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The American University in Cairo
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

**THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL BY
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS:
A CASE STUDY OF
THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF) IN EGYPT**

**A Thesis Submitted to the
Public Policy and Administration Department
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Public Administration

By

Inas Taha Abbas Hamad

Fall 2014

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Shahjahan Bhuiyan

The American University in Cairo
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy
Public Policy and Administration Department

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Inas Taha Abbas Hamad

Supervised by: **Dr. Shahjahan Bhuiyan**

ABSTRACT

This study investigates to understand how the United Nations development organizations in Egypt can manage social media as a communication tool to achieve their development objectives. A case study of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Egypt, is introduced. Using the Excellence Theory in Public Relations developed by Grunig (2002), this study examines how social media can contribute to the strategic management of the organization, rather than being a messaging, publicity, and media relations function. Through a content analysis of a number of social media pages of the UN organizations in Egypt, and in-depth interviews with four senior communication officers in four UN organizations operating in Egypt, the research shows that most UN organizations in Egypt still struggle with using social media for development purposes. UNICEF Egypt proved to be an “excellent” model for other development organizations to follow by putting clear strategies, planning their social media platforms in the light of the development objectives of the organization, and maintaining a balanced two-way communication mode with stakeholders and target audience. The strategic management of UNICEF Egypt’s social media platform has contributed to the achievement of the organizational objectives, and enhanced its role as a development organization at both local and international levels.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AUC	The American University in Cairo
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHP	Ministry of Health and Population
NCHR	National Council for Human Rights
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIC	United Nations Information Centers
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study is divided into five chapters. The second chapter provides a literature review about the use of social media in development organizations. The third chapter discusses the research methods and conceptual framework. While the fourth chapter presents the research findings and data analysis. Finally, the fifth chapter provides a conclusion, which discusses the implications of this study, and presents some recommendations for better management of social media platforms.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the concept of communication strategic management, and the importance and purposes of using social media in development organizations. It discusses the evolution of internet and social media in Egypt. This will be followed by presenting the research problem, objectives and questions.

1.1. Strategic management of communications

Development organizations cannot produce change without an ongoing, culturally and socially relevant communication dialogue with different stakeholders (Servaes, 2008). By gaining knowledge and communicating about issues of common concern, individuals and communities become empowered to take part in decision-making process (Waisbord, 2005). Regardless of career field, social media has become an increasingly valuable tool for different types of professionals. It provides ordinary people with extraordinary powers of communication (Aaker, 2010).

Strategic management is to set achievable and measurable objectives, work for the achievement of these objectives, and use effective methods to evaluate its accomplishment (Grunig, 2012). It is a multi-step process to support an organization

attaining its goals (David, 2009). It is a method of planning and implementation to reach organizational aims (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). Therefore, organizations are effective when they reach their goals and achieve their objectives. Communications can contribute to organizational effectiveness when it supports organization's goals (Curtis, 2009). In order to do so, organizations need to plan their communication programs strategically. Excellent communication is research-based. It exists in an effective organization characterized by dynamism. This kind of organizations scans the environment and continuously brings the voices of public into decision-making process. Communicators are effective when they bring information into the organization, rather than only disseminate information out of the organization (Grunig et al., 2002). Communication is an active tool for surveying and researching, a function needed in the strategic management process to measure the impact and set effective future plans (Macduff, 2012).

1.2. Importance of social media for development organizations

In order to achieve development, organizations need to have a community, and in order to build a community, every organization should use different communication tools. Therefore, communication is an essential department in any development organization, especially development ones. Since the internet has become the base of organizations' infrastructures and communication networks, social media has developed into an influential tool for sharing information, attracting donors, and creating change. The impact of the Internet transformed the communication platforms (Panyam, 2014). Internet has given nonprofit organizations wide possibilities/abilities to disseminate their messages and communicate directly with stakeholders (Young and Salamon, 2002). As individuals began to rely on the Internet as their primary information source, organizations worldwide have realized the importance of creating a dynamic web presence that attracts stakeholders' attention and promotes interactivity. Social networking sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, encouraged many

organizations to join them and incorporate these new strategies into their communications policies (Waters et al., 2009). For development organizations, having a static web presence may lead to the loss of potential clients, volunteers, and donors, as well as appearing to be outdated solely based on their online presentation (Gordon, Knock, and Neeley, 2009).

The relationship between development organizations and their audience should be productive, unconditional and flexible, and communication executives need to use efficient techniques and tools to build this kind of relations (Plowman, 2007). Communication tools, such as social media, have value in this perspective because it brings a different set of problems and possible solutions to the attention of the organization's management. It is a platform of communication to connect people and organizations (Nah and Saxton 2013). Therefore, communication professionals' role is to support the relationship between the management and the public by being responsive and visible. They need to identify and communicate with their target audience to understand their problems and interests (Rhee, 2007). Accordingly, communication benefits development organizations by helping them make decisions, develop policies, provide services, and behave in ways that are accepted and sought out by their stakeholder community (Grunig, 2012).

Social media has become a key tool to promote positive social change (Aaker and Smith, 2010). Consequently, it has been positioned on top of most organizations' communication agenda (Clifford, 2005). Development organizations recognized its importance in reaching key audiences, driving issues and campaigns and ultimately advancing organization's mandate (Bob, 2005).

1.3. Objectives of applying social media in development organizations

The two key purposes of development organizations in applying social media in

their communication strategies are fundraising and awareness raising (Nah and Saxton 2013). Social Media has become a major instrument in raising funds because of its transparency, as donors are more involved in open conversations with the organization about their work (Graddy and Morgan, 2006). Organizations are more concerned on gathering funds through external donors and more likely to utilize technologies like Facebook and Twitter. It is a way to raise significant funds in a short period of time with minimal administrative work if organizations succeed to sell their causes to people (Schipul, 2010).

In addition, social media provides a platform that overcomes the limitations of face-to-face communities and introduces a new dynamic interaction between organizations and different stakeholders. Attracting volunteers is another objective of using social media in development organizations. With creating interest and getting people involved in the conversation, volunteers use social media platform to express their interest and enthusiasm to make a change in their communities (Castilho, 2010).

1.4. UN development organizations and social media

The UN to meet development needs, especially in developing countries like Egypt, created the UN development organizations. These organizations work independently, or together, however, each has its own mandate and scope of work. Supporting governments and country capacities to manage development resources, including aid, and to deliver on development results remains one of the most important mandates of the UN system in Egypt (un.org, 2014).

The UN is represented in Egypt through 24 resident organizations that work in collaboration with the Egyptian Government, NGOs, and civil society organizations on different development issues and fields. The UN organizations work towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and their five priority areas are poverty

eradication; quality basic services; democratic governance; security; and finally, environmental sustainability. In Egypt alone, the UN employs more than 1,700 national and international staff, with specializations across all disciplines, including health, agriculture and development. Their approach is to ensure better alignment with national priorities and country systems, and harmonization among development actors to deliver development results (un.org, 2014).

After the Egyptian revolution of January 25, 2011, social media has become a popular tool in Egypt and an effective way to reach different public and raise their awareness on different issues. Data shows that in Egypt, out of 40 million users of internet, 20 millions are Facebook, while 1.2 million are Twitter users (sis.gov.eg, 2014). Social media has attracted community movements and social groups to use it to get people engaged in their activities. Social media have made significant changes to communication strategies. Accordingly, development organizations including some UN organizations, such as UNICEF, have been encouraged to create profiles and incorporate these new tools into their communication strategies.

For The head offices of the UN organizations, the online platform becomes more than a tool; it is an environment of a network. Social media has changed the context of communication by such international organizations (Castilho, 2010). It supports accountability and transparency, as the work of the UN organizations gets more recognized. People are more aware of the role organizations play in their life. Social network increases partnership, dialogues, and interactivity with different actors (Panyam, 2014). United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are good examples of UN organizations who are working on fundraising through social media (Pearce, 2014). Social Media can indeed generate a new income stream; it becomes a powerful tool to gain more supports and new donors and maintain the relationship with them (Panyam, 2014). As a form of two-way communication, social media demands two partners more or less

equally interested in communicating. Therefore, UN organizations at country level should follow the same track; however, they need to apply effective and reliable dialogue in order to attract the right attention. Messages should be strategically managed and delivered to the right persons and parties to achieve its planned objectives (Castilho 2010).

Thus, by taking UN organizations in Egypt as a study sample, this study analyzes how development organizations in Egypt use social media to achieve their development objectives. Investigating UNICEF in Egypt as a case study, this paper provides a content analysis of social media platforms to examine how development organizations can manage this new communication tool as a way to engage with its public and be more responsive. It also explores how development organizations can maximize the use of social media as a strategic management tool.

1.5. Research problem

Finding an interactive tool to relate with the public has become a vital issue for any organization, especially those who depend on external support of public and donors (Panyam, 2014). Although most of development organizations have a communication unit or department, in most of the cases, this unit plays a very limited role in organizational governance and management. Their role centered mainly on messaging, publicity, media relations, and marketing support, rather than focusing on organizational management. Such new communication tools are not fully utilized to help organizations create and maintain effective relationships with stakeholders and donors. Organizations still need to give more focus and attention to make maximum use of this new platform.

Furthermore, social media is relatively new tool to UN organizations in Egypt; they still struggle with the management of this tool. Some organizations lack a systematic

management approach to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate social media. A preliminary analysis of social media pages of UN organizations in Egypt shows that most of the pages are merely used as a tool to show the achievements of the organizations and decorate their image, rather than connecting with target publics, or responding to their questions and queries and build their trust.

At academic level, while social media has emerged as a new important platform of communication that gradually connects with people and organizations, there is lack of research regarding the adoption of this platform in development organization (Nah and Saxton 2013). The field of social media and communication is progressively changing, and therefore, the number of communication tools has changed since the data of the examined studies and researches. Considering the tremendous impact of social media on public relations, how organizations use Facebook is extremely important. Although the adoption of social media in development organizations has gained popularity and become an interesting channel for organizations to get support from their public, there is a lack of research on this issue. On the other hand, most previous research has focused mainly on the political effect of social media, especially after the advent of the 2011 Arab Spring.

