

# Variations in Strategic Management: The Cases of Thailand's Office Board of Investment, Tri Country Foundation, and UN Women Egypt

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine variations within strategic management plans across NGOs and public organizations in developing countries. In doing so, it sheds light on three cases of public and non-profit organizations that adopted different plans of strategic management throughout the 2000's and 2010's in response to challenges posed by private and multinational corporates. This study relies on open ended and semi structured interviews conducted by the author with representatives of the three organizations.

**Keywords:** Strategic management; NGOs; Public sector; SWOT analysis; Developing world

## INTRODUCTION

### Managing public sector

The three examined cases experienced different challenges both within and outside its organizational structure that implied the necessity of the adoption of a strategic management process. Their main mission was to promote their goals and contribute to the provision of better services to stakeholders. To fulfill this mission, the organizations had to ensure an efficient performance as well as an administrative responsiveness to changes in its internal and external environment. In order to develop their own strategic change cycle, the organizations followed different intertwined and interactive steps that were not necessarily adopted in a chronological and systematic order but consisted of combined procedures and steps that managed to help in achieving goals and implementing visions. Accordingly, the examination of the three cases will be centered on the identification of the different strategic change cycle steps they designed in terms of clarifying how they managed to carry them out in order to achieve a strategic change in within a changing environment. Also, it will elaborate on their strategic change cycle in general in order to situate their experiences in the strategic planning and management theories. Finally, it will identify to what extent the case in question managed to fulfill the theoretical framework provided by scholars in strategic management in terms of reflecting its components and aims [1].

### Thailand Office Board of Investment (OBOI)

By analyzing the OBOI case in Thailand, we can realize that it adopted the strategic change cycle in order to enhance its performance since it was unable to survive the changes that occurred in its external environment. Besides, these changes shed light on the weaknesses of the OBOI as well as its incapacities to deal with these external challenges unless radical changes are undertaken in its organizational structure and job design. By examining the case, it became obvious that the organization in question has adopted the different steps of the strategic change cycle since they constituted a unity that has to be concretized in order to enhance the OBOI's performance. However, it would be important to mention that the circumstances within which the OBOI was found acted as the articulator of this process in terms of determining the different steps' importance as well as their order of implementation as following:

**Assessing the internal and external environment:** In the 1990's, the organization's directory realized its incapacity to handle diver's development and investment project's applications that declined for about 40% due to the combined effect of several factors related to internal and external changes. For example, there were different external challenges that stem from the GATT agreement signed by Thailand that undermined the OBOI investment and incentives policies. Moreover, the inability to overcome the Gulf crisis' repercussions on the world capital market and the emergence of several poles of attraction

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for foreign investors like Eastern Europe and other Asian emerging powers reduced Thailand's part of the FDI floods. On the other hand, there were additional internal factors that threatened the OBOI's existence like the military coup d'état and the country's loss of its attractiveness due to the elimination of the special tariff treatment on certain products [2]. These two factors undermined Thailand's ability to undertake an economic development since the national economic infrastructure was weak and unable to foster an economic growth based on investment promotion. Furthermore, the internal environment suffered from two additional factors that are more related to the OBOI like the organization's ineffective performance. In fact, the OBOI suffered from its lagging bureaucratic system with different aspects of managerial misconducts that impeded the adoption of investment projects that were supposed to increase the public share of the economic growth in terms of a more equitable distribution of their benefits as well as guaranteeing the technological transfer to the country. Therefore, the rigidity of the OBOI administrative structure constituted a major obstacle for the organization to face the different surrounding challenges especially those related to the tax reform that undermined its reason of existence since the government adapted its tax structure and regulations to meet the investors' needs which eliminated the importance of the OBOI's mission related to the investment promotion [3].

**Initiating a strategic planning:** This step was pioneered by a new leader of the OBOI who took the responsibility of this initiative and managed to undertake a strategic change cycle process. In this step, the organization succeeded to make clear its own mission, vision, stakeholders' definition, mandates and strategies that it would adopt to face the different strategic issues and concern that threaten its continuity and reason of existence. Accordingly, the organization set a strategic planning that defined all these aforementioned components on which the organization's staff has all agreed under the supervision of its new leader. The organization defined its stakeholders that would be either the national or foreign investors, being individuals or firms that are interested to carry out some investment and development projects in Thailand or abroad. Accordingly, its mission is to promote investment in Thailand by adopting an ambitious vision of being an investment consulting firm. Therefore, it determined a set of strategies that describes the different services that the OBOI would provide for these stakeholders. These strategies are mainly focused on giving technical and informational assistance to investors in order to help them finding investment opportunities and useful business networks in Thailand or abroad. In addition to these strategies, the OBOI indicated that it has to reconstruct its organizational structure and enhance the capabilities of its employees as its necessary mandates to achieve its goals [4].

