THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT NETWORK LEBANON MEDIA STRATEGIES:

ONLINE AND OFFLINE PERSPECTIVES

A thesis presented

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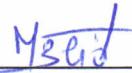
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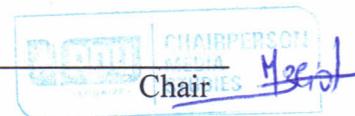
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Cheers to exciting endeavors to come.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to every passionate journalist who insists on choosing to stay faithful to the journalistic mission despite all the challenges, to every activist who eagerly works on making the world a better place and to every person who is fighting an inner battle or suffering from social injustice and going through life's hardships. I hope that the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) brings a light at the end of the tunnel. I also want to dedicate this to every dreamer and hard worker who never gives up and of course to my cherished readers who are joining me on this journey hoping that my work will be of great contribution to this field of research.

Abstract

The Agenda 2030 is the global cause of the era that created a commitment towards achieving the 17 sustainable goals through international partnerships at the private and public sectors levels. In this thesis, the researcher attempts to examine the strategic communication process that UN GCNL is implementing to foster and spread the mission among stakeholders through the scope of the media and a hybrid approach. Reflecting on the campaigns, programs and activities as well as their impact on building the public agenda, strengthening trust, loyalty and reputation under the lens of the framing and social capital theories.

Resorting to both qualitative and quantitative methods, the outcomes of the stakeholders' surveys, focus groups and expert's interview have shown that Lebanon has been pioneering in advancing the goals thanks to a clear strategy and dedication especially from the stakeholders' sides. Nonetheless, the power of bridging and bonding among the network members and the general public has to be boosted through various means. The benchmarking of evaluation and impact indicators have also to be developed in order to ensure transparency. Furthermore, the content and style of messaging needs further tuning to meet the stakeholder's and target audiences' aspirations and to fulfill GCNL objectives.

Keywords: UN GCNL, Media, Communications, Strategies, Digital Advocacy, Framing, Social Capital.

Introduction

Global partnerships and commitments are the new trends towards innovative and sustainable social, environmental, and economic structures that would help the world survive and potentially thrive. Considering many challenges that threaten the lives and growth of populations, businesses, and nations, it is now the time for action and social justice. Thus, the focus of this study revolves around the actions and social justice initiatives (i.e., sustainable developmental goals -SDGs) that were adopted by the United Nations for its projected Agenda 2030. The Agenda 2030 was adopted by 193 nations that committed to changing the world for the better. These nations agreed, with the help of the United Nations to bring "together their respective governments, businesses, media, institutions of higher education, and local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to improve the lives of the people in their country by the year 2030" (United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, 2015). These nations agreed to work together to:

> Eliminate poverty, erase hunger, establish good health and well-being, provide quality education, enforce gender equality, improve clean water and sanitation, grow affordable and clean energy, create decent work and economic growth, increase industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduce inequality, mobilize sustainable cities and communities, influence responsible consumption and production, organize climate action, develop life below water, advance life on land, guarantee peace, justice and strong institutions, and build partnerships for the goals (United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, 2015).

All of these were agreed upon in the Sustainable Development Summit as the necessary actions needed for social justice to occur around the world by 2030. Hence, in order to advance the Agenda 2030, effective communication is needed. Communication plays a key role in the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially since the processes have to be carried out across the social, economic, institutional and governance sectors. Then, to ensure success the media is needed; because it is the responsibility of the media to inform, speak out the truth and give voice to the voiceless (Freeman et. al., 2011). It is also the media's mission to be committed to the current issues (e.g., sustainable development goals) that are taking place in their respective communities and worldwide to regain the grassroots foundation (Madouh, 2004). The media can, therefore, advance and assist in promoting the SDGs by putting them on the agenda. In Lebanon a number of media vehicles were mobilized to promote the SDGS (e.g., Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International's 2030 Program, Radio du Liban's Agenda 2030 show, Sharika wa Laken's online platform) were specifically created to highlight the Agenda 2030.

Thus, this thesis investigates the effectiveness of the online communication of the UN's Sustainable Developmental Goals done by the Global Compact Network Lebanon (GCNL) to its multiple stakeholders. It specifically examines the impact that GCNL's Instagram posts that deal with SDGs have on stakeholders' company reputation, and action imitation. It also looks at whether these posts enhance stakeholders' trust in GCNL and lead to online cooperation and sharing through electronic-word-of-mouth. The GCNL is the official representative body affiliated to the United Nations and responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. The GCNL stakeholders are companies, private and public institutions, NGOs, the UN,

and any individual who is involved with GCNL and is committed to helping in his/her capacity in advancing the Agenda 2030.

The media landscape which in Lebanon is highly polarized and is divided along political and sectarian lines (Dajani, 2005), is complemented by the increasing power of social media that made it possible for every citizen to become an active participant in the communication process. It then becomes more important to assess the strategic communication of the UN affiliated networks, such as the GCNL and its affiliates, as they may help in suggesting potential guidelines and frameworks for improving future similar campaigns. Also, it is significant to carry out this research initiative, because Lebanon has been among the first countries to adopt and publicize the SDGs through its media channels. It is capable of doing so through the support of the GCNL. One of the 68 networks around the world, GCNL operates through a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UN Global Compact Headquarters. GCNL was launched in 2015 and closely coordinates with the UN Global Compact (UNGC) headquarters to grant opportunities for learning, policy dialogue, and partnerships aimed towards advancing the 17 SDGs. It integrated them within its public and private sector agendas and action plans with joint partnerships within many ministries. In the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak and dire socio-economic circumstances, the reinforcement of the SDGs is more relevant and crucial than ever, therefore greater the reason to examine it, and unique in the sense that through investigating its communication frames and bond with stakeholders, it allows for a local perspective (attempts at attaining social justice and a call for action in a most critical timeframe) that has to be upheld with global standards.

Literature Review

This section deals with the scholarly studies and international reports done about the United Nations' media campaigns related to the Agenda 2030. The purpose is to build upon previous studies to investigate deeper and perhaps suggest a new approach to these campaigns. This section will help in choosing the appropriate theories and methodologies, learning from the previous studies conducted in the field in order to further highlight the strengths and to help professionals propose strategic and customized online campaigns that meet the target audiences' expectations and create an impact.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) Overview

According to the United Nations Sustainable Development Program, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are rooted in the Millennial Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs were created during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro. The aim was to generate a set of global goals that cater to the alarming environmental, political and economic hardships that exist worldwide. The conference initiated a call for action to countries involved to commit to a more sustainability-driven path for both developing and developed countries.

As previously mentioned, Agenda 2030 includes 17 goals that are interrelated and interdisciplinary. The goals are: No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Well-being; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; Reduced Inequality; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; Life Below Water; Life on Land; Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and Partnerships for the Goals.

Table 1: *The 17 SDGs*

No Poverty	Affordable and Clean Energy	Climate Action
Zero Hunger	Decent Work and Economic Growth	Life Below Water
Good Health and Well-Being	Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Life on Land
Quality Education	Reduce Inequality	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
Gender Equality	Sustainable Cities and Communities	Partnerships for the Goals
Clean Water and Sanitation	Responsible Consumption and Production	

Figure 1: *SDGs Labels*

Source: United Nations Development Program

Accomplishments or work on one goal – affects the other goal. Dealing with the threat of

climate change, for instance, influences the management of natural resources, reaching gender

equality or better health conditions contribute to limiting poverty. Consequently, reinforcing

peace and inclusive societies will minimize inequalities and help with economic prosperity.

In September 2015, Lebanon, an active member of the United Nations, endorsed the

Agenda 2030 for SDGs, making it one of the signatories. The 17 SDGs are of the utmost

importance to a society dealing with social and economic challenges (e.g., poverty,

unemployment, injustices, threats to human rights, freedom of expression), such as the case with

Lebanon and arguably even more so today (in 2021) than when they were first adopted.

The Lebanese Case: SDGs in Lebanon

Lebanon as a member of the UN, originally contributed through a report to the UN

Conference on Sustainable Development or Rio+20. Lebanon took an interest in national

meetings and was an active contributor during the conference (its aim in defining the SDGs) and

partook in the summits to further improve the initiatives that were launched in the Rio+20

conference.

In November 2017, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Parliamentary Body was

assigned to support the advancement of the SDGs and to ascertain policy coordination (UN,

2018). Furthermore, to support the Agenda 2030, the Council of Ministers, formed a National

Committee on SDGs, which is presided over by the Prime Minister and includes delegates from

the concerned ministries, civil society and private sector. The National Committee created a

roadmap that guarantees the implementation of SDGs via national projects and plans, to put

together a national database for the SDG points. In March 2018, the National Committee on

SDGs actualized the plan, and pushed towards enforcing what is called the 5Ps of the SDGs.

The 5Ps of the SDGs are people, planet, prosperity, partnership and peace, which coincided with the named pillars: people; earth; prosperity and peace; cooperation; inclusion; and the creation of a task force. The committee named coordinators to oversee each thematic grouping/pillar. In addition, three workshops were held with government officials, private sectors and the Civil Society Organization (CSOs) to increase the awareness of the SDGs.

In July 2018, the national committee presented its Voluntary National Review (an evaluation component of the Agenda 2030) during the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) which is the central United Nations platform on sustainable development and plays a role in the follow-up and policy review. The Voluntary National Review (VNR) is a report which details the current status of each nation's accomplishments of the Agenda 2030; it includes each nation's challenges and solutions in addressing the various problems/situations.

In terms of progress toward the SDGs, Lebanon has met at least seven Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in health, primary education, and gender equality in education. The remaining goals yielded mixed results, were not relevant, or were not planned adequately to meet the deadline, such as poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. Up until 2017, no significant improvements regarding the implementation of the Agenda 2030 were visible (Network for Development; AUB Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy; International Affairs, 2018). At that point, Lebanon launched a project titled "SDGs in Lebanon: Analyzing Gaps and Reporting Progress" signed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Council for Development and Reconstruction (operates under the supervision of the Council of Ministers). The Council oversees funding and implementation of reconstruction, rehabilitation and development of public institutions projects (CDR.gov). Lebanon today faces the same

challenges as it did from the creation of the SDG initiative plan, yet now (2021) the challenges

have escalated.

In addition, being a host country for millions of Syrian and Palestinian refugees, Lebanon

is bearing a burden of tremendous infrastructure and demographic drawbacks. Also, taking into

consideration the latest uprising/revolution (October 17, 2019) and citizen's demands, along with

the current (2021) situation that Lebanon is going through – the unprecedented economic and

financial crisis, along witnessing a 19.2% decrease in GDP, inflation, and an increase in poverty

rates up to 45% and extreme poverty up to 22% (World Bank, 2021).

Due to these various hardships, Lebanon was given grants for improving infrastructure

and implementing reforms to remain committed to the Agenda 2030 in order to enhance its stand

globally and to redirect its governance towards transparency and accountability. Also, as part of

an emergency response to the status quo, and with the additional pressure on the healthcare and

financial system due to COVID-19 pandemic, the World Bank approved a US $246 million

budget for the Emergency Crisis and COVID-19 Response Social Safety Net Project (ESSN) in

Lebanon (World Bank, 2021).

Stakeholders and the SDGs

The implementation of the SDGs relies on the involvement and engagement of

stakeholders, who are key players in the success of the GCNL campaigns to endorse the SDGs.

The UN and the governments are considered stakeholders as they are directly affected by the

advancement of the Agenda 2030, as well as individuals who are interested. However, for the

purpose of this research, stakeholders are defined as entities (corporations, organizations, NGOs)

who signed up to join GCNL and adopted at least one of the 17 goals (see Appendix D for the

complete list of stakeholders in this study). This adoption entails continuous support and plan of

action to promote the SDG of interest. The goals chosen by the entities are usually in line with

their organization's identity and mission. Since this research examines the social media

advocacy strategies that GCNL has put in place on Instagram to reach its target persons, to build

a community around the SDGs and to reinforce and enlarge its network of stakeholders,

identifying those stakeholders is key to further understand their initiatives towards the SDGS,

how they reach out and how to reach out to them, and the strength of the impact that the SDGs

had on their teams.

Some ways that stakeholders interact with GCNL and introduce the goals to their own

followers is by sharing GCNL posts, taking part in their events or sponsoring campaigns – in all

of which communication is at the forefront. Hence, communication is a pillar to sustainable

development.