Although there are limited studies that tackled the use of social media in the context of development organizations, most of them are related to the context of United States and Europe rather than the Middle East. There is very limited research on social media in developing countries (Shah and Lim, 2011). Therefore, this study fills this literature gap by investigating the use of social media in development organizations in Egypt. It examines the adoption of this new media tool and the way organizations manage it for the benefit of the organization. In addition, it applies the Excellence Theory of Public Relations to development organizations in Egypt, which has been previously applied in The United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

1.6. Research objectives and questions

The main objective of this research is to discuss and investigate the importance of integrating social media as an interactive communication tool in the communication strategies of development organizations in Egypt to achieve organizational objectives. The study focuses on the UN organizations in Egypt as a study sample. It takes UNICEF Egypt as a case study to understand plans and techniques of social media management and to provide other organizations with a model to use as a guide to improve and maximize their social media existence and performance. In addition, the study aims to investigate the role that social media can play to build a community, attract volunteers, raise funds, and build the organization's image. It examines social media as a platform that donors, partners, as well as general public use to get information about different programs and activities, a mirror reflects the organization's mandate and implementation of projects.

In order to fulfill the above-mentioned objectives, the study investigates the following research question:

How the UN organizations in Egypt manage social media as a communication tool to achieve their development objectives, with a case study from UNICEF Egypt?

In addition, the research examines the following sub questions:

1. How can UN development organizations in Egypt manage social media strategically?
2. To what extent can social media contribute to the achievement of organizations' objectives?
3. How UNICEF Egypt has managed its social media platform successfully? What are the steps that other UN organizations in Egypt can take to achieve social media success?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the literature developed on communications and management, and to present the different concepts on the importance of communications, especially social media, as a tool to achieve organizational goals. In addition, it tackles the literature advanced on the role of social media in promoting public engagement. This will be followed by presenting the conceptual framework of this study, which is based on the Excellence Theory.

2.2. Communication and management

Practitioners have recognized the need for a diversity of communication strategies to improve the quality of life in communities. Different techniques in different contexts might be necessary to deal with specific problems and priorities (Waisbord, 2005). As well, it is necessary that the campaign select an appropriate strategy to tackle problems and conflicts in order to achieve improvement. Current researches proved the importance of different communication platforms that organizations can use to exert their power over publics. However, social media is still seen as a new approach in social science (Castilho, 2010). Some recent researches presented a model of communication that is linked to strategic management, in addition to its messaging role (Panyam, 2014).

Researches on communication as a management tool had started in the late 1960s, where the researchers evaluated communication programs of organizations. In 1984, the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation

conducted a study to ascertain if communication adds value to any organization. The outcome was the “Excellence Theory” that resulted from a 15-year study of best practices in communication management in more than 327 organizations in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. According to this theory, organizations should consider the goals of stakeholders as well as of management. The interviews conducted with communication officers of the sample organizations revealed that good relationships with the public and stakeholders were of great value as they reduce the costs of litigation, regulation, legislation. In addition, it emphasized the importance of communication officers’ involvement in strategic management. In his book, Grunig (2002) attempted to answer some key questions: how, why and to what extent communications affect the achievement of organizational objectives, to what extent it can make an organization more effective, and how much it contributes to the organization’s economic value. Grunig’s strategic management model did not exclude traditional public relations activities, such as dissemination of information. Rather, he highlighted the importance of different communication tools that study the target audience and fulfill their needs. As a result, organizations’ messages can reflect the interests of both the audience and the organization.

Since then, researchers and scholars started to focus on the important role of communication for any organization, and the way it contributes to the achievement of its goals. They continued to work on cultivating the relationship between the organizations and their communities and target groups. The challenge at that time was how to institutionalize strategic communication as an ongoing practice (Grunig, 2006). Social media could be the answer to this challenge; an organized platform that enables the organization to communicate and build relationships with public and stakeholders, which will be discussed later.

2.3. Use of social media in development organizations

An analysis of the literature reveals that scholars have focused mainly on studying the impact of using social media on social activism. They studied how social media helped mobilizing crowds for political change. Limited studies indicated how social media is used as a communication tool to increase the effectiveness of development organizations and support their causes (Davis et al., 2014).

Tredinnick (2006), for example, defined social media platforms as the outcome of user-participation and user-generated inputs that equips users with numerous tools to play an active role and get involved with organizations. Waters (2009) investigated how social media supports nonprofit organizations to improve their management functions, interact with donors, attract volunteers, and raise public awareness about their projects and programs. Through active interaction with stakeholders on different social media platforms, organizations develop relationships with their strategic public. In 2013, Waters developed another edition where he conducted a qualitative study on 39 nonprofit leaders. This study showed that nonprofit organizations are not fast enough in adapting the opportunities offered by the new social media platforms. They lag behind and wait to see how other nonprofits integrate these new communication tools into plans and budgets.

Wright and Hinson (2009) proved the positive impact of social media on the communications landscape by empowering the public with dynamic new media tools to communicate effectively with organizations, and vice versa (Wright and Hinson, 2009). Through a content analysis of 275 non-profit organization profiles on Facebook, Richard and others (2009) studied how such new social networking sites are being used by the organizations to advance their organization's mission and programs. Having a profile is not sufficient to increase awareness or attract users' participation. Instead, careful planning and research will greatly benefit development organizations as they

attempt to develop social networking relationships with their stakeholders. However, the research sample consisted primarily of organizations in the United States, while nonprofit organizations in other countries may use social media sites differently. In addition, this study focused only on Facebook. It did not examine other popular social networking sites, such as Twitter.

In 2010, Sen and others used qualitative research methods to analyze how members of the Seattle chapter of a social activist group, Asha for Education, use social media to manage their activities. By reducing participation costs, promoting collective identity, and fostering the feeling of community, social media helped Asha members coordinate their organizational activities, fundraise, and strengthen community morale. In the same vein, Wankel (2010) investigated the importance of social media to academics. He presented some case studies on how social media can enable the structuring of course activities, involving students, alumni, employers, businessmen, and others in information sharing and social activities.

Being direct, efficient and relatively cheap, social media has become an important alternative platform that is more relevant to development sector with limited resources (Waters, 2007). Social networking sites, such as Facebook, provide organizations with an environment that promotes engagement and dialogue in ways that their websites cannot achieve (Ingenhoff and Koelling, 2009).

Beth Kanter, a social media and nonprofit blogger and author emphasized how social media has changed the development world, and provided many valuable ways to engage audiences and promote an organization's cause. Kanter (2010) explained how connections increase impact in effective ways that drive change. It showed how social media offers nonprofit organizations new and creative techniques to improve their mission and better serve their communities. In another study, Kanter (2012) explained that using social media as a tool for advocacy offers strategies required for nonprofits

that need reliable and measurable data from their social media efforts. Using these tools will not only improve a nonprofit's decision-making process but also will produce results-driven metrics for staff and stakeholders.

A Nonprofit World article listed social media as one of the top ten fundraising tools to build a community around a cause. In the same context, a study published in the Journal of New Communications Research identified the most desirable age group to target if an organization wanted to promote fundraising (Livingston, 2009). With the wide prevalence of tablets, smart-phones, and notebooks, non-profit organizations can reach potential audiences at any places. Online communities are also valuable when creating a base of support around a cause or organization, as they foster the generation of ideas and can add value to a campaign. Social media has the potential to help an organization achieve its goals with fine-tuning and care (Brandtzaeg, 2009).

Saxton and Wang (2013) investigated how social networking applications such as Facebook and Twitter offer new ways for nonprofits to engage the community in fundraising efforts. This paper is one of the early studies conducted on the role of social media as a tool for fund raising. It also explained that online donors contribute to certain types of causes more than others, especially those related to health. The study conducted by Barnes and Mattson in 2009 revealed that social media has become an incredibly important part of the communication strategy for US charities. Barnes and Mattson (2009) compared organizational adoption of social media in 2007 and 2008 by the 200 largest charities in the United States as compiled annually by Forbes Magazine. This research showed that charitable organizations are still outpacing the business world and academia in their use of social media. These top organizations have found a new and exciting way to gain both interest and money of potential donors.

In his paper, McCorkindale (2010) demonstrated the importance of social media in relationship maintenance, information dissemination, and engagement. This study

analyzed Facebook pages available for public view to determine how data, discussions, photos, and videos are used on the site. However, there are several limitations to this study due to the changing nature of Facebook platform. Future research should determine how organizations manage their Facebook site, as well as investigate other social networking sites.

Leavey (2013) highlighted the importance of social media for development organizations. Social media data can improve the quality and timeliness of the evidence base that informs public policy. The unlimited conversations and interactions on the web provide an opportunity to governments to develop better policy, and measure its impact. The recommendations part of the report explained how to improve the use of social media by development organizations. However, it is important to point out that social media is an effective communication tool that should be used together with other tools, not to replace them.

2.4. Public engagement in social media

Some researchers studied how the public are engaged in social media. Several communication researchers have suggested the benefits of building relationships on social networking sites. Online communication allows individuals to discover shared interests for a cause (Kent et al, 2003). Steinfield, Ellison, and Lampe (2008) highlighted the role of Facebook to maintain a large network of friends, and to enhance users' social life, especially those with low self-esteem. Hazelton (2009) found that 57% of the study sample use Facebook to have fun, while 30% use the site to build professional relationships. A Web survey of 1,715 college students was conducted by Park, Kee, and Valenzuela in 2009 showed that students join Facebook groups to obtain information, to socialize with others, to seek self-status, and to find entertainment. The survey analysis of Facebook Groups use suggests that Facebook as an online tool plays a significant role in facilitating youth engagement in civic and political activities.

Facebook groups could provide platforms for young adults who are not interested in community services or politics; in general, they can socialize with others based on common interests.