**Determining missions and values:** The OBOI's mission consists of promoting investment in Thailand by the adoption of a more proactive vision centered on the service-oriented organization rather than being a tax incentives or privileges provider. Hence, the main value of the organization is to provide consulting services to investors in order to help them in carrying out their projects and to promote investment projects in Thailand.

**Identifying strategic issues:** Most of these issues were basically centered on the bureaucratic rigid system and its inability to cope with the different surrounding changes due to the mismanagement and the ineffective coordination between the different departments' functions as well as the limited skills of the workforce in OBOI. In addition, the centralized decision making process and the multiplication of the administrative procedures were major impediments to the development of the organization's performance and efficiency. These problems constitute structural obstacles to which the environmental challenges especially those of the political instability, the GATT agreement and the capital market crisis have to be added.

**Formulating strategies:** The OBOI changed its role and started to develop a new set of tasks and functions that it has to carry out in order to concretize its vision about being a service provider organization for investors in Thailand. These tasks consist of several policies and strategies that the organization would take vis-a-vis any potential investor to help him adopting and implementing its project. Hence, the OBOI would provide information and facilities about the different business formalities, procedures, opportunities either in Thailand or abroad for Thai and foreign investors. For example, the organization would assist investors in creating a new business in Thailand through the facilitation of the different administrative requirements and procedures that are prior to the business installation [5]. Besides, it would give an orientation service to investors by advising them on the different positive and negative aspects about the various regions and provinces in which investors are interested. In addition, it would coordinate between its different stakeholders by developing their networks, assets as well as production and performance standards in order to carry out their projects successfully.

**Defining mandates:** This step's main goal is to enable the organization in question to solve the different issues facing the organization in order to fulfill its mission. Accordingly, in light of the aforementioned mapping view of the strategic issues that threaten the OBOI, different mandates were assigned by the organization's administration to both tackle the surrounding challenges and enable the OBOI to carry out its strategies for achieving the new vision. Most of these mandates were essentially changing the organization's roles and were centered on the rehabilitation of organization's structure in terms of administrative procedures, the decision-making mechanisms as well as the development of several plans related to the enhancement of the human resource management inside the organization. Therefore, in addition to the adoption of the new information technology, the organization proceeded for the decentralization of the decision-making process by implementing a work organization based on the horizontal coordination of the different tasks. Besides, it allowed the delegation of some administrative authorities to different regions and provinces as well as contracting out many of its functions to private contractors. Concerning the Human Resource development, the main concern was to ameliorate the staff's abilities and skills in order to increase their performance and make them able to cope with the changing strategy and mission of the OBOI as well as providing a new mindset and culture for the workforce in the organization. Hence, the OBOI

adopted a training program as well as several techniques to improve the staff's performance at work such as the inquiry approach, work improvement team and the enhancement of many personnel functions like evaluation, sanction, acquisition and tasks planning [6].

**Crystallizing an organization vision:** The organization's vision consists of being an investment consulting firm and a customer oriented institution that provides services for investors instead of being a function oriented one. Accordingly, the organization would stop providing tax incentives and privileges and start to create services for investors instead. This makeover would have by its turn many implications on the OBOI's roles, structural organization and decision making process.

**Strategic planning and strategies reassessment:** All these elementary aspects of the strategic management were developed, formulated and communicated to the OBOI staff within a team work committee that was responsible to refine the vision statement, the mission, the strategies, mandates and stakeholders' analysis so that the plan would be more efficient in empowering the OBOI's existence and underlining its centrality in the public sector. This step is a sort of reconfirming and reconsidering the prior agreement on the formulation of several procedures and steps in the strategic change cycle like the determination of the organization's missions, mandates, strategic issues, the vision and the strategies formulation.

**Strategic plan adoption and implementation:** Concerning these two steps, it is possible to infer from our analysis of the case in question that they were implicitly illustrated in the OBOI's experience that started to reap its results. Hence, it can be easily assumed that the OBOI has not only adopted and implemented the process but also succeeded in its strategic change cycle [7]. Accordingly, it was mentioned that the secretary general of OBOI was praised and honored by several institutions and that some of them awarded him prizes like the Asian institute of management, the public administration association of thailand and the civil service commission. Therefore, it is obvious that there were concrete measures that were adopted and then implemented by the OBOI which incited these organizations to praise the whole process's initiator.