Studies on SDG Media Campaigns

SDG communication strategies cater to the specific culture they are being promoted in;

however, their reach tends to be global as far as connecting networks and encouraging

participation through the use of social media communication.

UNDP has emphasized the importance of multipronged media initiatives to promote the

media's role in aid of sustainable improvement and peace. This entails working in the media

ecosystem through capacity-development initiatives for key actors, such as journalists, citizens,

or governments to pave the way for independent media. This strategy which includes the use of

social media has helped ascertain that UNDP's media engagement caters to the complexity of

presenting local development obstacles to adjust to emergent possibilities within the national

media landscape. UNDP planned innovative media initiatives – often combining new and

traditional technologies – that have had a stimulant impact. For instance, to consolidate the

United Nations Volunteers (UNV) program's online presence in the region, Latin America and

Caribbean Portfolio was launched in 2016 mainly targeting Spanish and Portuguese speakers. It,

thus, introduced a new channel of communication that reaches social media users who gain a

platform to share their opinion while respecting differences and ensuring social inclusion and

gender equality which is part of the SDGs. The posts directly reached more than 10,000 people

and even succeeded in getting the attention of a broader audience thanks to the shares and

hashtags that went viral across networks making it possible to establish a link between similar

networks. This fast-paced evolution of communication technology often times leads to a free

flow of information that triggers a broader spectrum of opportunities and further developments

due to the interconnectedness of groups (those advantaged and disadvantaged) and therefore can

come together to contribute to building/developing their own communities (Servaes, 2017).

Likewise, through the GCNL networks and adoption of the SDGs by the various stakeholders,

different networks are formed that can expand the local geographic barriers. The networks are

formed between GCNL and the stakeholders and expanded to the social media followers of the

stakeholders involved; more specifically for this study the communication and connections

formed through Instagram as the leading social media portal for GCNL outreach (Personal

Communication, 2019).

GCNL Instagram Outreach Potential

GCNL is mostly active on Instagram, with 3,803 followers to date (December 6, 2021).

The researcher carried out a descriptive analysis of GCNL's Instagram page. The following

information can be viewed by any user/follower. They post on an almost daily basis. Some of

their posts, especially nation-wide campaigns and international programs (e.g., Regional Youth

Dialogue Leaders' Summit) go viral, others have limited interactions. Most of the posts are

consistent in terms of branding (the logos and colors) and hashtags. The posts mainly vary

between still images, infographics, and videos. The stories feature is also a space for active

reach. Below are detailed examples of the different types of posts linked to SDG.

On September 26, 2019, a video providing facts about SDG 5: Quality Education was

posted as a response to a voting poll previously featured on GCNL Lebanon Instagram story. In

this post, GCNL team has primed Quality Education over other goals adjusting its agenda based

on the public's agenda since the majority of the public had voted for quality education as one of

the most vital SDGs, as indicated on the Instagram account. Although GCNL has over 3,500

followers, only 112 of them viewed this video. The caption used has a conversational style and

ended by a call for action. The goal icon and number were clearly present to reinforce the

branding and visual identity of the SDG. The hashtags used were #sdgs #quality, and

#education.

On October 16, 2019, a video compiling the media coverage from different outlets of The

Annual Forum titled: Making Global Goals Local Business. It featured the headlines about the

forum and was highlighting parts of the event and ended by the GCNL logo. The video had 177

views. The hashtags were: #mgglb, #sdgspioneersleb, #mgglbmiddleeast, and #mysdgs. The

caption holds a call for action "spread the word and help us to save our country!" The video

clearly framed the distinctive angles of media coverage enhancing their agenda as well as the

media agenda as they are considered key players in spreading awareness about SDGs. It is a

great example on the interrelation of the public, media and SDGs stakeholders' agendas.

On November 1st, 2019, on the occasion of Halloween, GCNL team posted a creative

illustration showing a revisited version of the 17 SDGs presenting the worst-case scenario for the

repercussions of failing to implement the SDGs. In the illustrations, they replaced the word

Goals with Ghouls (from Arabic: an evil spirit or demon that robs graves and devour corpses)

along with a catchy caption and relevant hashtags: "Happy #Halloween! There's nothing scarier

than a world where we fail to achieve the #2030Agenda. It's time we step up action to meet the

#GlobalGoals, #ForPeopleForPlanet."

Then, they resorted to a deductive and casualty frame to shed light on the urgency of

implementing the SDGs. They also provided a URL

(https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/) to the official UN website to redirect their

audience towards a detailed explanation of the SDGs. Thus, applying one of the main objectives

of agenda setting which is to guide the target audience to salient issues. It reached 34 likes.

On November 20, 2019, GCNL posted a series of graphic images elaborating on some

facts about four of the main goals (Goals: 3, 6, 8, and 10), they reached 74 likes, whereas another

post of the same genre with an identical caption and hashtags ("Did you know the following facts

about some of the Sustainable Development Goals? #SDGfacts #SDGs) dealing with other goals

(Goals 5, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16) only got 12 likes and two comments. These posts presented a

user-friendly and clear-cut information for the audience. Perhaps the discrepancies in the

number of likes are related to the relevance and saliency of the issues to the audience.

On World Anti-Corruption Day on December 9, 2019, GCNL posted an informative

caption (In 2008, Lebanon officially joined the UN Convention against Corruption (Res

31/10/2003) to support the implementation of apt mechanisms that fight corruption of all forms),

along some graphics (scored 20 likes) using the hashtags #Unitedagainstcorruption, #Sdgs,

#Globalgoals to make a point that fighting corruption is the foundation of the SDGs

implementation. With this post, they tried to tackle three goals (8, 10, and 16) while

subliminally reminding the audience of the prominent role of the political agenda.

On December 15, 2019, GCNL announced the kickoff of a new chapter of the Youth SDG Innovators Program to promote capacity building metrics through a fast-paced video compiling participants' intervention from previous sessions. They attached the following caption enclosed with the mentions "YSIP: Camp 1, Onboarding our innovators are getting ready for their second camp tomorrow! After exploring the core concepts around business, SDGs and breakthrough innovation, they will meet at @beirutdigitald to test our innovative tools to frame and validate their SDG business challenges! And the hashtags #YSIP, #UNGC, #GCNL, #innovation, #accelerator @ blackboxinfo. This video with 102 views is mainly linked to five goals (5, 8, 9, 10, and 17).

From all of the above, the most reoccurring goals were about quality education, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, and reduced inequalities. This is not a coincidence as they are seemingly popular goals adopted by the Lebanese public. It is then important to further investigate and analyze how these goals are communicated to citizens to help develop a strategic communication plan that has a wider reach in Lebanon. This is so, especially that SDGs have become a controversial subject of debate both on the off- and online spheres. Therefore, understanding the online campaign strategies (through the framework of framing literature) of GCNL and the stakeholder's perspectives (from a social capital lens) lead to reaching better or more promising outcomes in terms of communication and sustainability engagement, given the grandeur of the Agenda 2030 initiatives and how positive the outcomes if implemented can be.

Theoretical Framework

This study attempts to assess the impact of media campaigns that are designed and implemented under the supervision of GCNL in cooperation with stakeholders (e.g., academia, companies, NGOs) on the reinforcement of SDGs awareness. Klapper (1960) considered that campaigns do not influence people but play a role in reinforcing existing attitudes. This should be taken into consideration. GCNL campaigns go together mainly with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) missions and action plans.

Framing theory is used in this study to further investigate how GCNL (as a brand) frames SDGs on its Instagram page, to gain a greater understanding how the goals are communicated to the stakeholders and others who are interested. Then, while framing theory is a prominent theory in allowing the researcher to examine how communication messages are portrayed, it lacks in its ability to guide the researcher in investigating the stakeholder's perspectives and whether certain bonds are formed through social media interactions that would allow for the strengthening of relationships and enhancing the stakeholder's corporate identity and/or reputation. For that reason, the social capital theory is used in guiding the research when testing the stakeholders' engagement, trust, and ties with GCNL.

Framing Theory

Framing can be defined as a mechanism in which some aspects of reality are selected and emphasized to define a problem, discuss its causes, and render a moral judgment that leads to suggesting solutions (Entman, 1993). Simply put, framing resembles placing a picture in picture

frame, or cropping/editing a picture before posting it on social media; a person crops an image to show how he/she wants to be portrayed to the viewers. Thus, the content creator who frames a message is doing it intentionally to fulfill certain outcomes.

Framing was coined as the second-level agenda setting to emphasize the salience of the characteristics of media coverage on audiences' interpretations of the news stories (McCombs, Shaw & Weaver, 1997). It is argued that frame building is influenced by culture and goes through a triangle selection, emphasis, and exclusion driving people's attention towards some issues while undermining others (Gitlin, 1980).

Differential framing filters the rapport between motives and behaviors, testing several statements linked to the scope of the phenomenon, suggesting that the audiences are influenced by the framing of the messages and may have different reactions to them in comparison with individual and company cultures (McMahon, 2009).

Framing on Instagram

As this study focuses on GCNL Instagram posts, it is appropriate to discuss research executed using framing theory in relation to Instagram posts. For instance, Russmann et. al., (2016) referred to political and business communication on Instagram and tested which type of organizations are active on Instagram, by which means and for what purposes in examining if they prefer to use Instagram to share one-way information or two-way communication to form and expand organization-public relationships. They found out that the combination of both aspects has been reflected through the advancement of an organization's reputation, the maintenance of long-term relationships, and a deeper understanding of the stakeholders' concerns and expectations. They also reviewed coding of variables under four clusters: the perception of the posting, image management, integration, and interactivity. All these clusters

are relevant to promoting SDGs through GCNL's Instagram page; because all SDGs are integrated together and with key publics (stakeholders), incorporating different hashtags and updating posts to match social events (e.g., Happy Halloween posts), can prompt interactivity; therefore, the way the posts are framed can create a combination of these clusters for better outcomes.

Moreover, Barbour et al., (2016) studied the persona work of content creation on Instagram which inspects distinct types of images, along with the use of hashtags, framing, filters, captions, or tags. It was proven that persona practice is iterative and emergent, both in digitally networked spaces and in our embodied self. Practices and standards vary by hubs, networks have their own vernacular languages, and their use and popularity fluctuate with time (Gibbs et al. 2015).

Taking into consideration the dynamics of visual political communication – including image-making as well as image management, Filimonov et. al., (2016) crafted a five-dimension frame coding scheme: 1) the structure and composition of Instagram still and moving images (e.g., SDG graphics and video posts) and whether filters were used; 2) the structure and content of Instagram captions and tagging mechanisms such as the @, hashtag symbol and emojis (e.g., use of several different hashtags for the variant SDG posts); 3) the political and policy issues referred to in Instagram updates (e.g., relations with government ministries and agencies); 4) the stages of performance depicted based on typologies developed by Corner and Pels (2003) and Van Zoonen (2006) (e.g., media, public, political, private); 5) the mise-en-scene of Intagram still and moving images (e.g., aesthetics, physical location, presence of symbols).

Social Networking Sites (SNS) are a pillar of brand's marketing communication. This pushes professionals to chase the most optimal way to frame posts that lead to positive user

reactions and interactions. In addition, it has been observed that the general theme of a post

("post appeal") is the main component of a successful communication plan. The outcome of

analyzing a sample of 1848 Facebook posts has shown the power of digital marketing. A

platform used by brands to generate attention around their services and to prompt the call to

action. It hence revealed that some post appeals have either positively or negatively affected user

interaction, particularly reflected by the audiences' beliefs and preferences (e.g., as was the case

with two similar SDG posts on GCNL page as discussed in the literature review). Surprisingly,

the posts appeal with a positive impact were rarely used by brands, pointing that brands do not

grip the full potential of this strategy (Wagner et. al., 2017).

Framing of SDGs

Lehmann (2017) differentiated between planned high-level/political SDG campaigns and

citizen-level campaigns. The planned high-level/political SDG campaign engages high caliber

public figures and personalities who become SDG ambassadors. They belong to various fields

such as: sports, arts, entertainment, and media worlds filming videos featuring them, creating

content for social media posts and billboard posters assigned to each goal. These public figures

support the GCNL as a brand image and launch a call for action; they disseminate the SDGs

through their respective networks, their concerts, interviews, and their social media platforms.

At the citizens' level, GCNL thrives to portray "action-oriented engagement activities and

training for key groups such as parliamentarians, municipal leaders, and civil society" (Office of

the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights –([OHCHR], 2008).