Kent and Taylor started this approach in 1998 to measure interaction on websites. They focused on five dimensions that promote two-way communication. The five dimensions are ease of navigation, provision of useful information, conservation of visitors, creation of a dialogic loop, and generation of return visitors. Research across the nonprofit, for-profit, and government sectors found modest inclusion of these principles into the design of organizational websites.

Recent studies have produced similar findings when adapting the measures to social media outlets. Seltzer and Mitrook (2007) found that blogs provide better opportunities than traditional websites in terms of public engagement and interaction. Bortree and Seltzer (2009) applied these principles on Facebook, and they found that Facebook enhances dialogue and two-way communication; however, it needs some efforts from the organizations to engage audiences.

Waters et al. (2009) proposed three key dimensions of organizational behavior in social media networks, namely: disclosure, information dissemination, and interactivity. Greenberg and MacAulay (2009) applied these three dimensions on Twitter to assess how well environmental organizations were using Twitter to engage with their stakeholders. However, both researches focused on information organizational disclosure and information sharing, and they neglected relationship development through engagement. Moreover, these studies focused exclusively on North American organizations. They failed to explore cultural dimensions that may affect organizations' engagement on the Internet, specifically in social media sites that thrive on interactivity.

The results of the report “Keeping up with the digital age: How the American Red Cross uses social media to build relationships” showed that practicing public relations through social media is effective and necessary in the emerging digital age, as shown through the Red Cross’ development of a two-way dialogue with younger constituents, the media, and the community (Briones et al., 2011). This two-way dialogue presented in this report accomplished primarily through Twitter and Facebook, with barriers such as lack of staff and time to improve National Headquarters and local chapter relations.

Previous studies have shown that development organizations have not been able to use websites as strategic, interactive stakeholder engagement tools. Perhaps this was due to not having the know-how or the staff to create more interactive sites with feedback options and discussion boards. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) investigated the Twitter utilization practices of the 100 largest nonprofit organizations in the United States. The analysis revealed that there are three key functions of microblogging updates “information”, “community,” and “action.” Nonprofit organizations are better at using Twitter strategically to engage their stakeholders than they have been with traditional websites. The adoption of social media appears to have engendered new paradigms of public engagement.

However, engagement needs organizations to do more than just broadcasting news (Filou, 2013). DiStaso and Bortree (2014) explained how organizations are compelled to engage with key audiences through these outlets. Social media engagement requires organizations to participate actively with public groups, and this highly interactive exchange raises a new set of ethical concerns for communicators.

2.5. Social media benefits to organizations

Barker, Bormann, and Neher (2013) provided a cumulative learning experience that showed how to construct social media strategies to achieve desired marketing goals.

These marketing goals shape the development of tailored social media strategies. Special attention was given to the most effective techniques for identifying targeted marketing on the social web, with emphasis on the creation of personas that represent the critical online market segments for a company.

Few studies examined the interactivity and responsiveness of organizations to the public. Kent (2003) found that membership organizations encourage two-way communication. They are more likely to identify their membership bases, provide information on joining the organization, and solicit donations. He recommended that social media outlets should promote openness and social networking by offering more space to the public and be responsive to their needs.

Hon, Jo, and Kim (2003) highlighted the importance of interactivity. Social media offers a rich user experience with multiple functions. However, the most vital part is the message an organization wants to convey. Facebook's wall is a perfect platform for organizations to promote interactivity and responsiveness with their fans. It is a way to build a devoted community, which has significant positive effect on relationship building and reputation, especially when that interactivity is high. Interactivity is essential if organizations wanted to develop relationships with their stakeholders. Providing valid contact details and appropriate way of donations online can increase interactivity. However, organizations should provide a calendar of events or listing volunteer opportunities to involve stakeholders offline as well.

A study conducted by DiSatso in 2012 used multiple methods to explore whether public relations professionals believe they are using social media to communicate transparently, to investigate how social media could be used to improve transparency along with its benefits and challenges, and to identify how transparency is used in social media campaigns. The study revealed that social media was used to enhance transparency through providing information that is useful for others to make informed

decisions. It was used to be accountable for actions and to communicate about how decisions affect others. However, most of campaigns communicated what organizations were doing but few explain why they were doing it.

Kelleher (2006) encouraged practitioners to use the Internet and social networking sites to advocate for their organizations and causes; however, practitioners should be transparent in their online communication activities. For full disclosure, organizations must make sure to provide a detailed description of the organization and its history, use hyperlinks to connect to the organization's website, provide logos and visual cues to establish the connection, and list individuals who are responsible for maintaining social networking site profile (Berman et al., 2007).

Kenney (2012) concluded that nonprofits must market a cause or mission, which requires clear and effective communication of the organization's goals and needs. Nonprofits also tend to have smaller marketing budgets than profit-driven businesses, and thus fewer resources devoted to facilitate online connections with target audiences. These tools have proven effective, and have the added benefit of being largely free. There exists a need for a comprehensive online platform designed specifically for nonprofit organizations. This platform could provide a method for nonprofits to consolidate their information, integrate existing social media accounts, facilitate the sharing of information, and streamline their messages to create more concise and effective communications. Simpler, more intuitive messaging has the potential to mutually benefit and better support the relationship that exists between nonprofits and their target audiences.

An analysis of nonprofit Facebook profiles by Waters et al. (2009) found that many organizations posted a description of the organization, but many did not provide the mission statement, did not distribute organizational news, and did not provide methods for how supporters can be involved in the organization.

Nour Al-Deen (2013) investigated how integration of social media in communication strategies can build and maintain effective relationships with stakeholders to support awareness and fund-raising plans. Nour Al-Deen conducted an in-depth examination of existing organizational social media policies and best practices to set a model legal framework organizations can use when using social media.

Taylor et al. (2001) stressed that Websites should be useful for organization's stakeholders. The usefulness of social networking site profiles often focuses on the information that is being distributed (Crespo, 2007). The most common forms of message dissemination include posting links to external news items about the organization or its causes, posting photographs, video, or audio files from the organization and its supporters, and using the message board or discussion wall to post announcements and answer questions. Including press releases and campaign summaries on their social networking, sites should also be encouraged to maximize the impact of their presence on social networking sites.

Social media use by development organizations is widespread and legitimate, but to be effective in reaching concrete goals, it should support but not replace physical operations. While some organizations appear to be embracing social media, others still have a great deal of work to do. Previous research indicated some organizations have the tools for promoting their organization, but need to work on the strategy behind it (Solis, 2008).

2.6. Conclusion

As indicated, several scholars examined social media in development organizations in different countries; however, studies in Egypt are quite limited. Furthermore, the field of social media and communication is progressively changing, and accordingly,

the number of communication tools has changed since the data for the examined studies and researches. Therefore, more research needs to be conducted in regard to social media in Egypt, especially in development organizations. This study attempts to fill this literature gap by investigating how development organizations in Egypt could maximize the use of social media to achieve their development goals.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study was conducted between September and December 2014. This chapter explains how primary and secondary data were collected. It presents the qualitative research methods used to answer the research questions presented in chapter 1. In addition, it attempts to develop a conceptual framework for the purpose of this study.

3.1. Content analysis

According to Neuendorf (2002), a content analysis is an observational research technique to analyze messages and different variables of recorded communication content. In order to understand the presence, usage, and effectiveness of social media in the UN development organizations in Egypt, this study analyzes the content of Facebook pages of the nine organizations mentioned in Figure 1. This content analysis helps to understand the objectives and mechanism those organizations use to manage their social media accounts. It looks at the different variables on the pages, such as likes and comments. It also considers the use of discussion boards, and the level of engagement. It evaluates the quality of the language used, and if it is user-friendly, as well as the type of posts such as links, photos, graphs, statistics, figures, status, videos, and questions. It examines the kind of messages delivered on the page, and if it is deployed to present the achievements of the organization, rather than being a reflection of community concerns and interests. The results of this content analysis help to understand if organizations have a clear strategy and management approach to govern their social media accounts.

Since UNICEF is selected as a case study for this research, a very detailed content analysis of the UNICEF Egypt Facebook page was conducted to evaluate how they

manage their social media platform to achieve their development objectives. Through this analysis, some examples were identified as a sample of campaigns that have been strategically planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated.

3.2. Contextualizing the case Study

According to Yin (2003), a case study is an ideal methodology when the research attempts to answer a “how” question. The case of UNICEF Egypt investigates different aspects of social media phenomenon and analyzes the recent UNICEF campaigns run over the past two years. It investigates how UNICEF launched their social media platform. It examined the way they use social media to attract their target audience to their cause and raise their awareness, increase the number of volunteers, attract donations and funds, and build its credibility and transparency. The analysis of this case study identifies the strengths as well as the challenges involved. UNICEF Egypt has been chosen for the case study as a result of a preliminary analysis of Facebook pages of all UN organizations in Egypt. As shown in Figure 1, UNICEF comes on top of all UN organizations in Egypt with almost 500,000 users on Facebook. Therefore, UNICEF has been selected to investigate how and why this organization achieves this position among all UN organization in Egypt on social media, and to examine the management approach they use to promote this platform.