The strategic management process adopted by this organization to modify its strategies, mission and incorporate a new vision for the OBOI in the Thai public sector was consistent with the strategic change cycle and nearly similar to it as was illustrated by Bryson. By studying the OBOI case, it became evident that Bryson's postulates about strategic change cycle constitute an essential framework for understanding the Thai case and situate it among several experiences of strategic management in the public sector. According to Bryson's model, the SCC is an interactive process since it can be carried out in the way that seems the best for the conditions and the environment of the organization in question. As a result, the SCC can be started by any of the ten steps mentioned by Bryson. This fact was concretized in the OBOI's case where we saw that the environment analysis was the first important step by which the SCC started since it was the trigger for the necessity of a strategic management initiative. Besides, the sequence of the

different procedures is never fixed but is relatively determined by the interaction between the formulation of a clear, concise and defined strategic planning, mission, vision and strategies in light of the environmental changes and the strategic issues surrounding the organization. Each of these components is considered as a step by itself that can occur either alone or accompanied by another one in any order without limitations [8].

Accordingly, the SCC consists of a flexible framework within which the strategic planning can take place without restrictions related to timing, sequences or any specific and rigid formulation of its different components like the mission, vision, strategies, strategic issues and the environment analysis. However, what counts in this process is the existence of all these aforementioned components that constitute the corner stone and the pillars that guarantee the occurrence of such process in a successful and comprehensive way that suits the organization's general context. Besides, the OBOI's experience managed to underline the importance of the strategic change cycle and turned to be an example that reflects the path that any public organization would follow in order to undertake a strategic change within its environment. As a result, it can be assumed from the case in question that the OBOI's case is a concrete translation of the SCC steps that were elaborated and developed by many prominent scholars like Bryson.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Improving NGOs performance: Tri country education foundation case

Tri country educational foundation illustrates the case of a non-profit organization that decided to expand its activities which incited it to recruit more members into its board of directors and to look for different sources for funding. As a result, the organization initiated several year round programs that exhausted its budget that wasn't by its turn well formulated in terms of giving further details about the expected revenues, costs and contributions. Besides, the decision on expanding the Tri country foundation's activities revealed some weaknesses in managing the different proposed projects and programs in terms of fees and time allocation by the different staff members. Therefore, after having an overview on this case, it would be evident to assume that the Tri country foundation suffered from three major strategic issues that threaten the sustainability and even the survival of the organization [9,10].

First, how would the organization acquire the required level of managerial expertise in order to undertake its activities' expansion successfully and in the most efficient way? Second, how would the organization develop a budget planning that enables it to manage the funding shortage efficiently without consuming a long period of time in its design? Third, how would the two major programs of the organization be developed and designed in a better way in light of the organization's mission in order to attract more funds and allow employees to reallocate their time in a more productive way? In the first part of the paper, each of these strategic issues will be examined in details so that they would be identified in terms of their

importance and scope of influence on the organization's survival in case of their ignorance. In the second part of the paper, two strategies for the first issue will be studied due to the significance of the lack of managerial expertise on the organizational performance in terms of its magnitude and consequences. Therefore, partnerships with public administration schools and the organization of weekly seminars to present previous managerial experiences of several public organizations were the two strategies that this paper would suggest later on as viable alternatives that would be followed by the Tri country foundation.

The first strategic issue that undermines this organization's performance is the lack of managerial skills and expertise among its staff members. The Tri country Foundation as a non-profit organization is mainly oriented towards the development of artistic and scientific programs. Although it is equipped with professional members that have the required skills and competencies to develop such programs and hence achieve the organizational goal, it lacks the basic and elementary notions of management within public and non-profit organizations. This lack would be explained by the limited scope of activities undertaken by the organization as well as the inability to attract various sources of funding at the beginning of its creation. This problem implicitly existed in the organization along the first ten years after its establishment, however, it was visibly manifested since the board of direction decided to expand the organization's activities. Once the organization decided to develop year-round programs and extend the scope of its programs to reach further and larger communities, it needed to know how to redefine its goals, programs, actions and plans in a way that copes with this new decision.