Dauda (2018) examined how Malaysian online newspapers framed the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). He utilized thematic examination to investigate the SDGs coverage

of a sample of 16 English online Malaysian newspapers. The themes were as follows: Economy,

education, environment, infrastructure and poverty. Dauda (2018) results indicated that the importance of and attention given to the SDGs agendas in Malaysia were rooted in recurrent "key words and phrases, news elements and news sources" (Dauda & Hasan, 2018). It has been concluded that stakeholders are untapped resources for SDGs funding, aligning SDGs to corporate social responsibility, and via developing better mechanisms for collaboration and partnerships (Malesia Sustainable Development Goals Voluntary National Review 2017).

Framing is used in this study to further understand how GCNL portrays its communication on Instagram, but more so to investigate if these frames are seen as positive or negative by the stakeholders involved. Are these types of interactions/communication devices associated to greater levels of bonding of Stakeholders to GCNL through trust, image, and reputation? These concepts will be investigated through the framework of the social capital theory.

Social Capital Theory

The theoretical dimensions of the social capital theory used for this thesis were developed by Bourdieu and Putnam. Bourdieu (1986) dealt with the role played by various types of capital in the reproduction of unequal relations of power. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) defined social capital as:

> The sum of the resources, actual and virtual, complied by an individual or a collective through belonging to a strong network or institutionalized relationships of reciprocity, companionship, and gratitude…The nature of these relationships and obtained resources are shaped in various forms and/or functions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 119).

In other words, social capital, according to Bourdieu, is a network of social relations that enables a person to advance in his/her environment. Likewise, in this study, the researcher

examines how the networking bonds and opportunities GCNL has created for its stakeholders

help them improve at the corporate and community level.

When a mix of networks and norms are tangled, Putnman (2000) focused on bridging and

bonding as generators of the social capital. In this research, bridging social capital is visible

when social networks are connected via individuals with various backgrounds. Consequently,

this may expand social horizons or worldviews of the members (e.g., such as GCNL outreach,

SDGs). Social networking sites, can thus, help users get access to resources and reach out to

others who share common interests.

Quan-Hasse and Wellman (2004) tackled three leading arguments with regards to social

capital and social networking: a) the Internet shifted social capital via entitling users to seek and

discover other users with similar interests (e.g., stakeholder's interest with GNCL), b) the

Internet decreases social capital through asking users busy with online interactions and denying

face-to-face communications, and c) the Internet replaces social capital by supporting existing

social relations while easing the formation of new ties (e.g., GCNL to stakeholders and

followers).

The positive effects were derived from the observations of (Wellman, Boase, & Chen,

2002; Wellman et al., 2003) and (Horrigan & Rainee, 2002; Howard, Rainie, & Jones, 2001)

who examined how the Internet is enhancing bridging and bonding rather than replacing past

human communication. Chat rooms have been found to be efficient in organizing action, and

have the potential to widen political engagement and the exchange of ideas (Price & Cappella,

2002).

According to Antheunis et. al. (2015) bonding and bridging social capital are fortified by

directed communication and public broadcasting vis-à-vis passive communication (one-way

communication, no interactivity involved). Although SNSs may not expand strong ties, they can tremendously reinforce weak ties since they are designed and shaped to cost-efficiently boost the creation and maintenance of weak ties (Donath & Boyd, 2004). In relation to GCNL, stakeholders can be considered bonding agents that attempt at bridging social capital with their followers back to GCNL. This type of bonding and bridging is developed through a system of interaction with the individuals involved that is based on trust; because without trust and even perhaps arguably loyalty to one another, these networks (stakeholders of SDGs) cannot successfully implement the SDGs. There are then two types of networks: the first, the network of stakeholders who have adopted GCNL's mission and goals; and the second, the social media network formed via Instagram that incorporates the interactivity of GCNL, stakeholders and followers all together. A certain degree of sociality and civic participation can be promoted at low levels of interactivity, such as those provided by new media, leading to reciprocity norms and potentially the establishment of social capital (Bucy &Gregson, 2001; Putnam, 2000). Shared interactions across unlike communities can diminish as the knowledge environment becomes more social, individualized, and fractured, promoting selfishness and self-indulgence (Turow, 1997). When the shared understandings deteriorate, the door opens to violence and societal discord, just like the knowledge gap expected a collapse in social order.

Social Networking Sites have a powerful capacity to widen relationships that were first developed offline. This is particularly relevant to this research since many stakeholders have met at least once in one of the GNCL offline programs and events.

Merging framing and social capital theories, this thesis seeks to develop a benchmark of the best media practices that would help increase SDGs visibility, strengthen brand image (GCNL) and trust, boost implementation, monitor electronic word-of-mouth and evaluate the

impact of these messages in the Lebanese culture where the media landscape is very unique and

where the media, political and public agendas often overlap. Hence, the below research

questions are posed.

Research Questions

RQ1: Does the greater engagement triggered by GCNL higher the chance of bridging

social capital among the stakeholders and followers?

RQ2: What are the frames that GCNL uses to strengthen their social media presence,

mainly that on Instagram, and advance their public agenda?

RQ3: Do the stakeholders' access and satisfaction with GCNL resources and programs

increase stakeholders' loyalty to the brand (GCNL)?

RQ4: Does the active involvement of the stakeholders in GNCL network increase the

stakeholder's company's reputation and collaboration with GCNL?

Methodology

This thesis combined qualitative and quantitative methods, since the reach of social media campaigns highly depends on the selected social media platform and the context of the posts (Kapoor, et.al, 2018). A questionnaire was sent out to stakeholders of GCNL to understand the impact of GCNL campaigns on their awareness about the SDGs and their action plan. Two focus groups were held to collect clear inputs around the various concepts. Everything complemented with an in-depth interview with GCNL Strategic Advisor Dr. Hassan Youness. Dr. Youness, as the former strategic advisor (2019-2021) has the most insights about what and how communication was executed. This chapter details the aforementioned by describing further the procedure, sample, and variables tested.

4.1. Procedure

Given the stakeholders or population of interest involved, a qualitative research method was adopted for this study. First, the researcher conducted a descriptive analysis of the posts and social media pages of the GCNL programs (which results were introduced in the literature review for clarity and understanding of GCNL). The descriptive analysis served two purposes: as a guide describing the characteristics of the GCNL online platform and as a starting point for the interview. After the thorough descriptive analysis, an in-depth interview was conducted with the GCNL Former Strategic Advisor, Dr. Hassan Youness (see Appendix A for interview questions). Although, this one interview can present a source of bias, yet the strategic advisor has the most insights about what and how communication was executed through the online platform (i.e., Instagram). Thus, although Dr. Youness' responses to how certain GCNL posts were framed could be one-sided, gathering the perspectives of the stakeholders involved and comparing them to the response will balance the results. Stakeholders were recruited for focus

group sessions in order to understand their attitudes and behaviors towards the SDGs and GCNL.

Nine participants joined the two focus group sessions. In addition, the stakeholders were asked to

fill out a questionnaire to further assess their perceptions of GCNL online communications

strategies and to provide an elaborated assessment of GCNL online media campaigns, GCNL

products and services (GCNL as a brand), trust and impact on stakeholders. Furthermore, some

stakeholders were not part of the focus group sessions, instead they completed the same online

questionnaire that was given to the stakeholders who participated in the focus group sessions

(See Appendix B for focus group moderator's guide and Appendix C for the questionnaire). The

online questionnaire was hosted on Google Forms and the link was sent out to the sample via

email asking for their voluntary participation. The variables/concepts assessed are detailed in

section 4.3

4.2. Sample

This research relied on a simple random sampling technique to recruit stakeholders to

participate. Using the simple random sampling technique allowed every member of the GCNL

network to have an equal chance of being selected (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). However,

results cannot be generalized back to the population of interest given that only 17% of the GCNL

network participated. Accordingly, the researcher retrieved the contact information of 160

GCNL network members by first compiling the list of stakeholders from the GCNL website and

then visiting each company/NGO's website to check the proper contact information. The

eligibility criteria reside in having been part of GCNL online activities such as taking part in the

Young SDGs Innovators program or attending the SDGs Academy series among others. These

participants are considered as the core partners of GCNL, they are companies, institutions, and

academia. They come from different backgrounds and industries which will enrich the data with

various opinions. They can be also labeled as alumni or beneficiaries, persons who applied and

were selected to take part of the programs or attended the workshops and forums and hence are

identified in this research as the stakeholders. The final sample for the results, thus, focuses on

the stakeholders who are members of the GCNL, being committed to the SDGs within their

corporate agenda, their engagement with GCNL and how through their involvement as

influencers, they can strengthen ties in society with the followers and the cause. From the

respondents of the questionnaires (N = 26), 46.2% hold positions that involve decision-making at

a managerial level. They are mainly distributed among various fields, 19.2 % belong to the

corporate sector, and 19.2 % are affiliated to non-profits while the others were disseminated to

higher education institutions and social enterprises. Their terms of affiliation to GCNL network

varied between less than six months (3.8%) up to five years (15.4 %). As for the two focus

groups, focus group A was composed of five representatives from Holdal[1], INDEVCO[2], Shamaa,

ShareQ[3] and BMF Architects. Focus group B encompassed 4 participants from Université Saint

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[1] HOLDAL CSR & SDG roadmaps have made significant progress in 2018 despite the challenges our region has been facing. Holdal joined the United Nations Global Compact and Global Compact Lebanon in January 2018 in supporting the 10 principles on human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption

[2] INDEVCO employs over 9900 people in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and the US in 38 manufacturing plants and 38 commercial companies. INDEVCO seeks to best serve a wide array of industries in nearly 90 countries worldwide, including agriculture; away-from-home, beverage; building and construction; chemical and petrochemical, dairy and ice cream; food; household care, hygiene converting; logistics and shipping, personal care, pharmaceutical, plastics converting, renewable energy, retail promotion, and tissue converting.

[3] ShareQ or شارك is a Lebanese non-profit organization launched by a group of dedicated young professionals in 2012.

Our vision is to insure support for people facing physical and financial challenges so they can overcome them and lead a productive and dignified life.

Our mission is to launch social enterprises and programs that offer innovative products, services while providing solutions for crucial social challenges.

Joseph-USJ, Injaz, S-Miles, Stand for Women[4], whereas the Balamand Universty representative couldn't join at the last minute and opted for answering the questionnaire.

4.3. Variables

Trust: Trust occurs when one party believes in the honesty and dignity of another one (Morgan et al., 1994). Trust was measured using a Likert-type scale from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree and mainly includes five items such as "I tend to trust GCNL's services" and "I believe that GCNL has honest motives." Trust is perceived as a pre-condition of social capital since organizational loyalty is linked to trust, which contributes to stakeholder's psychological connection to the organization, including the common feeling among employees that they are happy to be members of a company (Hunt, 1994). O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) described an organization as "a collection of people who work together to achieve a common goal" (p. 492–499). Relational trust can prompt sharing ideas and expertise among parties, as well as fostering flexibility and risk taking, both of which help a company fuel social capital. Hence, the organizational involvement and collaborative climax is the oxygen for long-term stability of an organization and the thriving of its members (Cook & Wall, 1980, p. 39).

Employees' and clients trust (reinforced sense of belonging, likeability to be doing business with this company or institution or buying from its products since it is socially responsible) depends on the intensity of SDGs incorporation within the organizations (in terms of number of goals adopted and how serious they are in the implementation).

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[4] Stand for Women is a social enterprise advocating the empowerment of women in the workforce across the Middle East.

Meanwhile, according to Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982), trust was also examined as the product of social capital: "Higher levels of organizational social capital reveal the individuals' involvement, commitment and identification with the organization". This mutual commitment has led to a bonding with the organization's goals and values (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974). Thereof, stakeholders would tend to prioritize the matters that are serving the organizational needs collectively, priming them over their limited personal interest.

Brand loyalty: Social media accelerates building brand loyalty via networking, conversation, and community building (McKee, 2010) which gears stakeholders' outreach (Khurram, M. et.al, 2018). Brand loyalty was examined through ten statements rating the level of agreement with from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree in relation to continuous commitment to GCNL initiatives: "I intend to collaborate with GCNL in the future," and "I intend to engage with other programs and activities by GCNL."

Engagement: Engagement is the extent to which a stakeholder or target audience is committed to a certain brand. It was measured by questions directly asking the participants to rate their level of active participation in GCNL initiatives. In addition, it asked participants to select on a scale of 1-5, 1 = extremely useful and 5 = extremely useless, to which extent did this program help them to gain a better understanding of the SDGs?