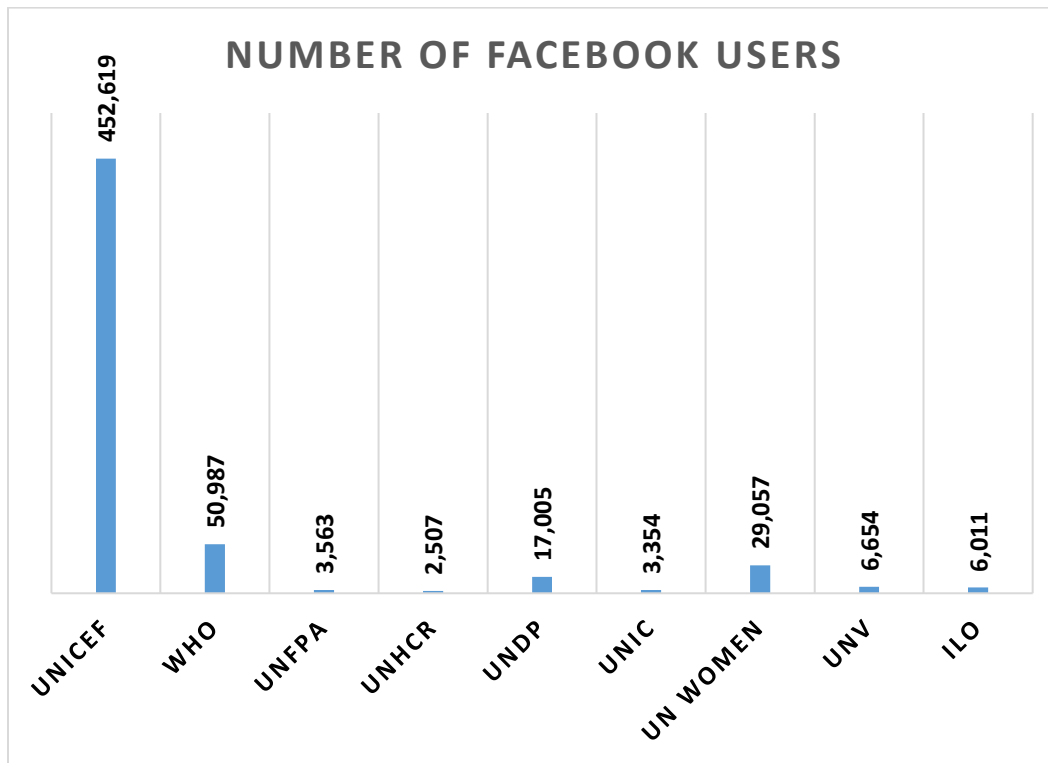


Figure 1: Users on Facebook

Facebook as of 19 December 2014

Source: Facebook.org

3.3. In-depth interviews

Emails were sent to the UN organizations presented in figure 1, since they already have profiles on social media. Four organizations responded to the requests for interview, and showed interest in discussing the social media issue, namely the UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the World Health Organization (WHO). The interviews were conducted with UNICEF Head of Communications Team, UNFPA Communication Officer, UNDP Communication Analyst, and WHO Communication Officer. The objectives of these in-depth interviews were to answer the research questions. In addition, it explored the recommendations of the interviewees as

professional communication experts to maximize the use of social media for the benefit of their organizations. The interview questions (Appendix A) were emailed in advance to the interviewees to be prepared and ready with supporting examples. The interviews were conducted in both Arabic and English and each interview lasted for at least one hour.

3.4. Participant observations

Observations generate rich qualitative descriptions. It is a direct method to collect data instead of asking people to report it. Most importantly, observations can successfully complement other research methods by supporting the quality of data collected (Baker, 2006). I availed the opportunity to work with several UN organizations in Egypt in developing and implementing several advocacy campaigns. The purpose of these campaigns was to raise public awareness on several issues, such as tobacco control, human rights, HIV/AIDS, hygiene promotion, and viral hepatitis. Social media, together with other traditional media tools, were used in these campaigns to reach out to different categories of the identified target audience. In this study, I used my direct fieldwork observations to identify the strengths as well as the weaknesses of these campaigns with regard to social media, to examine different communication management approaches used, and finally to highlight the factors that contributed to social media platform during the campaigns. Observations complement the other qualitative methods used, namely the in-depth interviews and the content analysis, which adds more value to the study.

3.5. Conceptual framework

To understand and investigate the use of social media in development organizations in Egypt, the research uses the Theory of Excellence advanced by Grunig. This theory investigated how, why and to what extent communication affects the achievement of

organizational objectives. It assessed the importance of communication to achieve organization effectiveness. Grunig identified fourteen characteristics of effective and successful communication at program, departmental and organizational levels. Excellent communication programs follow a strategic management approach implemented by an independent communication department that has separate function from marketing. Excellent communication programs are planned in the light of organizations objectives and goals. It should maintain a direct reporting relationship with senior management of the organization, and a balanced two-way communication mode with stakeholders and target audience.

Excellent communication staff should have academic training and technical skills to run communication programs effectively. Excellent communication departments should give equal opportunity to both men and women to join and contribute to the work. The head of the communication team has a decision-making power on communication issues. Excellent communication programs should be cost-effective and do not add a financial burden to the organization.

This theory integrates both communication and strategic management in one concept. This process is linked to the vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the organization, which requires allocation of financial, and human resources. It should direct all the organization towards achieving common goals and certain strategic objectives. Strategic objectives are measurable, specific, appropriate, realistic, and timely (Dess, 2005). The Theory of Excellence indicates how communication tools, if planned and managed strategically, can contribute successfully to the achievements of the organizations effectiveness. It shows how excellent communication departments can develop programs and use tools to communicate actively with the public and activists.

According to this theory, communication programs should begin with formative research, then develop achievable and measurable objectives, implement the program,

and end with evaluation of whether the objectives have been met. Excellent Communication departments design communication programs to manage conflict or potential conflict with the public, which helps organizations build stable, open, and trusting relationships with their target audience. Excellent relationships between organizations and their public are two-way and symmetrical, as it balances the interests of the organization with the interests of the public. This theory was tested on more than 327 organizations in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

To help explain development organizations adoption and management of social media within its communication strategies, this study attempts to apply the Excellence Theory on social media as one of the communication platforms. It proposes a conceptual framework that categorizes the criteria included in this theory under three key dimensions that are critical to understanding an organization's management of social media (Figure 2):



STRATEGIC DIMENSION

- Is Social media managed strategically?
- Is social media linked to the mandate and strategic objectives of the organization?
- Does social media contribute to the achievement of organization's objectives?
- Does communication department apply relationship cultivation strategies: asuch as access to data, networking, listening, and responsiveness?
- Do other technical departments and senior management support the communication department?



MANAGEMENT DIMENSION

- How organizations plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate social media platform?
- Is there a staff assigned to this job?
- Is there budget allocated for social media?
- Who is responsible for creating and finalizing social media activities?
- Have the communication team received professional training?
- Is the senior communication officer has a direct relation and reporting to senior management?



COIMMUNICATION DIMENSION

- What are the functions of using social media in the organization?
- How the organization use social media as an effective tool for advocacy?
- Is the platform active and responsive to publics and stakeholders?
- How social media provides a convenient platform to support fundraising, and attract volunteers?
- How does social media work as two-way communication model?

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The data collected through the in-depth interviews, the content analysis, as well as the field observations were processed and analyzed to answer the research questions and give insights on the research.

4.1. The use of social media by UN organizations in Egypt

According to the interviews held with the communication officers of the selected UN organizations in Egypt, and through the content analysis of their Facebook pages, it is found that only few organizations have official social media accounts at country level. Most of them depend only on the global page of the organization, if available. Examples of such organizations are: the World Food Program (WFP), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Lack of national pages for these organizations affects their presence and relationship with their local community. Even some of the UN organizations who have pages on social media platforms, their pages are used mainly to post information, with very limited two-way interaction with the public. Example of these organizations is WHO. Despite the public health topics they could promote through social media, WHO's page on Facebook is deployed to present the achievements of the organization, with very limited interaction with the users. They occasionally add new content or respond to public questions and queries. Instead, they may use this wealthy platform to gain more supports and new donors and maintain the

relationship with them (Panyam, 2014). The unlimited conversations and interactions on the web provide an opportunity to organizations to develop better policy, and measure its impact (Leavey, 2013). It is a way to reflect transparency (Kelleher, 2006). Online donors contribute to certain types of causes more than others do, especially those related to health (Saxton and Wang, 2013). Communication tools, such as social media, have value in this perspective because it brings a different set of problems and possible solutions to the attention of the organization's management. Accordingly, communication benefits development organizations by helping them make decisions, develop policies, provide services, and behave in ways that are accepted and sought out by their stakeholder community (Grunig, 2012).

On the other hand, the management of social media in development organizations is still an argumentative issue. Social media is still relatively new topic for development organizations; it needs more focus and attention to make maximum use of it. Some organizations do not put a clear strategy to manage social media and use it strategically for the causes of the organization. Limited funds are allocated to support this important tool, and to assign specialized staff for this purpose. Organizations should have a specialist to handle social media channels in order to avoid misinterpretation of the audiences and to make sure that the communication department underlines same issue as the whole agency. This would lead to a more efficient advocacy. Social media platform is hardly used to attract volunteers or to support organizations' missions, activities and objectives. To conclude, most organizations still need to know better how to function themselves in social media.

4.2. The importance of social media to the UN in Egypt

UNDP is one of the UN organizations that are relatively active on social media. According to the UNDP Communication Analyst, "social media is a two-way communication. We can get insights of the community; we receive questions, and we get ideas. It is a new approach all development organizations started to use. Social

media is open for everyone, not only youth, and organizations have to be connected to everyone. If we post something on Facebook, we are open and transparent to whatever we will receive from the audience. If we receive questions, comments, suggestions, we have to respond to it.”

She also confirmed that social media contributes to the achievement of the organizations objectives. Without social media, UNDP loses an important part of their target audience; youth, it is difficult to reach them without social media. All stakeholders, including donors are checking social media platforms to follow up on development activities, concepts, and projects, and to see how organizations are working on their Programs and if they are making any difference. For UN organizations, social media is getting more and more importance. The adoption of social media in the UN can be a powerful instrument to advocate messages and issues of concern from which a rapid public reaction is expected.

In Egypt, most of the UN organizations are not well-known to the public, and people are not aware of their vision and mission, and if they can benefit from their services. According to the Head of UNICEF Communication Team, before launching UNICEF social media accounts, for many people, UNICEF was merely an international organization, they were not aware of their work and programs. Social media bridges this gap as it allows for a two-way communication where people interact and participate in a conversation with the organization.

4.3. Social media strategies of UN organizations in Egypt

As mentioned by the interviewees, several UN organizations have their own social media accounts (Facebook is the most common platform). They usually post a link to these accounts on their website. However, the strategy to use this platform is not quite clear. The communication unit, in most of the cases, depends mainly on the

communication officer who gives priority to traditional media outlets, such as newspapers and press releases. Moreover, there is little coordination within the organization itself on how to promote and manage this new tool.