Besides, with the activities' expansion more expertise was needed in terms of redesigning the different tasks undertaken by the different staff members especially after the recruitment of six more members. This issue is considered as a strategic one since it would affect the entire organization especially after the introduction of more activities that surpass the previous ones in terms of working capacity and required resources. The Tri country foundation won't be able to develop its different year round programs efficiently if it doesn't possess the necessary managerial expertise. In spite of the consciousness of the board of directors about the need of some expertise which compelled it to recruit more members, the organization still needs more expertise in managing its programs and employees' functions and roles within these programs in order to come up with effective results. Moreover, the lack of managerial expertise has a broad impact on a wide array of stakeholders ranging from employees inside the organization as well as schools and other communities that benefit from its workshops and programs about science and art. Accordingly, if the organization fails to address this issue the consequences will be major and may extend to its failure and inability to survive and pursue its activities. First, most of the members are scientists and artists and don't have any professional background about how to manage a team work within an organization and how to plan the overall strategy that the organization would pursue in order to achieve its mission in light of its ambitious objectives. They are also unable to design the different jobs necessary for the

accomplishment of the activities and hence, they didn't succeed in identifying the external and the internal environment where the organization performs. Therefore, the organization won't be able to continue its activities and expand them for one or two more years if it continued to lack the required the managerial expertise and would be exposed to bankruptcy.

The second strategic issue is about how to attract more financial resources for the organization in terms of managing the funding shortage through an effective budget planning. This issue is concerned with the necessity to develop attractive proposals for the different projects undertaken by the organization in order to gain more funds. However, the identification of the funding problems is related to the budget planning process since the organization lacks the required competencies in developing a budget that would take into consideration the time and the money spent on the different activities which distorts information and waste resources. The Tri country Foundation received grants and donations but it can't use them efficiently through an informational budget planning that determines the different resources and income that it possesses and what kind of expenses it would afford in light of the available resources. Accordingly, in addition to presenting the projects in an attractive way, the organization has to start the adoption of a different budget planning based on realistic information about income rather than forecasting funds. Hence, this issue would be considered as a strategic one since it has a tremendous effect on the organizational functions and their sustainability. The funding issue was always mentioned in the board directions' agenda which explains why they were concerned about the budget planning in the board meeting after the expansion decision.

Although some of the Tri country foundation's staff had always recourse to give up their salary as a grant for the organization, the lack of funds persisted and it would obstruct the implementation of the different scientific and artistic activities especially on the long term. Therefore, this issue affects a wide array of stakeholders like the employees, the schools interested in the organization's activities, the students who need the workshops and the lectures given by specialists and the donors. Consequently, if this issue isn't tackled by formulating more attractive programs and scientific projects as well as the adoption of a more efficient and realistic budget planning, the organization will be seriously affected. Accordingly, the Tri country foundation won't be able to develop sustainable educative and cognitive programs and won't be able to pay its staff as well as financing the scientists and the artists that are consulted and responsible for holding the different programs and activities. On the other hand, the organization will be deprived from the necessary materials that it needs in the creation of new scientific and artistic programs. Besides, the board of directors will be paralyzed by the cumulative effect of fixed and variable costs that wouldn't be covered by an accurate expected income. In such a situation like the previous one, the organization will be compelled to stop its activities and will lose all the personal expenses that were invested in its programs by the staff members.



The third issue is related to job planning in terms of how would the organization reconsider and redesign its programs not only in an attractive way but also in a more balanced pattern of labor distribution in terms of time and resource allocation. This problem is somehow related and based on the aforementioned issues since the lack of managerial expertise and the funds' deficiencies would lead to an inability to manage the different jobs inside the organization throughout the different activities. In spite of the existence of qualified professors and students among the board of directors who are both devoted and talented in the development and the design of scientific and artistic projects, most of them seem to ignore the Human Resource management. The employees are deploying their efforts in the different projects according to their expertise while ignoring the question of efficiency and funding. As a result, the design of the projects wasn't formulated in a way that adapts the board of directors' expectations with the organizational resources.

Besides, there existed no clear human resource functions like the planning, acquisition, development and sanctions. These functions especially the first two ones are extremely needed for the organization in terms of identifying the various needs of the Tri country foundations and determining how to respond to them. Therefore, recruitment, creating suitable job description and budget planning are the ineluctable HR functions that the organization both missed and needed. In light of this brief identification of this third strategic issue, it would be inferred that it is a strategic issue. The organization's board of directors mentioned on their agenda their need to expand the board of directors by recruiting six more members as well as benefiting from their expertise. However, this inquiry was broadly mentioned without any planning or precisions that would indicate how this board enlargement would take place efficiently. Accordingly, this issue presents a major challenge for the organization. Although, the organization wouldn't be dramatically exposed to this issue in the first year of its expansion, it is expected that it would be negatively affected in terms of performance and even survival in a considerable way on the long term.