Participation: Participation is taking part in specific tailor-made programs and activities. It was measured by asking participants several questions about their participation in GCNL programs, activities and/or events; as well as how active they are on the SNSs associated with the programs.

Satisfaction: The level of approval and appraisal of GCNL online services and products. This variable was measured by asking the stakeholders to rate their level of satisfaction from 1 =

very satisfied to 5 = very dissatisfied with statements relevant to GCNL programs "The content of

the program was rich, the methodology (e.g.: style of delivery, research, statistics, case studies,

role playing) used was helpful and user-friendly" and "mentors/trainers were qualified and

engaging, groups dynamics were welcoming and encouraging." They were also asked to determine

their level of compliance of GCNL programs with their expectations "GCNL programs always

fulfil my expectations" from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Electronic Word of Mouth: It is also known as e-opinion where media consumers share

their experiences about a certain brand, its services and products with their network creating a

snowball effect. Thus, they become informal ambassadors of the brand. This was measured by

asking participants if they engage in reposting or sharing SDGs related posts on their social media

networks and their frequency of doing so.

Attitude towards GCNL: The stakeholders' attitude about GCNL is a key determinant

that could either hinder or fuel adoption of SDGs and lead to stronger bonding. Stakeholders were

encouraged to rate the level of agreement to four separate statements from 1 = strongly agree to 5

=strongly disagree, in relation to the overall GCNL initiatives, such as "I am interested in learning

about GCNL events and opportunities" and "There should be stronger focus on testimonies and

partnerships."

Adopting and Bonding: In reference to the social capital theory, communities and

institutions create a bond around common causes. These factors were measured through a rating

–oriented type of questions. For instance, stakeholders were asked to rate the level of

involvement on GCNL social media networking sites: 1 very active 5 not at all active. They rated

the level of agreement with a set of statements from 1 = strongly agree to 5 =strongly disagree, in

relation to GCNL program initiatives.

GCNL Reputation: GCNL reputation is the image and credibility that GCNL conveys to its stakeholders and general audience. It was assessed via asking stakeholders to rate the level of agreement on eight statements from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree, such as "GCNL treats its stakeholders in a fair manner," and "GCNL is concerned about its follower's needs."

Corporate Reputation of Stakeholders: Corporate reputation is often examined at the internal and external levels by the company's performance and the employees and clients' satisfaction (Chun, 2005). It was measured by asking survey respondents to compare different items using a common scale: "Please rate each of the following elements on a rating scale of 1-5, where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree for statements such as, "GCNL has helped build my company's reputation through its interdisciplinary approach and international stand," and "through GCNL our company was able to reach out to the community."

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data that was collected through many stages, on a quantitative level, the researcher used descriptive statistics (percentages and frequencies), that were retrieved from SPSS.

On a qualitative perspective, the researcher used a thematic approach to analyzing the data. First the researcher grouped the focus group discussions content under several categories that match with the variables and concepts. The researcher has also reviewed the interview insights based on the themes that were discussed in the descriptive analysis of the posts. After linking all of the above, the researcher reported the results by choosing quotes from the focus group participants and the interview and combined them with the statistical outcomes for a comprehensive assessment.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the researcher presents the reflection on the data collected from qualitative and quantitative methods. It also categorizes the outcomes as per the concepts tested. Whether they were accepted or refuted, the stakeholders' perspectives on the various elements certainly provide an understanding of the digital advocacy landscape and the itinerary of the SDGs journey in Lebanon.

RQ 1: Engagement and Bridging Networks

As a starting point, it is vital to understand the rationale behind international agencies recruitment and networking processes. For the GCNL case, Dr. Hassan Youness unveiled that the recruitment to grow the network was done via multiple channels: one-on-ones, via the board members, members of the secretariat who run these activities, through some syndicates, word of mouth, and some referrals. Such means proved to be fruitful, since GCNL is now one of the biggest networks per capita in the world (Youness, 2021).

According to Dr. Youness, the mission and vision of GCNL revolve around Agenda 2030 for achieving the 17 sustainable development goals which are related to every activity that has an impact on people, planet and prosperity. It involves working with the private sector to fulfil that, so, the United Nations Global Compact in general was created due to the important role of the private sector and the Lebanese network has the same purpose of working with and engaging the private sector to have a more socially responsible community. This converges with the argument of Bourdieu and Wacqant (1992) previously discussed showing how the combination of resources from various types can model the networking and nature of relationships. This proves that it doesn't matter on which basis the connection was first formed, what is important is which path it will take and how it will be institutionalized.

The results showed that 42.9% of the questionnaire respondents are barely involved in GCNL social media networking sites while 21.4% were very active which unveils some flaws in the digital communication process. Meanwhile, 23.1% of the questionnaire respondents strongly agreed that GCNL social media networking sites allow users to reach out to others who share common interests. This crosses back with the idea of (Wagner et. al., 2017) positing that social media networking sites posts might have a double edge sword effect by whether positively or negatively affecting the target audiences because some brands do not reap their full capacity.

 It is accurate that with commitment and memberships come responsibilities and privileges. Hereby, Dr. Youness noted that "the privileges granted to GCNL members can be summarized by belonging to an eco-system, exchanging and sharing expertise, having access to the academy sessions, to exclusive campaigns, competitions and webinars." A statement that gained the stakeholders' appraisal as Mrs. Ghanem from Holdal Group believes that the diverse ecosystem created by GCNL has opened their company's outlooks to the multiple actors of change and integrated them within the bigger national call for action. She already perceives it as a milestone.

Bridging and Bonding

Third, USJ Representative Dr. El Hage described it as "a great visibility platform, and it challenges us to go beyond our expectations, to stress on the importance of collaboration and to investigate the interdisciplinary approach while opening up to new outlooks". A step confirmed by 41.7% of the respondents who agreed on its efficiency in paving the way for long-term collaborations among GCNL and the participating members/followers. These types of long-term collaborations are indicative of bonding social capital initiatives because as suggested long-term initiatives are opposed to short-term.

In terms of bonding and outreach, GCNL acted as a fertilizer to new ecosystems bridging the gap among local and international key players. For example, Injaz had the chance to team up with UNDP and integrate the SDGS further in their programs. They are also coordinating with Eco Switch Coalition and Fondation DIANE[5] who are working on clean entrepreneurship and sustainability as it is a part of a directional strategy that they are following. The program allows for valuable collaborations across industries according to 66.6% of the participants. Thus, this generates deep and meaningful connections even though they come from various backgrounds. They were united by a pool of resources under GCNL's vision plan. As for those who did not agree, it could have been perhaps because they were not actively involved in the communication process or haven't reaped the benefits of a long-term partnership.

Dr El Hage accentuated the need to improve this kind of collaboration. He explained: "It is at the core of our mission at Fondation DIANE to build cooperation among all the relevant NGOs and the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Environment." Moreover, he reminded: "Unfortunately, it is not easy in Lebanon due to bureaucracy and lack of communication, believing that GCNL is responsible for establishing this rapport." That's where the role of GCNL comes from since it has established internal committees with many ministries which help overcome the bureaucratic obstacles. A step that initiated an involvement at the core of cohesion and active citizenship, potentially seeding mutual norms as well as implementing social capital among the members as put by (Bucy & Gregson, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

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[5] (CEEDD) was created by the "Diane Foundation" in October 2015.
It aims to be an interdisciplinary platform dedicated to environmental issues with an integrative approach. It is distinguished by the strong links it establishes between citizenship and sustainable development. It acts as a crossroads between the various local bodies dealing with these issues and aiming for international collaboration.

Many barriers and challenges came to the table of discussion throughout the in-depth assessment of GCNL communication strategies towards the stakeholders. First, the lack of access to information and the communications hindrances as well as the absence of a database. Second, the national culture and financial obstacles (Fondation DIANE, USJ). Third, the lack of grants and funds as well as the limited resources due to the ongoing socio-economic issues (Stand for Women). Fourth, there is a gap in the SDGs presence in the media discourse, as they remain not relatable to the mass public. Besides, there is no direct correlation between the SDGs and our daily life. "Just 10 out of 100 people will know about it. Youth will not feel concerned unless they have experienced it" (Injaz). An idea that points to the flaws in the communication of SDGs and the relativity of the efficiency of the framing techniques in relation to the segmented audiences. This is important because if the SDGs are not well communicated, the chances of expanding their reach will decrease and GCNL would fail at meeting its international commitments. Not only that, but the repercussion would harm the community at several levels and would worsen the socioeconomic crises and affect universal principles such as justice and transparency.

RQ 2: Framing of SDGs

Tackling the framing of GCNL messages and campaigns, all focus groups participants found that they are rich and integrative, creating a room for involvement to all. Seven out of nine focus group participants revealed the power of email marketing mentioning that they usually receive specific call to action to join certain initiatives and movements. As for the remaining stakeholders, videos, stories, and graphics ranked as the top three posts genres that help promote the SDGs in the optimum way. A point that is comparable to differential framing

that looks at the linkages and messages filters that incongruously affect the audiences based on

their personal and corporate cultures (McMahon, 2009).

Regarding the main highlights of the program's online campaigns, the survey outputs

revealed that the main highlights of the program's online campaigns are represented by: the

universality of the causes (3.8%), the comprehensiveness (7.7%), the coherence (3.8%), the

engaging posts (3.8%), catchy visuals (3.8%), well drafted captions (3.8%), as well as the style's

variations (3.8%) and inclination towards social impact while serving the 17 SDGs and ten

principles.

The participation remains a key indicator of the stakeholders' serious commitment to the

Agenda 2030 since 37.5 % strongly agreed and 29.2 % agreed that they are more interested in

GCNL than its international counterparts thanks to accessing and participating in its programs

and activities. Seven out of nine of the focus groups participants have strongly agreed that they

are interested in learning about GCNL events and opportunities. For Shamaa, it is a ground for

visibility and a potential to build partnerships while ShareQ perceives it as a good hub for avant-

gardists inclusion. Both insights refer to the social capital theory suggesting that individuals and

groups bond with a cause that meets their aspirations and needs and in return bridge together the

company, cause and greater community.

Strategic Framing and Advocacy

Tackling the multimedia strategies that GCNL resort to in order to promote the SDGs,

Dr. Youness explained that GCNL has its digital media presence. It has an active and interactive

website linked to its social media platforms: to Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn, and it relies

heavily on e-mail marketing, the most efficient manner for interacting with different players

from the civil society organizations, academia and the private sector.

Highlighting the framing of GCNL programs and activities to prime them on the

stakeholders' agenda, Dr. Youness stressed that "every program has its own particularity. For

example, the YSIP program has one-on-one interaction with the companies. So, for example, if

we have 11 teams in the YSIP program, we interact with the 11 companies via weekly or

monthly meetings, as well as mass marketing via the digital media platforms." The findings

indicate that GCNL is aware of the goals relevant to the Lebanese Network priorities and is

strategically planning the campaigns to meet them which is compatible with the thematic

examination of Dauda (2018) of how Malaysian online newspapers framed the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) that were as follows: economy, education, environment,

infrastructure and poverty.

To support Dr. Youness' claim, eight out of nine stakeholders agreed that GCNL is aware

of its responsibility to society and thus offers high quality programs. On another note, as for the

Rebuilding Beirut Initiative, Dr. Youness recalled that they relied on digital and traditional mass

media to promote the cause, in order to establish a proper matching among the donors and the

beneficiaries.

The high level of credibility emanates from the international reference of the GCNL. Dr.

Youness mentioned the SDGs Academy webinar series that are done with a strong cooperation

with the headquarters, and definitely most of the members of GCNL have access to this academy

webinars series: "They get the emails from UNGC New York to join the academy sessions that

are of interest to them because the sessions revolve around many topics related to: women's

rights, involvement of minorities, life on earth, life under water."

Tremendous efforts and collaborative solutions came to rescue amid the Lebanese case. Dr. Youness shared the major achievement: creating this corporate social responsibility spirit in Lebanon, strengthening the bonding with this network of like-minded organizations, whether academia, private sector institutions or civil society organizations in addition to the programs that were run." For instance, the program in collaboration with UN Women reinforced the involvement of women in the decision-making process, and helped in breaking the glass ceiling. The YSIP program succeeded in disrupting a sense of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship. The Lira Betchabbe3 campaign helped underprivileged people in Lebanon.