Communication units mostly produce publicity, public relations, and/or multi-media materials without much involvement at the information needs assessment, communication strategy and planning, message positioning, treatment, and design, and/or multi-media mix selection processes. Most importantly, there is lack of an integrated approach in designing and planning communication strategies in support of the broader development objectives or goals.

As the UN organizations work in partnership with the Egyptian Government, sometimes organizations refer to this partnership in their posts on social media, they even tag the concerned governmental institute who in turn shares this post on their page. The UNDP Communication Analyst mentioned in the interview that the governmental partners are always supportive to what they deliver through social media; a platform that shows the results they have achieved through their partnership. However, it is important to mention that the organization does not talk on behalf of the government; its page on social media is an independent platform of the organization to promote its principles and values that always go in line with the national priorities of the country.

However, beside UNICEF, there are some promising social media initiatives among the UN organizations in Egypt. Despite their relatively low number of users, UNDP, UN Women, UN Volunteers, and the United Nations Populations Fund work on developing their social media platform. Based on the content analysis and the interviews, their Facebook pages are relatively responsive to user's questions and comments. Their posts highlight their activities and programs, as well as the international days, such as the World Health Day, and the International Volunteer Day. They also post facts and statistics that support their program areas. Raising awareness is

another objective of their platform. In addition, they use global hashtags for their key topics such as poverty, HIV, and crisis.

A good example of a social media initiative is a campaign launched by UNDP in October 2014 to support Wadi Degla protected area. Through a social media event, 300 volunteers joined the campaign and went to spend a day at Wadi Degla to raise awareness about it. The campaign used Omar Samra as a public figure to attract attention of social media users (Photo 1).



Photo 1: Wadi Degla campaign by UNDP
Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

The UNDP Communication Analyst stated that the campaign succeeded to attract the attention of other NGOs and community groups to go and work in this protected area. To sustain their support, volunteers who participated in the campaign launched a parallel Facebook group for the purpose of protecting Wadi Degla. To evaluate the campaign, UNDP developed an analysis to assess engagement, likes, and comments as indicators. A two-page info-graphic sheet was developed for this purpose (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Info-graphic on Wadi Degla campaign by UNDP

Source: UNDP Communication Unit

4.4. Case study: UNICEF Egypt

UNICEF is an organization that is mandated by the UN General Assembly “to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential” (unicef.org, 2014). Through the implementation of development programs and activities in more than 190 countries, UNICEF is committed to protect the rights of children with special focus on disadvantaged children (unicef.org, 2014). In Egypt, UNICEF started in 1952 under its Program of Cooperation with the Egyptian Government to put children and women's rights at the center of a broad range of development decisions.

An in-depth interview was conducted with UNICEF Head of Communication Team, followed by emails and sharing of information and info graphics about their social media platform. Considering the number of social media users in Egypt, UNICEF has launched their social media outlets two years ago with a full support from the senior management, “it was fully supported by senior management and that was a big plus. In development area, you sometimes receive questions from the management like why do we go that far? In our case the senior management were very supportive because they understand and believe in communications.” According to the Excellence Theory, the support of senior management is essential to adapt a new media platform and run it successfully. Reflecting this, UNICEF senior management supports various efforts. They understand and believe in the importance of utilizing this new popular media tool to the organization, as explained by the Head of Communication Team.

4.4.1. Situational analysis

a. Identifying target audience

UNICEF social media platform has been launched with a situational analysis to identify the target audience and set the strategies and plans. In order to design this platform, it was important to identify stakeholders, problems, and potential issues most likely to be affected and affect the organization. It was also necessary to assess the needs of the communication team to accommodate this new tool. The political, economic, cultural, religious, and educational variables of the area of concern need to be taken into consideration as well. Therefore, the launch of UNICEF social media platforms was based on an extensive research and assessments. Many focus group discussions were conducted with different age groups, and different categories of the public, “We based our strategy on focus groups. We met with different people from different backgrounds, we discussed with them what they like, what is attractive for them, to decide what we can provide differently,” explained the Head of the communication team. According to the focus groups, it was decided to target young

people and youth between 16 and 35, since they are the category that most often use social media (Figure 4). As Grunig indicated in the Theory of Excellence, if an organization communicates effectively with the public before decisions are made or during the implementation of decisions, issues, and crises may never happen and good relationships and reputation should be secured.

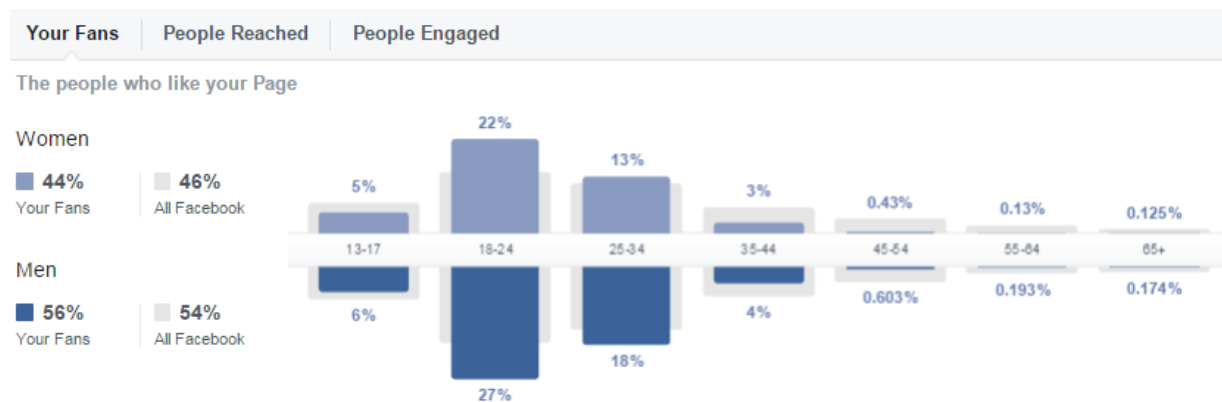


Figure 4: UNICEF on Facebook

Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

To approach young people, UNICEF decided to use a user-friendly simple language that is close to what the target group use, it is not a formal classic language. UNICEF also studied and analyzed the pages of other organizations at both national and international level to decide their strengths and weaknesses. They excluded private sector and corporates who have higher budgets, “We looked at what other organizations who have similar mandate do, and tried to put something that could be attractive to the public.” Three months were taken as a preparation stage to understand the organization and how its social media platform could work successfully.

b. Development of social media strategies

A well-developed communication strategy is a strategy that manages to be

efficient, cost-effective, and achieves the objectives. UNICEF used their extensive research as a base to build their strategies with the public and other stakeholders.

Social media strategy with the public

Social media in general is used under the concept of social marketing, how to attract people who are not interested in your work. UNICEF put a strategy to attract the target audience and to have them as active members (Figure 5):

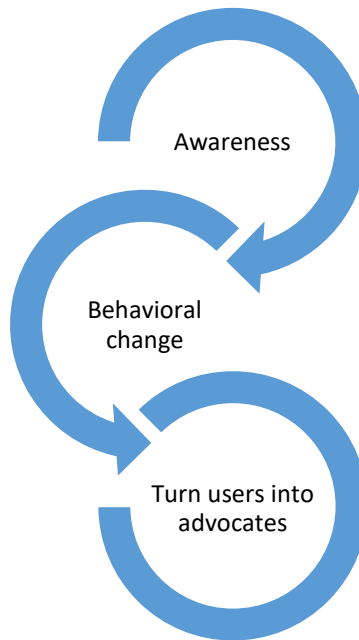


Figure 5: Social media strategy with the public

Source: Author

- 1- **Awareness:** UNICEF started the process of launching their platform by raising public awareness on the objectives of the organization, and the main issues they are concerned about. During the first year of using Facebook, UNICEF introduced what the organization stands for as a mandate. Since their focus is

children, they presented the status of children in Egypt through simple and understandable facts and figures, especially that data in Egypt has many limitations. They posted many pieces on where they stand, and the problems children face in Egypt in a way that attracted the audience and encouraged them to think and imagine. This phase included using expressive photos from the real target areas in Egypt, and a simple language to convey the organization's messages. Posts were in both Arabic and English to reach different people from different educational backgrounds, as well as international donors and partners.

- 2- **Behavioral change:** UNICEF tried to raise the interest of the audience by changing their behavior from being receivers to share their information and knowledge. UNICEF launched a campaign called “share your story” to get people involved in the page by asking them to post community success stories. This campaign has been very inspiring and interactive because it provides people with a platform to present their life experience (Photo 2).



Photo 2: Behavioral Change

Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

- 3- **Turn users into advocates:** In this stage, users and members of the page were not only watching and commenting; they have become advocates. Being an advocate does not necessarily mean to volunteer; there are many ways to help and provide support, such as disseminating information, word of mouth, support the ideas and initiatives ...etc. For this purpose, UNICEF initiated “page in the street” “Saf7a fi El-Share3,” a campaign launched by UNICEF Egypt in cooperation with Masrawy social webpage on the International Voluntary Day. This campaign is still running. It offers information on non-profit initiatives and volunteering opportunities in Egypt. It serves as a platform for the volunteers to present their initiatives and show their interest in community services. This platform enables young initiators to reach out and be seen by the community, which in turn gives them the opportunity to gain support from donors, NGOs, and community groups. Examples of these initiatives are the harassment map, Recyclobekia, Cairo Runners, and Educate-Me (Photo 3).



Photo 3: Turn users into advocates

Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

Social media strategy with stakeholders

UNICEF has a strategy of engaging stakeholders through monitored and controlled conversations on social media pages. Social media strategy is based on four factors: listen – discover – measure – engage (Figure 6).