## DISCUSSION

By influencing approximately all the organization's stakeholders whether directly or indirectly, this issue will impede the organization from fulfilling its expansion dream and would face a lot of turnover rates that exceed the normal and the moderate levels. Not only the staff members and the schools will be affected but also the surrounding community and the different participants and volunteers who decided to take part into this organization's activities. In case of ignoring the reconsideration of the HR functions especially the first two ones, the organization will be driven by unrealistic and enthusiastic expectations that aren't founded on the factual situation. Moreover, even if the projects would be handled in a high scientific and artistic design, they won't produce the expected results in terms of disseminating science and arts since they won't be financially and administratively managed in an efficient way. The schools would look for alternative research and scientific systems and the board members would leave the

organization since the productivity level will decrease and its administrative framework won't be efficiently maintained by well-defined job and budget planning as well as recruitment process upon the required skills and needs.

After exposing the features of the three different issues that undermine the organizational performance and threaten its persistence, this part will be devoted to the presentation of two alternative strategies that the organization would adopt based on the five part process. In light of the organization's case as well as its limited resources and managerial expertise, the following two strategies were proposed for the organization to overcome the first strategic issue. Since the three issues are intermingled and overlapping in terms of their effects and importance, the first issue was chosen to be analyzed since it is perceived as the most dangerous issue that would critically undermine the organizational survival as a non-profit institution. These two strategies are as follows: The development of partnerships with public administration schools and the organization of weekly seminars in which the managerial experiences of several organizations are presented. Concerning the first alternative, the development of partnerships with prominent schools of public administration in the US and Europe would face several impediments. For example, the organization as a burgeoning entity would need to be more appealing for these schools so that they would accept to create partnerships in terms of providing some volunteering professors in public administration who would act as consultants for the organization.

The financial issue is important in order to apply the consultants and professors' advises within the organization. The funding will be a major barrier since the board of directors who lack funds have to receive these professors on the organization's expenses, implement their suggestions and provide them with the necessary materials and technical expertise to enable them to come up with accurate managerial advises. On the other hand, there might be a resistance to change from the board of directors who believe in themselves as experts since they might find that the professors' suggestions would ruin their visions and artistic taste which would incite them to refute their advises. Moreover, these partnerships may include courses that would be offered to the organization's personnel for free about public administration and management. However, there exist few incentives for schools to provide such courses either for free or with reduced fees since the organization is more focused on scientific and artistic projects that won't benefit these schools back.

After providing such courses, the organization may delay its activities for a period of time which is detrimental for both the organization and its external stakeholders which may result in high rates of turnover. To overcome all these barriers, the organization may create a deal with the different universities that have public administration schools stating that the Tri country Foundation will devote its artistic and scientific research and projects for the benefit of the universities' schools of art and science in return for helping the organization with professors and courses provided by their public schools. The organization may add further programs related to environmental studies that would attract these schools to engage into partnership

agreements with the organization. Accordingly, these environmental studies will be focused on recycling and generating electricity from permanent resources like solar or wind energy depending on the state where the university is situated in. In light of the financial deficiency and the aforementioned proposals about widening the organization's research and scientific activities, these universities as well as other prominent research centers would grant considerable funding for the organization in return for benefiting from the organizational research findings.

Some courses or training sessions would be provided for free for employees. In addition, the Tri country foundation would enhance these partnerships by creating dual PhD and master degrees both in public management and environmental studies which would let students carry out researches in the organization in return for enrollment fees which would help the organization to overcome its financial problems. Moreover, these dual degrees and research orientation towards issues of interest for the universities would eliminate the psychological barriers between the consulted professors and the board of director's members who would be more receptive to advises and some incremental changes. Besides, by applying these suggestions, the organization would be able to overcome its financial problems and recruit more staff members which would enable core functions' employees to attend courses and training sessions while other backup employees would handle their tasks on their behalf. In light of these barriers and proposals, the organization would recruit more employees and reconsider its programs' design in order to come up with more attractive initiatives for universities that have public administration schools.