Dr. Youness ensured that the reporting process respects certain guidelines for transparency and accountability as they frequently report to the board of directors, to the SDGs council which is composed of the top CEOs in the country, and to the headquarters in New York. If they are partnering with certain donors such as UN Women, the World Bank, or the World Food Program, then they will share insights or submit reports to them respectively which reinforce the joint discourse and continuous cooperation among all UN institutions operating in the MENA region and their global headquarters.

According to the findings and despite all the efforts deployed by GCNL and its network members, there are still many missing factors that strengthen bridging and bonding among all Agenda 2030 actors such as a well-grounded database sorted by scope of interests and interventions, a dynamic platform that updates GCNL programs and activities, a space for follow up on already implemented projects and benchmarking the evaluation procedures. It has been clear that with the COVID-19 restrictions, GCNL has moved its activities online. Hence, relying merely on SNS which did not fully play in its favor. Hereby, it is important to understand that effective communication is definitely about alteration between online and in-person approaches.

RQ3: Stakeholders' Satisfaction and Loyalty to the brand

Out of all the questionnaire respondents, 54.2% were satisfied with the richness of GCNL programs content. The methodology used in various programs was satisfactory, efficient and user-friendly for 41.7% of the total respondents. In addition, assessing the qualifications of the high-profile mentors and trainers, 54.2 % found it satisfactory. Nonetheless, the group dynamics haven't gained unanimity since 16.7% of the total respondents expressed dissatisfaction.

They also emphasized that they usually resort to the electronic word- of- mouth by sharing GCNL call to action as long as they are directly contributing to it and satisfied with its approach while it is relevant to their scope of interest and work. BMF Architects said that "we usually resort to word of mouth as long as we are closely involved in the initiative or program at hand as long as it is relatable." An issue that brings to attention the need for efficient political communications tactics on social media, with 35.7 % of the stakeholders likely to repost or share SDGs related posts.

Assessing the outreach potential of bridging social capital, the stakeholders had various perspectives. The nine participants agreed on the need for stronger focus on testimonies and partnerships, "they give a human face to every story and make it noteworthy" Ms. Samar Dani, Executive Director at Injaz-Lebanon said. Whereas Mrs. Maissa Abou Adal Ghanem – Member of the BOD, IAC & CSO at Holdal Abou Adal Group saw that the greater involvement in social media networking sites reaped its fruits by bridging among followers. In this context, 50.0% have noticed that social media networking sites were powerful bonding tools that helped maintain ongoing communications. This entails that the social media networking sites might be a good means to transform online networking to hybrid collaborations.

In this context, Shamaa's Executive Director Mrs. Rita Maalouf pointed out that their niche is selective, and that they were thriving for bonding, but it doesn't happen through GCNL yet. Niche segments within such programs could be a potential area for future research, especially that they might require greater efforts or specialized ways of engagement for bonding to occur within and across the networks. An angle that Quan-Hasse and Wellman (2004) addressed about social capital and social networking since the internet has changed the traditional flow of information by granting the audience more autonomy. Thus, threating the frequency of offline networking opportunities.

However, Founder and Executive Director of ShareQ (a non-profit), Mr. Samer Sfeir mentioned that they have met Holdal and INDEVCO through GCNL and other channels, since they were on the same wave and they had a common ground. He added: "Sometimes it is recurrent since the continuous nature of our work strengthened our bonds/relationships. However, within GCNL we need to see more engagement that leads to productivity." An assumption that intersects with the finding of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) recommending a reinforcement of the UN online presence in the region, thus, introducing a new channel of communication that goes beyond the GCNL stakeholders' database and reaches wider social media users who gained a platform to share their opinion while respecting differences and ensuring social inclusion.

After dealing with the satisfaction and word of mouth factors, another concern arises when it comes to the access to resources, and the outcomes of the stakeholders' involvement in the action plan on their corporate reputation. It is a deeper layer that examines the responsibilities and privileges that come with the access to resources as well as the challenges and opportunities that can be derived from the involvement and implementation.

In the focus group, the stakeholders discussed the access to GCNL programs and activities, dealing with the benefits and outcomes. Mrs. Gacia Apikian- Global Communications and Sustainability Manager at INDEVCO Group argued that the programs are an added value because they bring in local and international experts to guide stakeholders and beneficiaries through many steps. She stressed that "GCNL programs and activities facilitate networking and partnerships among companies from around the world which was helpful to strategize better." An observation that demonstrates that bridging expands from the local networks to the global networks of partnerships, and that involvement could potentially lead to bonding. It also points to the trust and loyalty factors. In addition, this is another outcome of the SDGs communication strategies that are globalized as far as connecting networks and encouraging participation through the use of social media communication.

ShareQ team was deeply involved in this process as explained by Mr. Samer Sfeir: "We had the opportunity to put our expertise at the service of training HR managers from GCNL network of companies on inclusive recruitment. As an outcome, they employed more people with disabilities." He described GCNL as a door opener, reconsidering boosting their collaboration on several levels. This grounded network triggered a fast-paced evolution of communication technology and had expanded the spectrum of opportunities due to the interconnectedness of groups regardless of their status and therefore drove them together to form alternative communities as highlighted by (Servaes, 2017).

Mrs. Maissa Abou Adal Ghanem from Holdal Abou Adal Group affirmed that the tools and resources that GCNL have put at their disposal helped Holdal rewire the challenges and develop a zero-waste sustainable economic affordable solution to all.

As for Shamaa, Mrs. Maalouf pointed out that although they were already on the right track and that their mission and objectives were set and clear, their participation in GCNL programs and activities drove them to focus more and to categorize their actions as they were taking reporting more seriously.

The stakeholders' stand on this issue proves that their loyalty to GCNL as a brand increased thanks to their access to GCNL resources, programs and activities. This implies that social networking sites widened the relationships (e.g., bonding relationships) that were first developed offline (bridged relationships). An interesting layer that Price & Cappella, (2002) expanded to justify that offline spaces can be duplicated online as it is the case currently with Chatrooms, Google Meet, Twitter Spaces and Clubhouse. Like-minded people and businesses can gather around certain topics or in a conference-like atmosphere, then they will maintain connection through emails subscriptions or workshops sign up. All of which can lead to in-person meetings and vise-versa. Meeting up in a physical conference or workshop can lead to connecting among the network via social media sites or other institutional platforms to stay in touch and lobby around certain causes.

Stakeholders' Loyalty to GCNL Brand

Discussing the campaigns' characteristics, for the stakeholders, GCNL brand identity is noticeable, the SDGs framing, the colors, the language, and the call to action were recurrent elements of the campaigns' communicative messages.

The stakeholders' assessment for the access to GCNL programs and activities and their loyalty affiliation towards the brand was somehow relative. Injaz confirmed that they are involved with GCNL because they believe in the mission, and they didn't necessarily seek benefits or get access to privileges organically. USJ believed that the networking, collaboration,

as well as reporting process, the tools and instruments provided by GCNL were really beneficial

for the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis and to reconsider the

best approach for the incorporation and implementation of the SDGs.

All these elements played a role in accelerating the stakeholders' loyalty to GCNL brand,

62.5% of the overall questionnaire respondents strongly agreed that they will be collaborating

with GCNL in the future after accessing and experimenting their resources and programs.

Moreover, due to GCNL resources and programs benefits and impact, 50.0% of the total

respondents will renew the engagement in GCNL activities. Most importantly, as the loyalty to

the brand has been sealed, 50.0% strongly agreed and 29.2% agreed on recommending GCNL

initiatives to others in their networks, and 50.0% would prioritize it over other similar

international agencies. These relatively high figures give us an understanding of the importance

of reciprocity in the rapport between GCNL and its stakeholders which was reflected by the win-

win situation.

This step lays the ground for a solid company reputation well-crafted thanks to the

know-how transmitted by GCNL activities and the strategic implementation of the Agenda 2030

at the leadership and operational levels within the stakeholders' respective workplaces.

RQ 4: Involvement in the Action Plan and Corporate Reputation

When it comes to the engagement with the SDGS action plan and involvement with

GCNL, each company adopts a pool of SDGs that they usually rotate on yearly basis. Thus, they

set corporate strategies accordingly, and develop projects that tackle each goal.

Seven out of nine participants were neutral when it comes to the statement "the 17 SDGs are

given the same space and interest on GCNL platforms", an issue that was also reflected within

the companies and institutions. For instance, BMF architects[6] mainly focus on concrete base and

up cycling designs. They advocate for responsible construction sites, relying on solar energy, and

clean water. They have also been pushing towards gender equality and good health and well-

being. This example illustrates that even though BMF is scientifically oriented, it bridges the gap

to engage and invest in leadership and humanitarian goals. This wouldn't have been possible

without the framing of the goals on GCNL platforms. When GCNL introduced each goal with

relevant facts and figures about them, the stakeholders got acquainted to them and were curious

to discover the outcomes of adopting them which is defined as the second-level agenda setting

managing the salience of a topic (McCombs, Shaw & Weaver, 1997).

In the case of Holdal, and as sustainability was embedded in their purpose, adopting the

SDGs was the natural way forward, they usually focus on three axes of philanthropy: saving

lives, empowering communities, and sustainable development. Thus, for Holdal, joining GCNL

was a great opportunity to put pressure on the company, and to make the process more

disciplined and transparent, and from a change management point of view, to become more

holistic in everything they do. Another proof that Lebanon as a signatory country and GCNL as

an implementation body, have succeeded in mobilizing the private sector to be part of the SDGs

advocacy and action task force.

The majority of the stakeholders appreciated the fact that their corporate social

responsibility (CSR) has improved and has been institutionalized by joining GCNL. Eight out of

nine agreed that being part of GCNL has boosted their CSR "because it allows them to gain more

access to local, regional, and international resources and references to tailor them to their

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[6] "Established in 2006, by Architects Hany BOU MIKHAEL and Nisrine FARAH, BMF Architects s.a.r.l is since looking forward for a persuasive idiom with a main objective to create a high-quality end of project, through elaboration, development and progress.

company's needs, seven out of nine either agreed or strongly agreed on the fact that it is easy to access GCNL resources and/or programs. Member of the BOD, IAC & CSO at Holdal Abou Adal Group Mrs. Maissa Abou Adal Ghanem summarized it well by emphasizing that: "being part of this bigger national call for action is already a milestone." They were able to open-up to the diverse ecosystems and to be part of multiple actors of change. Thus, improving their corporate image and disseminating a credible portfolio to their respective shareholders and stakeholders. This signifies that the social capital theory is value-based and a motivation to show integrity in incorporating the Corporate Social Responsibility within an institution's philosophy. Thus, in order to strengthen the bonds with society or within a community, companies are encouraged to uphold their corporate social responsibilities and not just propose them or market their company/institution/organization by them.

Adoption and Trust

For Holdal, SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) is of greater importance because it is about bringing coalitions together around the main values. They have been working on integrating the SDGS to the workplace culture through the leadership style and teamwork, putting everyone's principles, convictions, and values to be part of the bigger solution.

Goal 10 (Reduce Inequalities) is a top priority for Shamaa: as they are keen on giving equal access to information to students in both public and private universities. As for Goals 4 (Quality Education) and 5 (Gender Equality), Shamaa also developed tutorials around research essentials, copyrights and dissertations. Besides, they ensure equal gender representation within the board and team members. In line with Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), they also implemented efforts by signing more than 100 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with universities and institutions.

ShareQ has mainly adopted Goals 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduce Inequalities) 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). In order to expand awareness around the SDGs and to create an action task force, they signed MoUs with around 30 NGOs and created a disruption among companies to seriously consider inclusiveness as a mindset. This indicates that massive partnerships make the goals implementation smoother and that bridging companies/ NGOs and/or communities is feasible when the common objectives are set and the dialogue is open among them while respecting their uniqueness and building upon the richness of their backgrounds.

INDEVCO has run an internal auto evaluation globally (all units under INDEVCO group worldwide) resulting in identifying eight SDGs (3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17), since they were planning to make their engagement impactful.

They believe that SDG 17 is fundamental as "none of these SDGs is possible if we do not work together across the private and public sectors." Moving forward, they are going to use the SDGs as a guide towards achieving the 2030 sustainability strategy. GCNL outreaching and communication strategies through framing allowed the stakeholders to spot the goals that interest them for a long-term commitment.

To fully ensure trust, ways to measure the development of the goals should be executed by GCNL so that some of the problematic areas can be addressed and resolved. It is then noteworthy to mention that the focus group participants have brought to attention some barriers that they are facing as members of the GCNL and SDGs actors. Five out of nine focus group members questioned the criteria that GCNL uses in treating its stakeholders.