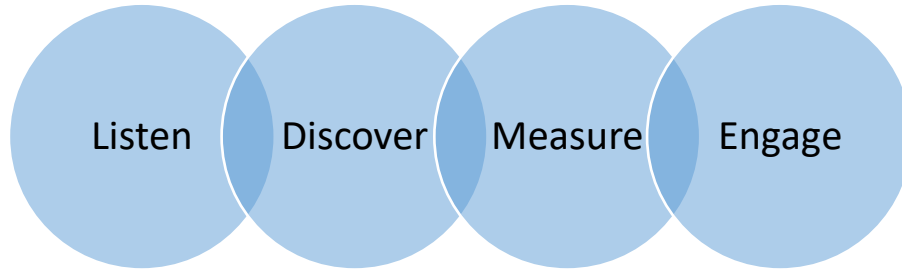


Figure 6: Social media strategy with stakeholders

Source: unicef.org

Listening is necessary to identify topic trends, influential stakeholders and important networks. UNICEF uses different applications and tools to follow influencers, journalists, bloggers, peer organizations, NGOs, donors, and governmental partners. *Technorati* or *Google Blog Search*, for example, are tools to help the communication team to have an insider understanding of the visitor demographics, track where people are visiting, and develop relationships with them. Such listening tools enable the organization discover who cares for their programs and activities, and who is writing about them. Listening helps the organization assess and understand stakeholders' online preferences, and determine where to spend time and efforts. Accordingly, they can attract them to engage in an interesting conversation. To increase engagement, UNICEF communication team create a reason for stakeholders to care about their activities. They post videos, relate success stories, and harvest stories from their audiences themselves.

c. Building the communication team to accommodate social media

Based on the research and content analysis of social media platforms of other

development organizations, UNICEF started building up their communication team. The team includes a researcher to collect data, statistics and figures, a content writer to change statistics into media messages, and identify and highlight the data that concerns the public and attracts their attention. In addition, the designers design photos and layout of the page. Finally, the Head of the Communication Team is responsible for supervising the whole process and decides with the team on the final content of the pages.

Due to limited budget, as revealed in the interview, UNICEF depends on young volunteers, and freelance designers. Youth are the target group, and using their eagerness to change their community was a great asset to the platform. However, to overcome the problem of the high turnover of volunteers, UNICEF created a young consultant position, which is used to hire innovative fresh graduates to work as designers and social media consultants, supervised by the Head of the communication team. They work on issues such as content generation, page design, and campaign ideas. They also coordinate with other technical units on events and field trips. Accordingly, UNICEF has managed its limited budget to have community management round the clock. In August 2014, UNICEF launched a campaign called “follow your dream.” It was a campaign to encourage young designers find their way to UNICEF as young consultants. The campaign included a competition on the best design for the postcard on the International Day of Girl Child. The winner signed a one-year consultancy contract with UNICEF Egypt. This competition was one of the most engaging activities in the year (Photo 4).



Photo 4: “Follow your dreams” campaign

Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

d. Setting social media guidelines

There should be house rules that govern the use of the page, and control content of public posts and inputs ...etc. UNICEF set social media guidelines that identify how to respond to comments and questions. If they receive technical questions, they refer it to the concerned technical unit. It is part of their policy to respond to all comments and questions received on the page. UNICEF never delete opinions; they only delete spam and ads. Social media increases interactivity with different actors such as internal offices, public audience and donors. Therefore, themes and dialogues have to be monitored and controlled to ensure that the organization remains neutral and the officers do not express personal opinions and views.

e. Securing funds for social media

Social media is funded under the communication budget. However, communication is a limited-funded unit in UNICEF Egypt. Therefore, UNICEF intelligently has used some solutions to generate funds and save expenses. Based on the topic and the issue

covered by the campaign, the communication team requests the financial support of concerned technical units. For example, if the campaign about health, they request funds from the unit concerned with health. Using volunteers and young consultants was another efficient alternative to manage the budget.

4.4.2. Planning (pre-testing)

UNICEF set their communication plan every year. The annual plan is prepared in coordination with senior management and other technical units. Every year, UNICEF communication team try to introduce different topics in a new format. They analyze the key issues and identify the main topics to be covered in social media throughout the year. The planning process includes setting different objectives of all communication activities, including social media. Messages and content are decided in the light of the organization’s objectives and development goals. The planning process includes identifying the market gap, and focuses on public interests and concerns (Figure 7).

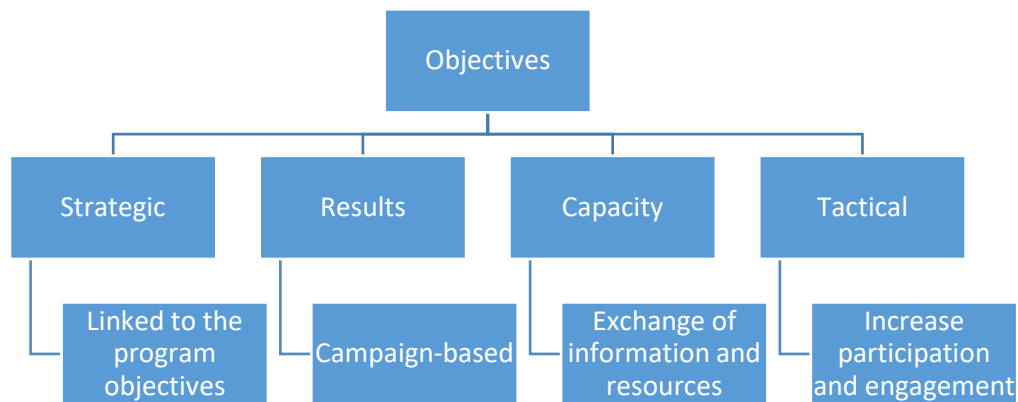


Figure 7: Setting objectives

Source: Author

Communications, including social media, have strategic, result-based, capacity, and

tactical objectives. Strategic means to be linked to the organizations objectives and mandate. It should achieve the expected results of every activity and campaign. It should allow for more exchange of information between the organization and its stakeholders and strategic public in the sense that builds the capacity of the community, raises their awareness, and attracts more voluntary initiatives. Tactical objectives work towards achieving more participation and engagement in the social media platform. Indicators are set to help measuring the achievement of objectives.

In 2013, UNICEF implemented a plan that included 12 themes; one was covered every month. The 12 themes reflected the different priority areas of the organization: Education dropouts, unemployment, child labor, street children, hygiene promotion, Literacy, violence against children, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), gender equality, Health promotion, youth initiatives, and finally water issues in Egypt. In general, it is very important that the page does not only focus on the achievements of the organization, it should also cover the issues that have a public interest.

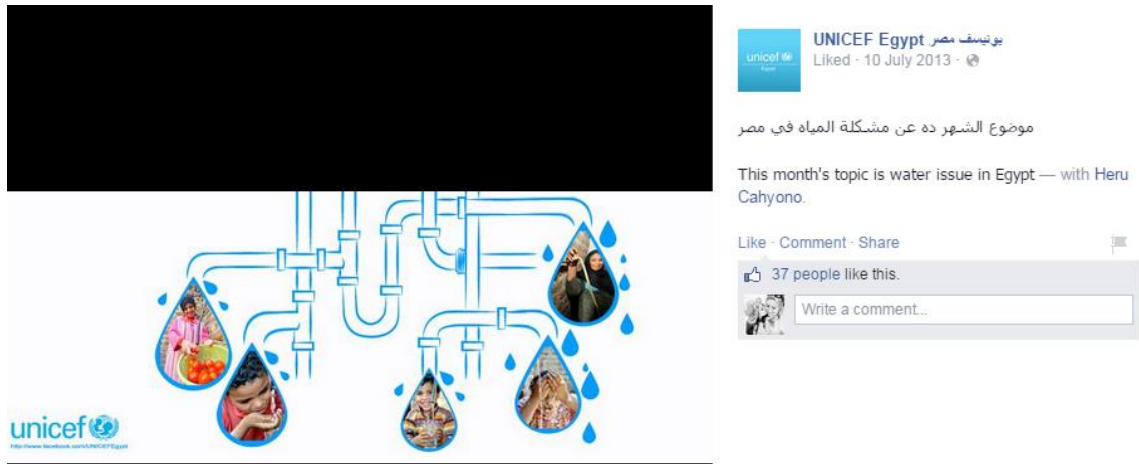


Photo 5: Monthly Theme on social media
Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

4.4.3. Implementation

According to the Head of UNICEF Communication Team, “The process is a

calculated risk; it is a very thorough clearing process. It is a longtime frame for development and clearance. It is indeed a lot of work.” There is a buffer zone of two months to finalize pieces and get it cleared and approved. Therefore, social media team work hard to have the material drafted early enough to give ample time for clearances and approvals. The process depends on input received from researchers and technical programs. Social media team brainstorm on ideas and designs. The content writer drafts the content, which has to go through clearance by the Social Policies staff (who is considered as the data bank). They double-check every single figure to ensure accuracy of data. Then, it comes back to social media team for finalization and formatting. The Head of the Communication Team approves the final content and formatting. She explained, “It is a long process and dedication of a lot of time and efforts, which has to be supported by the senior management.” All technical units are involved in responding to queries, and they have to accommodate time for it. It takes out from their regular working hours. UNICEF senior management clear the content; they examine to see the development angle out of the messages, and ensure its contribution to the accomplishment of organizational objectives. UNICEF tries to create a balanced message, which is user-friendly, and the reader does not feel that he or she is reading the UN technical terms. As the target audience is youth, UNICEF uses their simple language, an approach that is also supported by the senior management.

Focus groups from the target audience are used as a pre-test technique to evaluate the content before publishing it. The focus groups include bloggers, designers, and students. They look at different factors, such as content, language, data, design ...etc. UNICEF uses the input of the focus groups to set a framework and build a strategy for every campaign.

