholders who share those values can make sense of leaders' aspirational change efforts and envision the role they could play in it for achieving the leaders' vision. Value-driven sensegiving can thus pave ways for boundary-spanning collaborative activities of stakeholders from a great diversity of socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, geographical, political, and professional backgrounds towards tackling grand challenges. Our study thereby adds to current scholarly understandings of sensegiving as being conducted "through persuasive or evocative language" (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007, p. 57). Our study furthermore demonstrates how values can play an important role in changing the sensemaking of others, even when they remain "unarticulated" (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004, p. 364). Hence, value-driven sensegiving can facilitate forms of sensegiving such

as narratives (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2007), metaphors (Hill & Levenhagen, 1995), and gestures (Cornelissen et al., 2012). For instance, values can complement metaphors which can also cause a shared understanding of multiple and heterogenous audiences and mobilize them to tackle grand challenges (Schoeneborn, Vásquez, & Cornelissen, 2022).

At the same time, it remains important to highlight that value-driven sensegiving only brings people together when values are deployed that resonate with, and are shared by, the targets of such sensegiving. Notably, value-driven sensegiving is not a way of convincing people to change their values, but rather a way to activate and thereby change the priority of existing, shared values of stakeholders in order to attain a leader's vision. This mechanism is in line with prior research that has found that the priority of values can change, yet the presence or absence of values does not (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Schwartz, 1994). Value-driven sensegiving may also work for mobilizing stakeholders in the context of visions that do not tackle grand challenges. We can, for instance, imagine that leaders can instrumentalize value-driven sensegiving in order to promote their own, opportunistic interests.

Our findings also differ from the process of values work (Chatterjee et al., 2021; Daskalaki, Fotaki, & Sotiropoulou, 2019; Gehman, Treviño, & Garud, 2013). According to Gehman et al. (2013), the process of values work starts with "local, emergent pockets of concerns" (p. 102) of heterogeneous stakeholders, continues with "knotting these local concerns into larger action networks" (p. 102), and eventually ends in values practices that "actively intervene in situations, contributing to the enactment of normative realities" (p. 104). Hence, the process of values work describes the unveiling of values as driven by stakeholders. In contrast, value-driven sensegiving suggests a process of how leaders can actively influence the relevance of certain values for stakeholders.

Tackling Grand Challenges by Bridging Boundaries

Our study also contributes to research on grand challenges and new forms of organizing by suggesting that value-driven sensegiving can help bridge geographical, ethnic, religious, political, and sectoral boundaries. Grand challenges have an impact far beyond "the boundaries of a single organization or community" (Ferraro, Etzion, & Gehman, 2015, p. 365). Hence, establishing new forms of organizing across boundaries allows the tackling of grand challenges collaboratively by merging the efforts of large numbers of people and organizations (George et al., 2021; Günzel-Jensen & Rask, 2021; Martí, 2018). Our findings show that values can enable leaders to bring together stakeholders who otherwise would neither have met nor collaborated with each other. Although stakeholders may have different values, contextualizing and enacting the interface of those values can create common ground and a shared sense of purpose among stakeholders. However, a requirement for instrumentalizing values to bridge boundaries is that the values of those stakeholders overlap to some extent and thus unveil commonalities between their heterogeneous backgrounds. Otherwise, unveiling values may lead to a manifestation of contradicting positions and thereby accentuate boundaries (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995).

Furthermore, Grodal and O'Mahony (2017) find that different communities which "grafted the grand challenge onto their existing interests" (p. 1820) were mobilized to tackle a grand challenge even when "some were only partially aligned with the grand challenge" (p. 1816). A similar mechanism was initiated through the value-driven sensegiving process of WTSUP!. By contextualizing and enacting shared values, value-driven sensegiving can contribute to expanding the thematic scope of stakeholders' joint action which would have remained more limited if they had acted within their individual peer groups and capacities. For instance, the founders' value of "Inclusiveness" became relevant for tackling gender equality in Lebanon for Stakeholder #6, while the value of "Human Well-being" was relevant for Stakeholder #15. Thus, collaboration between both stakeholders arose from the shared vision of tackling gender equality in Lebanon despite the different values they shared with the founders. Hence, WTSUP! was able to enlarge the scope within which to tackle related grand challenges. By arguing that grand challenges are reflected in the UN SDGs (George, Howard-Grenville, Joshi, & Tihanyi, 2016), scholars have highlighted that the SDGs are interdependent and, therefore, require considerations of complementarities and contradictions (Günzel-Jensen, Siebold, Kroeger, & Korsgaard, 2020). In our study, the necessary interdependence of the SDGs is reflected by the current political and socioeconomic crisis in Lebanon (Reuters, 2020), where the absence of economic growth and decently paid work prevents improvement in the quality of education and gender equality. By presenting a process of value-driven sensegiving, the WTSUP! case demonstrates how heterogeneous stakeholders can collaboratively tackle the interdependent grand challenges of "gender equality" (SDG5), "quality education" (SDG4), and "decent work and economic growth" (SDG8).

Limitations and Future Research

Our study carries limitations which, at the same time, proffer exciting future research opportunities. First, our findings may provide promising research avenues for research on interorganizational collaboration. Previous research has highlighted common values, goals, incentives, and interests as well as relational contracts and complementary resources as antecedents for creating successful interorganizational collaborations that can tackle social problems (Lazzarini, 2020; Murphy, Arenas, & Batista, 2015). Our study investigates collaborations at the individual level. It suggests processes of how latent stakeholder values can be activated and installed as a key element of collaboration toward a common goal, i.e., by contextualizing and enacting shared values. Future research may investigate if and how the mechanisms of value-driven sensegiving can be transferred and scaled from the individual to the organizational level (Dittrich, 2022). Furthermore, scholars may explore how those mechanisms influence narratives and their temporality in fostering the commitment of stakeholders to tackle grand challenges (Stjerne et al., 2022).

Second, the importance of values in our study also indicates that value-driven sensegiving can play an active role in implementing the three robust action strategies for tackling grand challenges outlined by Ferraro et al. (2015) in which values are inherent. Here, "participatory architecture" may reflect values such

as equality, recognition, sharing, and solidarity; "multivocal inscription" values such as compromise, reflectiveness, openness, flexibility, and tolerance; and "distributed experimentation" values such as persistence, patience, carefulness, and exploration. However, such values only tentatively describe the various strategies. Future research can be expected to reveal profound and evidence-based findings on which values characterize the different robust action strategies, and how the various strategies can be differentiated from each other on the basis of their values and specific processes of value-driven sensegiving.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that values can be a powerful instrument for mobilizing heterogeneous stakeholders across boundaries, which is a critical endeavor in order to tackle grand challenges adequately. Due to their transsituational nature, values can be shared by heterogeneous stakeholders and activated for attaining a leader's vision by processes of contextualization and enactment. Our study not only shows that values can be a central facilitator for setting up collaborations between heterogeneous stakeholders. It also demonstrates how this can be done, i.e., through processes of contextualizing and enacting values. Values may therefore serve as an important means for new forms of organizing so as to respond to the multi-faceted and interrelated effects of grand challenges. We remain hopeful that our study provides a fruitful basis for further investigation into the relationships between values, sensegiving, and new forms of organization that tackle societal grand challenges collaboratively.

NOTE

1. WTSUP! stands for **W**omen **T**ech **S**tart-**UP**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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