Samer Sfeir from ShareQ said that: "to be realistic the absence of a real measurement of the SDGs could backfire since it will become self-satisfactory and hinders evolution." He added that "it is not sufficient to tick SDGs, there is a need to really build on that." He pointed out that some entities join the GCNL just for the image without being faithfully involved in the SDGs implementation. In this context, he explained: "First and foremost, we joined GCNL with the aim of building partnerships with companies, NGOs and institutions that want to make an impact. Thus, the reality does not fulfil these expectations." He urged for putting a benchmark to measure the involvement of a company based on its capacity. Such additions will make a difference as they will help in creating a transparency policy so that the management can assess the strategies implemented internally and GCNL can hold its network members accountable on their engagements. Those are the pillars to enhance a network's social capital since it will showcase a model of good governance which is one of the main reforms that the international community is asking the Lebanese government to abide by in order to pave the way for potential investment, and the private sector is the key leader in this framework (World Bank, 2021).

Gacia Apikian from INDEVCO pointed out that "the issue with sustainability is that we transitioned from what is now considered change and what was previously labeled as CSR without really thinking about the numbers behind it: How many people were really impacted? How many from the people who were impacted transmitted it to others?" Meanwhile, the implementation of the SDGS is a work in progress and they are trying the best with the resources at hand. She finally proposed the introduction of unified quantitative metrics for the SDGs and on a comprehensive national level.

A matter that GCNL Former Strategic Advisor Dr. Hassan Youness clarified during his interview, when it comes to monitoring the SDGs campaigns implementation and follow up, he

referred to an international and a local component because the different SDGs are being

implemented distinctively across countries as the challenges aren't the same. He added:

> So, the way to confront these challenges has to be a bit different, not uniform, they have
>
> to be customized. That's what we were keen about doing in the campaigns that had this
>
> local sense. The Secretariat of GCNL monitors these online campaigns along with the
>
> members of the board of Directors who are part of the General Assembly, they are
>
> elected by it, and they are representatives of the major private sector institutions and civil
>
> society organizations, and every member of the board of directors has his own field of
>
> expertise and they can help in monitoring as well as in the evaluation and even in ideation
>
> before running these campaigns.

All the programs are evaluated based on the metrics, rubrics and score cards that were

developed to weigh to which extent they achieved their purpose. The major metrics are the

indicators of the SDGs. Besides, each program has its own particularity and its own success

factors. For the YSIP, the inventions that were developed inside the corporations to which the

cohorts belong helped in assessing whether the SDGs are being implemented properly or not.

For example, for the *Lira Betchabbe3* Campaign, the major success indicator was the

reach out on social media, spreading the message, raising awareness on the level of poverty in

Lebanon, via TV interviews, influencers' marketing, ads, digital media presence, and most

importantly raising donations. A primary goal that Lehmann (2017) investigated in a

comparative approach between the political and SDG efforts in parallel to citizen-level

campaigns. As apparent on GCNL Lira Betchabbe3 campaign, celebrities from various fields

promoted the GCNL as a brand and issued a call to action, spreading the SDGs through their

media appearances and social media placements. The same issue arises in presidential electoral

campaigns in the US for instance when celebrities encourage citizens to vote or try to influence

their choices for certain brand or persons who become a brand name by themselves.

Maissa Abou Adal Ghanem from Holdal commanded the democratization of the

process, the need for consistency, daily commitment and having the courage to go against the

status quo, and to go back to the environmental and social impact. "There is no small and big

actions, we can't compare or have the same expectations from startups and multinationals. We're

just a drop in the ocean, but if we mobilize a human chain around the right action, it will pay

off", she declared. So, the success of the SDGs action plan depends on its ability to engage

people at all levels, from the bottom to the top of the pyramid, especially the actors that are in

direct contact with the needs of the communities (OHCHR, 2008).

Trust

In line with the motives behind the stakeholders' involvement in the GCNL, the

respondents expressed their trust towards GCNL vision, mission, services and reforms (50%

strongly agreed while 45.8% agreed). Knowing that the trust is a component of the bridging and

bonding trajectory, 54.2 % strongly agreed that GCNL is a reputable international network which

means that trust cannot be established unless there is credibility.

For example, Ms. Mireille Chrabieh- Co-Founder and Managing Director at Special

Miles[7] joined the network based on the industry needs and her relevant experience, since GCNL

hub met her entrepreneurial vision.

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[7] S-miles - Special Miles is a specialized inclusive center, founded in January 2011, and includes individuals between 3 and 25 years of age, with and without learning difficulties and mild special needs.

As for Ms. Samar Dani- Executive Director – Injaz Lebanon[8], she was inspired by the whole model of their institution which is grounded in partnerships among different sectors especially the private and public sectors as well as different organizations. She added: "Since we are education-based, being part of a network that is working towards more development and responsibility is aligned with our mission and is also helpful to achieve more objectives. It strengthens our commitment and contribution towards Agenda 2030." This pertains to Lebanon's meeting at least seven Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in health, primary education, and gender equality in education.

Pr. Fadi El Hage, PhD. representing the Chair in Education for Eco-citizenship and Sustainable Development at USJ explained that the faculties work together on achieving multiple goals. Thus, they were seeking a strong linkage among the various SDGs under the umbrella of GCNL which justifies why 45.8 % appreciate their involvement in GCNL network for strengthening the corporate image while 41.7 % believed that it has boosted their entity's reputation at the societal level. This is another advantage of forming bonds internally and externally.

Company Reputation

On the involvement and impact on the company's reputation side, many perspectives were brought to table.

First, Representative from Stand for Women- Project Coordinator Roula Achkouti pointed out that their involvement with GCNL helped them expand their initiatives and get referrals and bond with other members such as Holdal. Likewise, 37.5% of the total respondents

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[8] INJAZ Lebanon is a non-profit organization that aims to educate and prepare Lebanon's youth to become successful entrepreneurs and qualified employees stimulating their communities.

agreed that GCNL has helped build their company's reputation through its interdisciplinary

approach and international stand. Through GCNL, their company was able to reach out to the

community (29.2 % agreed 25% strongly agreed; whereas 33.3% of the participants were

neutral), 45.8% strongly agreed that their own image strengthened while 41.7% agreed that

GCNL initiatives have helped them increase their company's reputation within society.

Moreover, 31.8% agreed and 18.2% strongly agreed while only 9.1% disagreed when asked if

the GCNL network helped them to advance in their domain since GCNL activities and events are

not industry-oriented, rather they are sustainability driven across many sectors and industries.

Seen as an entity, these outcomes are indicators of the power of GCNL programs and

initiatives accessibility in nurturing the company's reputation and in CSR integration.

Second, Injaz assessed the outcomes of their involvement in terms of credibility and

validation of their work, not only towards their stakeholders but also toward their beneficiaries.

Here it is noteworthy to mention that the participating NGOs and social enterprises usually

receive grants from UN affiliated entities. For example, INJAZ has jointly funded programs with

UNDP. Therefore, being an active member of GCNL is an added value on their portfolio. As

Mrs. Dani clarified: "We don't just tell the youth about the SDGs but through our involvement,

we are able to show them tangible examples." Since stakeholders have remarked the power of

youth in driving change, they called for a reconsideration of the current means of communication

of the SDGs and they became more aware of the need to leverage new technologies and all

available resources to mobilize the niche audiences as per their internal assessments.

Limitations and Further Suggestions

Out of the crises come many opportunities. From this perspective, the researcher encountered some limitations at the theoretical and methodological levels. On the theoretical level, both the framing theory and social capital theories were usually more focused towards studying the traditional messaging strategies and networks building, so the researcher had to investigate a way to contextualize it to the social media landscape and online communities.

On the methodology level, the focus groups might have drawbacks in terms of providing a safe space to share feedback, thereof a post-focus group questionnaire was shared with the participants to get more details regarding specific aspects which gave them a wider margin for transparent expression. In some cases, the focus groups dynamics were challenged by opinion leaders who tried to dominate the discussion and influence others' opinions.

Similarly, due to various constraints, not all of the stakeholders responded to the questionnaire. Although the researcher approached stakeholders via one-on-one contact, they were either unresponsive or reluctant and many of them confessed not being fully aware of the essence of the SDGs which speculates that the commitment was just a cover for Social Corporate Responsibility purposes. Therefore, results of this study are exploratory and cannot be generalized across the population of interest due to the small response rate. In addition, the small amount hinders the parameters needed to be fulfilled to carry out statistical procedures beyond descriptive statistics.

In the light of the research process and the stakeholders' insights, recommendations for further research and development are as follows:

Theoretically, it would be interesting to study GCNL strategies from a political communications framework. Methodologically, implementing pretest and post-test designs in order to expose the stakeholders to different GCNL campaigns and to also test the general audiences' feedback on the same campaigns would provide a full spectrum. Besides, it will aspire at finding indicators of the disruptive innovation that the SDGs well-constructed messaging could create among the stakeholders and within the community.

Due to the new working normal amid the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person surveys and interviews were shifted towards online. The researcher would have preferred to conduct the interview and focus groups in person. However, this was unfortunately not possible due to time zone differences and quarantine constraints, which led the researcher to virtual means; however still found to be valuable. The resources on the topic were somehow scarce since it is a dynamic phenomenon that is still under thorough experimentation. References were based on international academic papers and case studies that the researcher built upon to investigate the global

framework of the United Nations communication strategies towards the stakeholders and contextualization. Since this study focused on Instagram, other researchers might expand the layer by tackling different platforms such as: Facebook, Twitter etc. Noteworthy to mention that the cultural, political, and socio-economic context has totally changed in the last few years which calls for a revamping of some campaigns that are no longer relevant to the status quo which is currently highly unpredictable.

On a holistic note, there are suggestions worth studying in relation to the SDGs narrative and media discourse such as: countering the misconceptions about the SDGs related to the fragmented presentation, building a multi-disciplinary bridge between teaching and learning through integrating the SDGs within the curriculum, and focusing more on interactive and hands on educational tools, and taking steps based on studies to meet the stakeholders' needs. From the bridging and bonding perspective, many steps can be undertaken such as: introducing project-based learnings and awareness, in parallel with rewiring the target audience and communications strategies to educate and disseminate information, prioritizing extensive and specific theme-oriented programs showing the opportunities and innovation in sustainability.

Conclusion

To sum it up, the universal communication of the SDGs has marked a milestone but needs more standardization. The combination of online and offline strategies is of greater importance to optimize the stakeholders' equal access to resources. Trust should be strengthened by continuous monitoring and evaluation among the GCNL network and stakeholders. Loyalty to the brand is determined by recurrent participation in the programs and initiatives whereas Corporate Social Responsibility is an integral component that advances corporate reputation.

Based on the results, it is essential to notice that all variables are interconnected and complementary, if one is undermined, the SDGs communication process will be hindered, and the GCNL network components will be affected. The stakeholders have raised many issues pertaining to the access to resources, challenges in the implementation and evaluation. Many insights manifested pitfalls in the digital advocacy realm.

In sum, it's time to institutionalize a culture of collective power by setting the ground for private /public partnerships, and to develop a communication guide for public policies and sustainability based on market research and experts' insights. Sustainability is the future and media's power is exponential as a fourth estate. Digital media advocacy has driven tremendous changes and brought to attention vital conversations as well as global coalitions. Hence, it created a momentum in which every community and media specialists have their share of responsibility to keep it up!

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview

Interview with Former GCNL Strategic Advisor Dr. Hassan Youness

Dr. Youness, it is a pleasure to get your valuable expert's insights. Thank you for your time and contribution.

1. Kindly introduce us briefly to GCNL mission and vision

2. GCNL uses multimedia to promote SDGs online and offline, in your opinion what is the most efficient medium to convey your strategies?

3. GCNL organized the Young SDG Innovators Program, rebuilding Beirut initiative among others and advertised it via its platforms, what are the main frames used to prime it on the stakeholders' agenda?

4. The Lira Wara Lira campaign gained the public agenda's attention using the ethos, pathos and logos pillars, how did you go on ideating and promoting it?

5. GCNL also promotes the SDGs Academy webinar series, would you give us further insights on the coordination process with UNGC headquarters?

6. Who are the eligible and assigned agents or actors to design the SDGS campaigns /and or promote them? Based on which criteria have they been selected or assigned?