Every campaign generally started with posts that give a big space for innovation and imagination (Photo 6). They usually start with stimulation of interest (brainteaser). Then they present facts and info-graphs with simple statistics and clear data on the

campaign topic. This step is followed by presenting some interventions and success stories. A good example of this process is a campaign called “Imagine” “ta5aya1” launched in November 2014 on celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. During the first week of the campaign, UNICEF started by “Imagine,” where they tried to engage people to imagine how life will be better place if certain situations to children happen. The second week was about some facts and statistics about Egypt (Photo 7). The third week was the highlights of UNICEF main interventions (Photo 8). Finally, the last week was mainly success stories about the beneficiaries. Feedback and ideas were collected in a report submitted to UNICEF Egypt senior management for their attention. The campaign achieved high engagement among users and audiences. Among the reason for this success was variation of data and innovation. Sometimes, UNICEF receive some queries from the public requesting information about what they do, therefore, they put more posts about UNICEF interventions; however, this is a response to the queries, not the focus of the platform.

Photo 6: Example of imagine posts



Photo 7: Example of facts posts



Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

Photo 8: Example of interventions posts

UNICEF Egypt يونيسيف مصر
November 28 at 2:00pm · Edited ·

زينب، أم لثمن أطفال، كانت بتروح من ثلاث إلى أربع مرات كل يوم لمنزل صديقتها عشان تجيب اللي يكفي أسرتها من المياه، لكن معانتها اليومية دي انتهت بعد ما بقى عندها مياه في البيت.

Zeinab, a mother of 8 children, used to go three to four times a day to her friend's home to fetch enough water for the whole family; however, things have recently improved after she had access to clean water connection in her home



7,796 people reached [Boost Post](#)

Like · Comment · Share · 307 11 17

Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

4.4.4. Monitoring

UNICEF social media team monitor the page around the clock. The objectives of this close monitoring are to increase participation, engagement, responsiveness, and reach to citizens and target groups. The strategy to achieve all these objectives is simply to be real, relevant, practical, and active. The language should be simple and understandable to the receiver. Answering the comments should add value to the discussion and be relevant to the community. It should be about the target audience rather than about the organization. The administrator of the page needs to be active and offers fresh content every now and then to attract users' attention. Public questions that require technical input are directed to the concerned program unit for their

feedback. Social media Monitoring offers rich conversations and more information sharing. UNICEF receives huge number of messages from volunteers who are interested to join different programs. Being responsive, the administrator of the page replies to these requests timely and directs them to the volunteers' page which is "page in the street". As mentioned in the interview with UNICEF Head of Communication Team, being responsive and active, UNICEF has built a reputation that is attractive to volunteers, and that is reflected in the huge number of requests they receive every day.

4.4.5. Evaluation

The page is evaluated on quarterly basis to assess the performance. In addition, UNICEF arranges focus groups to get their feedback on their opinion about the page. This feedback is considered when planning for the next year. Based on the nature of the campaign they do two kinds of evaluation (Figure 8):

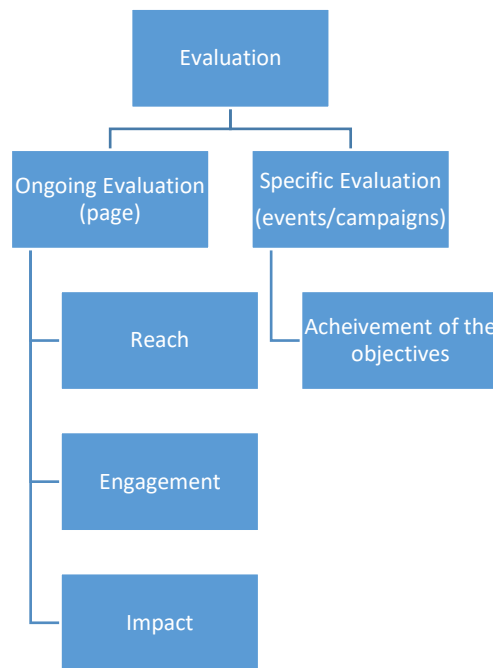


Figure 8: Evaluation

Source: Author

The ongoing evaluation involves some quantitative analysis of the number of likes, followers, and viewers on the page, which can easily be aggregated by using different online applications. Engagement represents the number of people commenting and getting involved in the conversation. For example, Figure 9 shows the reach achieved during the Campaign of the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition, the communication team develops a regular analysis to compare what they spent to what they achieved. They use engagement, likes, and comments as indicators.

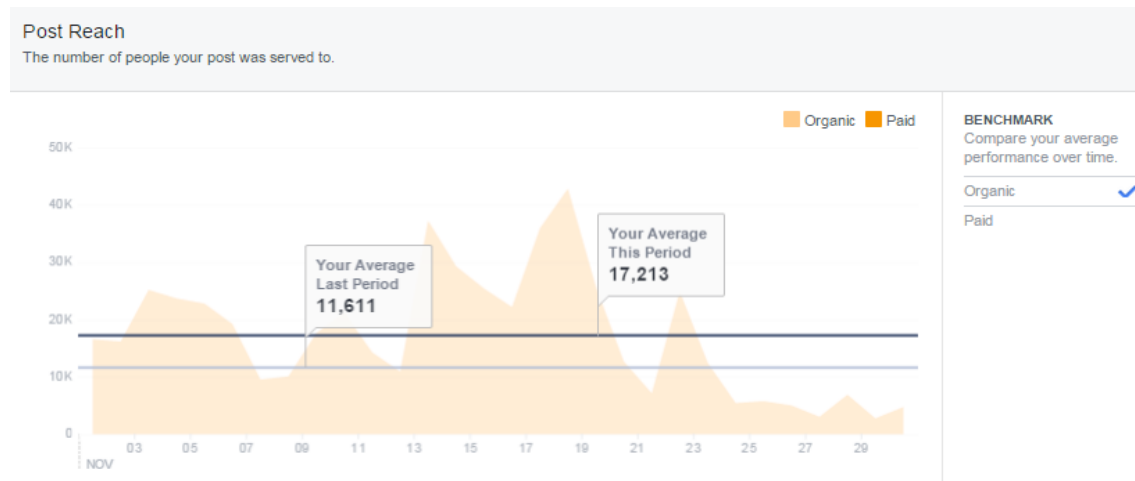


Figure 9: Total Reach of the CRC Campaign

Total reach (without advertising) 550,000 compared to other months which usually range between (150,000 -250,000)

Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

In addition, UNICEF evaluates the outcome of the page and their social media campaigns in the light of the objectives set in the planning phase to see how successful they managed to fulfill their objectives. Finally, they try to measure the influence of the page on raising funds during a certain period of time, the number of volunteers requested to join, and the impact on decision-making and support by stakeholders and partners.

UNICEF are proud that their platform is used by other media outlets as a source of information. Some talk shows use UNICEF posts and data as a credible reference, “We are proud that we are seen and perceived as a reliable data source on children”.

4.4.6. Social media is a tool to achieve UNICEF goals and objectives

As mentioned in the planning phase, UNICEF set the communication plan in light of the general plan of the organization. Measurable indicators are set to facilitate measuring the impact and evaluating the performance. An investigation of UNICEF Program Expected Results 2013-2017 showed that one of the objectives is to raise awareness of families who have girls at risk of FGM. Therefore, several social media campaigns have been implemented to achieve this objective, and successfully, thousands of people were reached and got engaged in the campaigns (Photo 9).



Photo 9: FGM/C campaign

Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

Another important objective, as per the Program Expected Results, is to reach 2 million people through media and public awareness programs to prevent violence against children. Accordingly, the communication plan has accommodated this objective by including several campaigns on this issue. Again, the info-graphics of the campaigns show high engagement and reach (Photo 10).



Photo 10: “Violence against children” campaign

Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

Talking about the regional goals of the organization, increasing enrollment in primary education is on top of the list. The Communication team has managed in 2014 to launch several campaigns to support the achievement of this objective (Photo 11).



Photo 11: Education campaigns on social media

Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

Goal 7 of UNICEF Egypt is to ensure environmental sustainability. This objective was reflected in the social media plan to include a big campaign to raise environmental awareness aggravated the problem of the natural resources degradation and generated sanitation, hygiene and environmental problems at community level (Photo 12).



Photo 12: Hygiene promotion campaigns

Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

UNICEF 2014 goals include improving maternal health and reducing child mortality, and this was depicted in a successful campaign launched in 2014 to raise awareness on mother and childcare (Photo 13).



Photo 13: Maternal health campaign

Source: Facebook.com /UNICEFEgypt

Raising public awareness on several key issues was one of the organizational goals. Therefore, in January 2014, UNICEF launched a social media campaign on the

difference between Refugee and the Asylum seeker. In February 2014, the theme was raising awareness on FGM/C. In March 2014, a campaign was launched on gender equality and girls' rights. In May, the campaign was on different problems faced by Egyptian children and families. In June, another campaign launched about child labor. In July, they launched an awareness campaign highlighting the main values in the Egyptian community, and this was one of the most engaging posts talking about the hazards of water wastage. The campaign of September 2014 was about literacy. In October, and on the occasion of the International Day against Violence, UNICEF published some statistics to raise awareness about violence against children. The campaigns achieved significant reach and engagement that exceeds 33,000 likes and 17,000 comments and messages. The users of the page increased by more than 200,000 in 2014. This number indicates the people who read the posts and possibly got aware about the issues.

Different stakeholders, including donors are checking UNICEF social media platforms to follow up on their activities, concepts, and projects, and to see how they are working on their programs and if they are making difference to the community. As a UN organization, social media is getting more and more importance; admittedly, it largely improves the image of the organization to the society.

4.4.7. Challenges

According to the interviews, there is still a challenge of measuring the impact of social media. Developing indicators to assess the impact of communication programs is an issue that needs more attention. This challenge does not only face UNICEF Egypt, impact measurement is a key challenge in the entire development sector including media. It is important to mention that impact is different from results. It is a process of tracking the changes that may occur after an extended period of time and as a result of a specific effort ("Measuring public media's impact", 2013). For development programs, it is still a challenge to measure the impact of social media on the ground. In

addition, social media is one of the factors that may lead to the achievement of organizational objectives; however, its impact cannot be measured in isolation from other contributing factors.

Another challenge is the high rate of illiteracy in some of the target areas. This factor prevents the reach of social media efforts to them, which affects the achievement of objectives. Therefore, posting informative videos and expressive photos helps a lot to convey the message if the user finds difficulty in reading the text.