7. Who is monitoring the online campaigns implementation and follow up? Any major insights?

8. What are the main methods of recruitment and networking for certain programs?

9. What are the major privileges granted to GCNL network partners?

10. What are GCNL main achievements in Lebanon? (Tell us more about the annual forum and workshops, as well as the mentorship programs).

11. What are the metrics used to track progress?

12. How do you assess the SDGs implementation process locally and internationally?

13. What are the strengths and weaknesses to assessing the implementation of the SDGs action plan in the Lebanese case?

14. To which communication techniques does GCNL resort to promote the SDGs (on the short and long term)?

15. In your opinion, what are the fundamental ways to spread awareness about Agenda 2030?

16. To whom, other than to UNGC headquarters, does GCNL report?

17. Would you like to highlight anything else?

Thank you and wishing you continuous success in your endeavors.

Appendix B: Moderator's Guide

Opening Note:

Hello, I hope you are all safe and doing well.

Allow me to thank you for your great cooperation and for showing interest in joining this focus group. It really means a lot to me. I would like to get your consent to record this session and to quote you (using full name and title) within the thesis.

 Now we have started recording because all of you have consented to the recording and voluntarily participating in this focus group session, is that correct?

They each answered yes.

Briefing:

As previously mentioned throughout our communication, I am conducting this focus group in the context of completing my MA thesis in Media Studies, with emphasis on Journalism, Electronic Media and Public Relations at NDU. The thesis investigates the online communication of the UN's Sustainable Developmental Goals done by the Global Compact Network Lebanon (GCNL) to its multiple stakeholders

You will be representing your renowned companies, institutions and/or organizations which were selected based on the profiles, engagement to the SDGS action plan and involvement with GCNL. May you please briefly introduce yourselves and your respective entities?

I am excited to hear all of your ideas and contributions wanting to ascertain that each of your voices is heard. I wish we were having this discussion in-person.

In the meantime, let's get the best out of this technology. Let us have an open discussion, free of judgments.

Let's proceed.

For how long have you been affiliated to GCNL network?

What are the motives behind joining GCNL?

What are the relevant characteristics of GCNL Campaigns and programs that caught your attention?

Does the access to GCNL resources and programs increase your company's loyalty to GCNL?

Do you think that your involvement in the GNCL network increases your company's reputation?

Do you feel satisfied with the GCNL? If so, do you think that has increased your word-of-mouth for GCNL?

Do you think GCNL social media networks such as Instagram has helped bond with GCNL or bridge together the stakeholders and other followers?

Do you feel that the more causes you adopt or more dedication you put in implementing them increase your trust to the GCNL to continue collaboration? Or are there barriers that play a role in this relationship?

Does the recurrent strategic framing of the SDGs positively advance the stakeholder's advocacy awareness about the SDGs relevant causes?

Final Note:

I am grateful for all your insights. It was a pleasure having you on board. Wishing you continuous success in all your endeavors. Together towards a more sustainable world.

Appendix C: Questionnaire

Name / Company: ....

Please rate the level of agreement with the following statements from 1 = strongly agree to 5 =strongly disagree, in relation to the overall GCNL initiatives.

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
I am interested in learning about GCNL events and opportunities.					
There should be stronger focus on testimonies and partnerships.					
The 17 SDGs are given the same space and interest on GCNL platforms.					
I think it is easy to access GCNL resources and/or programs.					

Rate your level of satisfaction from 1 = very satisfied to 5 = very dissatisfied with the following statements in relation to GCNL programs.

	Very satisfied (1)	Satisfied (2)	Neutral (3)	Dissatisfied (4)	Very dissatisfied (5)
The content of the program was rich					
The methodology (e.g., style of delivery, research, statistics, case studies, role playing) used was helpful and user-friendly					
Mentors/trainers were qualified and engaging					
Group's dynamics were welcoming and encouraging					

Please rate the level of agreement with the following statements from 1 = strongly agree to 5 =strongly disagree, in relation to GCNL program initiatives.

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
GCNL programs helped us implement the SDG goals that we adopted.					
We have incorporated many GCNL/SDG program insights within our company's culture.					
Being a GCNL network member has boosted our CSR.					
GCNL programs have created a bond between all participants.					
GCNL programs have paved the way for long term collaborations with its participating members/followers.					
The program allows for valuable collaborations across industries.					
GCNL Beirut Relief initiative has strengthened my bonds with the GCNL network?					

How   likely   are you to recommend the   programs via your   own   social media platforms to your consumers/followers?

   Very likely

   Likely

   Neutral

   Unlikely

   Very unlikely

Rate the level of agreement with the following statements from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly

disagree in relation to continuous commitment to GCNL initiatives:

Due to the access to GCNL resources and programs, its benefits and impact

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
I intend to collaborate with GCNL in the future					
I intend to engage with other programs and activities by GCNL					
I recommend GCNL initiatives/programs to others					
I say positive things about GCNL as a brand for social responsibility initiatives					
I consider GCNL as my first choice when I want to invest in CSR or sponsor socially responsible initiatives.					
I engaged with GCNL action plan because I really like it					
I am pleased to spread awareness about GCNL as opposed to other similar local or international agencies					

I like GCNL as a brand more than other similar institutions in the same category					
I am more interested in GCNL than other international bodies					
I feel more attached to GCNL than other sustainability initiatives.					

Rate the level of agreement with the following statements from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree in relation to GCNL.

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
GCNL treats its stakeholders in a fair manner					
GCNL is concerned about its followers' needs					
GCNL is an engaged institution with strong prospects for the future					
GCNL recognizes and takes advantage of expenditures opportunities					
GCNL is aware of its responsibility to society					

GCNL is a strong reliable institution				
GCNL offers high quality programs/initiatives				
GCNL supports good causes				

Rate the level of agreement with the following statements from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly

disagree in relation to GCNL.

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
GCNL has helped build my company's reputation through its interdisciplinary approach and international stand					
Through GCNL our company was able to reach out to the community					
Through our involvement with GCNL network initiatives our own image strengthened					
GCNL initiatives have helped us increase our company's reputation within society.					
Through the GCNL network we were able to advance in our domain.					

Rate the level of agreement with the following statements from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly

disagree in relation to GCNL.

	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)
I tend to trust GCNL's services					
GCNL is an honorable international network					
In general, I trust GCNL's vision and reforms					
I believe that GCNL has honest motives					
I believe that GCNL SDGs help strengthen societal issues					

Would anyone like to add or share anything to our discussion that we haven't yet discussed? I

hope that it would be okay to follow-up with you in case there is something to clarify.

The following questions were also asked in the survey and participants from outside the

focus groups have answered them.

Demographic Questions and Sample Background:

How old are you? ....

Please specify your gender.

    Female

    Male

What is your professional field? _____

What is your professional rank/career status? Select one:

    Entry-level

    Mid-level

    Senior level

What is the genre of your workplace?

    -company

    -institution

    -non-profit

    Other, please specify _____

Does your position involve decision-making at the managerial level?

    Yes

    No

Participation in GCNL Online Network:

For how long have you been affiliated to GCNL network? Please provide your answer in months

or years (ex. 2 years) _____

On which social media platform did you first hear about GCNL?

    -Facebook

    -Instagram

    -Twitter

    -Website

    -Other, please specify: --------------------------

How do you assess GCNL social media campaigns?

Extremely efficient 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 extremely ineffective

What are the main highlights of the program's online

campaigns? _____

Rate your level of involvement on GCNL social media networking sites: 1 very active to 5 not at all active.

Very active 1 2 3 4 5 Not at all active

GCNL social media networking sites allow users to reach out to others who share common interests.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

GCNL social networking sites (e.g., Instagram) have the capacity to widen relationships that were first developed offline.

Strongly agree.

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree.

Electronic Word of Mouth:

How likely are you to repost or share SDGs related posts?

Very likely

Likely

Neutral

Unlikely

Very Unlikely

How often are you likely to repost or share SDGs related posts on your online social media networks?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always (every time there is an SDG post related to my cause)

Rank from 1 -7 which posts genres are the best to advance and promote SDGs?

-Videos

-Graphics

-Stories

-Posts

-Facts

-Polls

-Competitions

Which GNCL campaign(s) caught your

attention? _____

_____

Explain why

_____

_____

Participation in GCNL Events, Programs, and Activities:

Did you attend any of the GNCL events? Select all that apply.

-Youth innovation workshop

-Stakeholders Forum

-Webinars

-Other, specify_____

In which GCNL programs (e.g., the academy, the special panels, regional youth assembly etc…) have you been involved? _____

What were the motives of the program/s that you were involved in?

Which GCNL activities (e.g., awareness raising, capacity building, recognizing leadership, policy dialogue, multi stakeholder partnerships) have you attended? _____

Specific SDG and Importance:

What are the SDGs that you support and/or adopt in your company? _____

Rank the following SDGs from 1 most important to 5 least important.

Quality Education ____

Decent Work and Economic Growth _____

Sustainable Cities and Communities _____

Peace and Justice Strong Institutions _____

Partnerships to achieve the Goal _____

I consider that my company is an active participant in GCNL initiatives.

   Strongly agree

   Agree

   Neither agree nor disagree

   Disagree

   Strongly Disagree

The following questions are in relation to any program by GCNL that you attended and/or are part of.

How did you first hear about the program?

Email marketing

Social media

Referral

On a scale of 1-5, 1 = extremely useful and 5 = extremely useless, to which extent did this

program help you to gain better understanding of the SDGs?

Extremely useful 1 2 3 4 5 extremely useless

Have you applied the program's outcomes to your company and/or professional field?

Yes

No

If yes, how did you do

so? _____

_____

____

GCNL programs always fulfil my expectations.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

I consider that my company is an active participant in GCNL initiatives. 1 very active to 5 not at

all active

Very active 1 2 3 4 5 not at all active

How likely are you to recommend the programs via your own social

media platforms to your consumers/followers?

Very likely

Likely

Neutral

Unlikely

Very unlikely

Appendix D: Sample List

1. HST

2. i engineering group

3. Alyounbouh

4. L'Oréal

5. Association of Banks in Lebanon

6. The Nawaya Network

7. Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU)

8. Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik (USEK)

9. University of Balamand

10. College Louis Wegman

11. Lebanese organization for Green Schools (LOGS)

12. El Yaman Group

13. AM Bank

14. Dar Al-Handasah

15. Sept

16. Lebanese Green Building Council (LGBC)

17. The Little Engineer

18. ITG (Holding) s.a.l.

19. Maze

20. Crédit Libanais

21. The Euro MENA Funds

22. Fernand Hosri Group

23. Nasri Karam and Sons

24. Selecteum des Arts et des Sciences

25. INAASH Association

26. City Bank

27. HK

28. Holdal

29. Shtrumpf

30. The Lebanese Transparency Association

31. Ajyalouna

32. Dot.Lebanon

33. LDSAl

34. LibanPost

35. ZRE Building Communities

36. KPMG Lebanon

37. Ayadina

38. Deloitte

39. Lebanese Autism Society

40. Almajmou3a

41. The International School of Choueifat

42. Cénacle De La Lumière (CDLL)

43. Civvies

44. Care

45. Children's Cancer Center

46. Novitag

47. Nature

48. Phoenix

49. Almidan

50. Out of the Box

51. Mets Energy

52. Kids Mondo

53. Mishwar

54. IPT

55. Saccal

56. AGBU

57. MEDCO Petroleum Company

58. Search for Common Ground

59. AIESEC

60. Lebanese Food Bank

61. Albina

62. Commercial Insurance

63. Eeco Solutions

64. Unipak Tissuemill

65. جامعة بيروت العربية

66. INDEVCO Group

67. Senteurs d'Orient

68. Adyan

69. Engineer Elie N. Maalouf Company SAL (EMC)

70. Beirut Marathon

71. ACT

72. Arc en Ciel

73. Lebanese American University (LAU)

74. MUE Group

75. Berytech

76. PwC's Academy Lebanon

77. Masterpak

78. The Blessing Foundation

79. George's N Frem Foundation

80. Makhzoumi Foundation

81. Smallville Hotel

82. Daher Foods

83. Netways

84. Royal

85. Bank Audi

86. Azm and Saade Association

87. Chronic Care Center

88. Majed Al Futtaim

89. Ijazi Investment

90. Balsam

91. BLOM Bank

92. Alticity Together

93. International College

94. Modern University for Business and Science (MUBS)

95. Levantine Institute

96. Aramex

97. Sanita

98. GS

99. Sab

100.	Robinson Agri

101.	Malia Group

102.	GroupMed Insurance and Reinsurance Company S.A.L (GMI)

103.	Akle

104.	Skoun

105.	Erga

106.	Cedrus Bank

107.	FransaBank

108.	René Mouawad Foundation (RMF)

109.	Touch

110.	Sesobel

111.	Injaz Lebanon

112.	Gomac

113. EBCO BITAR

114. Beesline

115. المجلس الانمائي العربي للمرأة

116. Business Motion

117. DiaLeb

118. Lebanese International University (LIU)

119. theOtherDada: Sustainable Architecture Consultancy + ForestsPrepak

120. Cedar Environmental

121. Brave Heart

122. BLC Bank SAL

123. ShareQ

124. Banque Libano-Française (BLF)

125. Bassma

126. American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC)

127. Diet Center

128. Fair Trade

129. Teach for Lebanon

130. Unipak

131. Fattal

132. Arab Monetary Fund (AMF)

133. Diabco

134. Lebanese Canadian University (LCU)

135. Haven

136.	Pidaya

137.	Jubaili Bros

138.	Tinol Paints

139.	American University of Beirut (AUB)

140.	Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB)

141.	Phoenix Energy

142.	Henkel

143.	Sacotel

144.	BMF architects

145.	Tamanna

146.	Alfa

147.	Onlivery

148.	Data Consult

149.	Shamaa

150.	Tamayyaz

151.	Food Blessed

152.	Power Me

153.	CME Lebanon

154.	L'artisan du Liban

155.	Société Générale de Banque au Liban (SGBL)

156.	Kristies

157.	Needs

158.	Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth (USJ)

159.   3QA

160.   S-miles

Appendix E: Descriptive Analysis of the Content of GCNL Instagram posts

Date	Genre	Text caption	Hashtags	Themes (occasion, SDGs tackled)	Interaction (Likes, comments)
September 26,2019	Video	When it comes to implementation, all SDGs are prioritized equally! However today we will only shed light on one SDG, Quality Education (SDG 4), since the majority of votes in yesterday's interview, suggested that Quality Education is an SDG that many people most	#sdgs #quali y #education	SDG, Quality Educatio n	112 views

truly support.

If we do not work for SDG 4, how will we raise our children to become economically productive? How will they gain the necessary, knowledge, skills and competencies to survive a stressful era?

With the rapid change in technology, an increasing number of opportunities are becoming available. However, our children are not being able to capitalize on this advantage because they are not receiving their basic right of quality education that enables

		them to keep up with the rapid pace of changes. Let us all spread the word & raise awareness!			
October 16, 2019	Video	The Annual Forum Making Global Goals Local Business has been mentioned in all Lebanese Media Outlets and this gives us more hope for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda that will	#mgglb #sdgspioneer sleb #mgglbmiddleea st #mysdgs	All 17 SDGs	177 views

		have a positive impact on Lebanon! Spread the word and help us to save our country!			
November 1, 2019	Graphics + URL (https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/)	Happy #Halloween! There's nothing scarier than a world where we fail to achieve the #2030Agenda. It's time we step up action to meet the #GlobalGoals, #ForPeopleForPlanet. https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/	#Halloween #2030Agenda. #GlobalGoals, #ForPeopleForPlanet.	All 17 SDGs/ Occasion Halloween	34 likes
November 20,2019	Graphics (5 photo in an album)	Did you know the following facts about some of the Sustainable Development Goals?	#SDGfacts #sdgs	Goals 1, 3, 6, 8, 10	74 likes

December 2, 2019	Graphics (6 photo in an album)	Did you know the following facts about some of the Sustainable Development Goals?	#SDGfacts #SDGs	Goals 5, 11, 13,14, 15, 16	12 likes 2 comments
December 9, 2019	Graphics	In 2008, Lebanon officially joined the UN Convention against Corruption (Res 31/10/2003) to support the implementation of apt mechanisms that fight corruption of all forms. We the Global Compact Network Lebanon have a commitment towards anti-corruption which is a driving force that pushes forward our agenda of achieving the 17 Sustainable	#Unitedagainstcorruption #Sdgs #Globalgoals	All SDGs specially goals 8-10-16/Occasion World anti-corruption day	20 likes

		Development Goals (SDGs).			
December 15,2019	Animated Video	YSIP: Camp 1, Onboarding Our innovators are getting ready for their second camp tomorrow! After exploring the core concepts around business, SDGs and breakthrough innovation, they will meet at @beirutdigitald to test out innovative tools to frame and validate their SDG business challenges!	#YSIP #UNGC #GC NL #innovation #acc elerator @blackboxin fo	All SDGs/ Occasion Young SDG innovator s camp	102 views

Appendix F: SDGs Highlights

With respect to the aforementioned priorities www.sdglebanon.com refers to several steps which have already been taken. In this section, while referring to these steps, this addendum will also put forward some critical analysis on the remaining and related challenges:

- **In relation to Goal 8 and Goal 9:** In June 2017, the Cabinet approved the plan of the Ministry of Telecommunications and reduced the prices of the internet and increased its speed, which is presumed to stimulate the facilitation of the business environment especially for small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs and young people. While access to internet, especially in relation to accessing information, is vital to achieving sustainable development, and while its affordability is an important element in this regard, such initiatives must go hand in hand with others, including by enhancing the role of internet for multi-stakeholder platforms among development actors, and by ensuring data privacy. Accessibility is also an issue of infrastructure, and improvements in and investment in the right telecommunications infrastructure are necessary to increase connectivity and accessibility for all across Lebanon, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, regarding the business environment, Lebanon still lacks a regulatory framework, which includes laws and regulations to organize e-commerce, and the latter must be adopted and effectively implemented to achieve sustainable development. Reliability, whether related to connectivity or electric power supply, is also crucial to the success of e-commerce.

- **In relation to Goal 8 and Goal 9:** Lebanon adopted a large Capital Investment Program (CIP) aiming at addressing the challenges of the Syrian crisis, to develop Lebanon's infrastructure and public services, to stimulate economic growth and restore confidence, and to create jobs. The plan was presented to the donor community at the CEDRE—Conference for Development and Reform with Businesses—conference in Paris in April 2018. The conference pledged billions to support the program that includes projects in eight different sectors: transport, water and irrigation, wastewater, electricity, telecom, solid waste, tourism and cultural heritage, and support to industry. Although investment and infrastructure support is needed in Lebanon, and became critical in light of the Syrian crisis impacts, the CIP cannot be considered an effective and efficient response to the challenges facing Lebanon. Not only does it rely highly on public-private partnerships (PPPs), which is likely to be disguised public debt (public debt-to-GDP stands at 150%), but it is a part of a wider austerity plan pushed by several donors and international institutions. There are concerns that the CIP will be implemented along with other measures, including cuts in pension, as well as public sector servants that will have a detrimental impact on workers and the population in general. Also, there remain several issues of concern including the lack of sustainability impact assessments, lack of national dialogue on the development needs, the role of the private sector when the regulatory role of the state is in question, and the promotion of PPPs and rentier economy sectors at the expense of value added economic sectors. Additional challenges in relation to the CIP are :

1) Infrastructure support and related projects should not be planned only as vehicles for job creation, but also as a comprehensive macro-economic reform process in Lebanon. Furthermore, most of the employment that will be created as a result of the CIP is likely to be precarious, low-skilled and temporary, whereas Lebanon needs to enhance productive sectors that can generate sustainable and decent jobs, ones that are much needed to tackle the high level brain drain, and which consolidate labor supply and demand.

2) Lebanon has previous experiences of infrastructure and reconstruction projects, yet has not witnessed genuine development achievements. Within these projects' implementation, the private sector will play a key role, but Lebanon's experience with private sector involvement in infrastructure projects has been poor in light of the state's weak governance set up and lack of strong state regulations. Safeguards on economic and social rights are vital, together with an accountability framework for the private sector.

3) A World-Bank Strategic Assessment on the projects is present, yet what Lebanon needs is a comprehensive economic feasibility study and an analysis of social returns on investment. Decent job creation and addressing inequalities should be the key indicators of a priori and a posteriori sustainable impact assessments. These assessments should be inclusive and participatory, allowing open and public consultations.

• **In relation to Goal 5**: Lebanon has made important strides towards achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls in Lebanon, be it through the introduction of the Law 293 on domestic violence in 2014, or more recently by the abolishment of Article 522 by the Lebanese government on August 2017[3]. The abolishment of Article 522, which allowed rapists to marry their victims in order to avoid punishment and prison, marks a significant step forward for women and girls in Lebanon, but there are other discriminatory laws that still exist; i.e. Article 505 and 518. Article 505 involves sex with a minor who is 15 years old and Article 518 involves the seduction of a minor with the promise of marriage. In this regard, while the abolishment of the Article 522 was a clear achievement and outcome of the civil society campaigns in the country, a genuine step forward towards Goal 5 necessitates aiming at eliminating all discriminatory laws, rather than using a case-by-case approach, and at ensuring full adherence to the CEDAW, which Lebanon is party to. This also includes addressing several practices related to economic and social rights to ensure gender equality i.e. in relation to informal labor, taxation, social security, etc.

• **In relation to Goal 16:** The Office of the Minister of State for Women Affairs (OMSWA) was established in February 2017, aiming at empowering women, and combatting violence and extremism. Prior to parliamentary elections (that took place in May 2018), a Diaspora-ID project was launched to allow Lebanese expats to vote and a new law was passed for proportional representation. Nevertheless, the elections witnessed many flaws, with hundreds of violations reported by the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE), including for Diaspora whose personal data was shared with the candidates, without any prior consent. Also as a step towards achieving Goal 16, in May 2018, the Lebanese government designated the members of the Lebanese National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) and the National Prevention Mechanism against torture. Both institutions can play a key role in monitoring Lebanon's compliance to international human rights treaties and the overall promotion and protection of human rights in the country. With regard to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, these institutions should also play a proactive role, in an independent and unbiased position as watchdog and advisor.

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2. These points are retrieved from the speech made by Kulluna Irida at CEDRE conference, full text of the speech is available at http://www.kulluna-irada.org/2018/04/08/speech-kulluna-irada-at-cedre/

3. Draft laws on sexual harassment have also been presented, though these are not currently on the government's agenda.

◼ TOWARDS ACHIEVING SDGS 1, 8 AND 10

The liberal economic model in Lebanon, which promotes rentier economies of banking, financial services and tourism does not generate sustainable growth, but rather leads to further inequalities. Given the lack of redistribution mechanisms and generation of decent work opportunities, private sector-ruling elite relations with embedded corruption, growth accumulation from these sectors remains in the hands of few and at the expense of productive sectors that can generate jobs. In addition to these, political deadlock/ instability and the Syrian crisis hampers growth.

While remaining one of the most indebted countries, Lebanon passed its long awaited budget (pending since 2005) in 2017and tried to move forward by meeting with the international community and donors, first in the Brussels Conference and later at CEDRE in April 2018, to promote investments and infrastructure support for the country. Yet, as previously discussed, promotion of the CIP has its own flaws and Lebanon needs counter-cyclical monetary and fiscal policies to restore its economy towards inclusive and sustainable growth. This, on the monetary and fiscal levels requires reforms, i.e. lowering the interest rates to the level of GDP growth and tax reforms[7].

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4. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-lebanon/lebanon-near-breaking-point-over-syrian-refugee-crisis-pm-hariri-idUSKBN1722JM

5. http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71

Appendix G: Samples

gcnlebanon · Following

gcnlebanon When it comes to implementation, all SDGs are prioritized equally! However today we will only shed light on one SDG, Quality Education (SDG 4), since the majority of votes in yesterday's interview, suggested that Quality Education is an SDG that many people most truly support.
If we do not work for SDG 4, how will we raise our children to become economically productive? How will they gain the necessary, knowledge, skills and competencies to survive a stressful era?
With the rapid change in technology, an increasing number of opportunities are becoming available. However, our children are not being able to capitalize on this advantage because

112 views

SEPTEMBER 26

gcnlebanon · Following

gcnlebanon YSIP: Camp 1, Onboarding

Our innovators are getting ready for their second camp tomorrow! After exploring the core concepts around business, SDGs and breakthrough innovation, they will meet at @beirutdigitald to test out innovative tools to frame and validate their SDG business challenges! #YSIP #UNGC #GCNL #innovation #accelerator @blackboxinfo

6d

102 views

6 DAYS AGO

Add a comment...   Post