Despite the many advantages that social media offers to the organization, working on social media is time consuming. Being accessible to everyone, social media pages should be monitored all the time to make sure that nobody takes the advantage of the high engagement of the page to promote for personal, political, religious, or commercial interests. It is also a challenge to reply to some sensitive comments and questions.

4.4.8. Reasons for success: lessons learnt

Based on the findings and the analysis, there are some key reasons for the success of UNICEF social media platform. One of the main reasons is the extensive research the communication team conduct to decide their social media approach and strategy. UNICEF is guided by the background research they have done on how to position themselves in social media platforms. It is the wealth of information and data UNICEF generates in general. The methodology of focus groups is used in the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases to put themselves on the right track. The focus groups include different audience with different backgrounds.

Another important reason for this success is that UNICEF social media platform depends mainly on young people. UNICEF has succeeded to attract young talents and use them. Young people are the target group, and therefore, UNICEF opens a space for

them to volunteer, participate and engage in the conversation. With their creativity and innovation, young consultants and freelancers are used to develop the page and run the campaigns.

One of the strengths of the page, which makes it popular and engaging, is that it goes bilingual. Posts and statuses are in both Arabic and English. The language used is simple and understandable. It is closer to the newspaper language than academic and literature publications. UNICEF sometimes uses colloquial language that touches people's life.

The strategic approach applied by the communication team, which is represented in setting clear objectives in the light of the organization's mandate and mission, is a key factor to achieve the success of the page. Going through a systematic process of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, enables the communication team to have a clear and measurable plan to achieve their objectives. The long clearance process may be considered as a challenge; however, it guarantees a good quality of content as well as its relevance to the organizations mandate and to the public interest. To avoid any difficulties, the team put a timeframe for each step to make sure that work is implemented as planned.

The strong support of senior management and the technical programs staff is another success factor of this platform. Without the support of senior management, UNICEF Egypt would not have this strong start of their social media platform.

UNICEF use different technological tools and applications to achieve better reach and engagement. Examples of the applications they use are Social Mention, Twitalyzer, Crowdbooster. UNICEF supports staff development to master different applications and tools. Workshops are organized to update staff on the new technologies and approaches of social media.

4.5. Conclusion

According to the interviews, social media is considered an important tool to enhance the reputation of the organization. It is a fast but cheap platform to communicate and interact with the target audience. For the UN organizations, social media increases the visibility of the organization and contributes to resource mobilization that feeds back into its work on the ground. Social Media also transformed the structure of communication as it enables individuals give their inputs and take part in the development process. Power has been transferred from top-down and bottom-up to horizontal approaches, as development parties affect each other.

However, most UN organizations in Egypt still struggle with using social media for development purposes. They lack concrete strategies, tangible objectives, and clear management process of their social media platforms. Another limitation is lack of social media staff due to limited funds. Communication officers are responsible to do all the work both digital and traditional media. Lack of support from senior management and other departments of the organization is another limitation.

This study shows that UNICEF is the most popular, interactive and responsive organization in using social media in Egypt, which reflects a model of social media management other organizations may consider when working on their social media platforms.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To thrive, organizations must continue to evolve in line with new technologies and tools. The growth and penetration of the Internet as a two-way communication platform has revolutionized information sharing. The Internet has become the venue where people interact to learn, discuss, deal and socialize. According to Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (1998), the successes and failures of most development projects are often determined by two crucial factors: communication and people's involvement.

In recent years, the impact that social media has had in helping organizations achieve their objectives is clear. As such, UN organizations have recognized the role that social media can bring to them in terms of establishing organizational presence and communicating for change to the society where they operate their business.

In Egypt, social media has become an important communication tool for the UN development organizations—allowing them to expand their reach to various audiences, particularly young people whom have proven challenging to access when social media is excluded from the mix. Multiple stakeholders, including donors, are constantly accessing social media platforms to learn about organizational functions, programs and activities, and to understand the role such organizations have in impacting individuals and societies at large.

Social media platforms allow for two-way communication where providers and recipients interact on information shared and received. It is the virtual space where organizations receive questions and gather ideas. This must therefore be clearly recognized by senior and middle management, to ensure that communication is incorporated as a core component of organizations' overall objectives.

The study shows that trusted channels of communication are essential within the community development field, to provide reliable information and analyses, in addition to effective informal networks for sharing and learning from experiences in various settings. Community development organizations must speak, not necessarily with a single voice, but with a strong and clear voice. A competent and grounded communications department is capable of reaching multiple stakeholders, to bring their voices to management for strategic development—making it possible for stakeholders to participate in organizational decisions that affect them.

Nonetheless, most UN organizations in Egypt still struggle with using social media for development purposes. Most of the organizations lack concrete strategies, tangible objectives, and clear management processes for their social media platforms. Additional limitations include lack of designated social media staff to manage such issues due to limited resources; communication officers being fully responsible for all media work, digital and traditional; and insufficient support from senior and middle management, as well as from other departments across organizations.

By applying the Excellence Theory, this study evaluated the use of social media as a communication tool in UN organizations in Egypt. As such, it proved how UNICEF, by following a strategic management approach, succeeded to implement successful campaigns and contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives. While the Theory of Excellence was developed as an assessment tool of communication programs in general, in this study, it was deployed to investigate social media in particular. UNICEF has managed to develop “Excellent” communication programs in the light of organization’s objectives and goals. By building their platform on formative research, maintaining a balanced two-way communication mode with stakeholders and target audience, and using cost-effective techniques, UNICEF Egypt has achieved the highest level of engagement among all UN organizations in Egypt. Social media has helped

UNICEF broaden their reach, covering and engaging various stakeholders, and including donors and the general public, and hence, the work and role of UNICEF have been recognized at both local and international levels.

Though the Excellence Theory was developed before the maturity of social media, this study proved that this theory could be adapted to this new communication tool. In addition to the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada where the Theory was previously applied, this study ascertained that it could be generalized and applied to communication programs in a developing country like Egypt. To conclude, the results of this study provide further support to the Excellence Theory.

Recommendations

The findings of this research reveal a number of recommendations for development organizations to consider for improving their social media platforms, and their presence in such forums.

Development organizations must recognize that communication is an essential component of every program, and that communication personnel and units must be invested in and must house the expertise, tools and facilities needed to deliver on organizational objectives. Ongoing training is critical for communication personnel to stay relevant and up-to-date with evolving technologies and tools, including advocacy, impact and reach analyses, and use of communication as a strategic management tool.

Adequate funding should be provided from the start for communication. If funds are not sufficient to recruit social media personnel, volunteers and young consultants are good alternatives. Development organizations must recognize the importance of different communication tools. In this modern digital age, traditional media is not enough. It should work hand-in-hand with new media to improve reach and engagement with the community. Multi-channel approaches are more effective than any single medium application and should be part of any communication strategy.

Social media platforms should be built on extensive research and accurate reliable data. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches should be considered for this purpose. Focus groups, questionnaires, and other data collection methodologies can be used to pre-test and post-test the communication performance. Involving the target audiences and stakeholders from the beginning and throughout the process is an effective way to gain their interest and support. Communication teams should have clear strategies to deal with different segments of the target audiences. Communicating with donors is different from communicating with volunteers or community groups.

Development organizations should view communication as a development tool. It is a way to achieve the development objectives of the organization. Therefore, the communication plan should be linked to the general workplan and the development objectives of the organization, and it should support the achievement of these objectives. Planning, monitoring, and evaluation are necessary steps to ensure proper management of communication. Measuring impact of different communication activities is a tool to evaluate success and improve performance.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the main objectives of using social media in the organization?
2. If the organization has a policy in action to govern the use of social media, what are the key elements of this policy?
3. How does the organization link the use of social media to the strategic objectives of the organization? Have social media contributed to achieving organization's objectives? Give example.
4. How is the communication team? Is there a special team authorized to create, manage and update the organization's social media page?
5. How other departments contribute to the social media page of the organizations? And how cooperative they are?
6. Does senior management believe in social media?
7. How the organization responds to citizen's comments, concerns and questions on social media pages? Give examples.
8. How often do you post new content on the social media page?
9. How do you measure the success and the impact of social media work?
10. What are the opportunities social media can offer to the organization, compared to other advocacy tools?
11. What are the challenges/problems the organization encounter when using social media tools?
12. What do you suggest to improve the use of social media in the organization? What should the organization do/avoid from a management perspective?

Appendix B: Approval of Institutional Review Board

CASE #2014-2015-43



To: Inas Hamad
Cc: Mariez Wasfi
From: Atta Gebril, Chair of the IRB
Date: November 27, 2014
Re: Approval of study

This is to inform you that I reviewed your revised research proposal entitled "THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN ADVOCACY TOOL BY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS," and determined that it required consultation with the IRB under the "expedited" heading. As you are aware, the members of the IRB suggested certain revisions to the original proposal, but your new version addresses these concerns successfully. The revised proposal used appropriate procedures to minimize risks to human subjects and that adequate provision was made for confidentiality and data anonymity of participants in any published record. I believe you will also make adequate provision for obtaining informed consent of the participants.

Please note that IRB approval does not automatically ensure approval by CAPMAS, an Egyptian government agency responsible for approving some types of off-campus research. CAPMAS issues are handled at AUC by the office of the University Counsellor, Dr. Amr Salama. The IRB is not in a position to offer any opinion on CAPMAS issues, and takes no responsibility for obtaining CAPMAS approval.

This approval is valid for only one year. In case you have not finished data collection within a year, you need to apply for an extension.

Thank you and good luck.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Atta Gebril'.

Dr. Atta Gebril
IRB chair, The American University in Cairo
2046 HUSS Building
T: 02-26151919
Email: agebril@aucegypt.edu

A logo consisting of a yellow square on the left and a dark blue rectangle on the right.

Institutional Review Board
The American University in Cairo
AUC Avenue, P.O. Box 74
New Cairo 11835, Egypt.
tel 20.2.2615.1000
fax 20.2.27957565
Email: aucirb@aucegypt.edu