This action would be progressively developed within one year so that the organization would be able to benefit these universities and develop some researches related to environmental issues like recycling. Another action would be the acceptance of internship programs within the organization for these universities' students especially those from public administration schools in order to apply what they have learnt throughout their academic year. This action would pave the way for the creation of dual degree masters and PhD programs. These actions may require some steps like for example holding regular meetings among the board of directors in order to discuss these actions in order to enable them to come up with different suggestions and be ready for the incremental changes that will be introduced into the organization. Besides, some professors and students in public schools would be allowed to attend some parts of these meetings in order to better know the organization and get used with the working atmosphere of the Tri country foundation.

As for the second alternative for the first issue, the organization would hold a series of weekly seminars where the previous managerial experiences of public and non-profit organizations would be discussed either by inviting members from these organizations or by showing films that illustrate the main features of these experiences. This alternative would face several barriers like the refusal of some organizations to speak up about their experiences in managing their functions and programs in a better managerial way due to the intimacy of some information that would be possibly revealed. In addition, these seminars

would need funding which is not feasible for the organization that needs to cover its costs and at least pay the salaries of its employees. Moreover, some of the previous experiences of other non-profit or public organizations may not benefit the organization since there might be differences in their working environment in terms of challenges and opportunities. Besides, some organizations which might be specialized in the same domain of the Tri country foundation may be intimidated to reveal details about their experience due to competitiveness.

In light of these barriers, there are some proposals that the organization would adopt like exchanging managerial experiences with some organizations in return for making some scientific researches that may be required by these other organizations instead of paying them money or being crippled by the refusal of some organizations due to competitiveness. Besides, the Tri country foundation would hold these seminars on a limited level that includes only the high ranking positions within both organizations which won't be costing. Moreover, limiting the seminars on showing films only would be a good proposal that would enable the organization to overcome the issue of information intimacy and costs since the previous experiences will be provided taped under the supervision of other organizations. Throughout a year, the organization would develop some actions by starting with a series of consultations with stakeholders including a wide array of schools, students, teachers, professors in public administration and donors in order to ask them about their expectations from the organization. Besides, the Tri country may seek for volunteering professors or high ranking managers in other organizations to make some interventions in these seminars.

In addition, the organization may ask for a financial help from the research department in the state administration in order to help them to hold seminars and encourage other public organizations to reveal their experiences by providing them incentives. The state may provide the organization with some experts in public management who would be assigned by the state administration department to devote some of their working hours for giving some consultations to the organization. Furthermore, the Tri country foundation may initiate some steps in order to implement these actions like creating informal networks with employees from other organizations in order to have an insight about their experiences and develop good relationships that would allow further cooperation later on. Besides, the organization may let some of its employees to attend seminars and conferences that are held on the state level as well as those organized by other organizations about managerial experiences in various domains according to the companies' missions which will allow the Tri country foundation to compare between several experiences and formulate the best managerial framework that suits the organization. On the other hand, the board of directors may attend some classes and symposiums offered by professors in public administration schools about strategic management and public administration in general in order to be able to get acquainted with the public management concepts and understand how to apply them empirically in their organization.

The Tri country Foundation faced three major interdependent strategic issues that constituted a considerable impediment for the organization to keep on providing its activities and implementing projects for the coming two years. Besides, the organization lacked the preliminary requisites that any organization must have in order to expand its activities. Accordingly, this paper pointed out to some strategic issues related to how to acquire expertise in management and attract more funds through better project and budget planning and how to develop a better project management through according more importance to HR functions in the organization. However, in light of its limited resources and low experienced staff, it was suggested that the organization would better focus on the first issue as the most considerable one in terms of impact and importance as well as its significance in providing solutions for the other issues. Hence, two strategies were examined by using the five part process to come up with possible solutions in defined and feasible actions and steps to better handle the issue and enable the organization to achieve its goals. These strategies focused on creating partnerships with public administration schools and holding seminars about public administration and management as the most efficient solutions to tackle the first issue directly and with the least costs and maximum benefits.

## International public organizations: UN women Egypt

### Strengths:

- Strong leader with the capacity to take the women's rights agenda to a higher policy level.
- Higher status for the organization within the system of the United Nations.
- High caliber expertise recruited in the organization on the managerial and programmatic level.
- Wealth of knowledge and available up to date research.
- The affiliation to the UN system gives the UN women a credibility towards the different state members.

### Weaknesses:

- The organization's visibility and communication with various media channels is not enough. More effort is needed with regards to more visibility.
- Under staffing on a country and regional level, which leads to slower responses on an operational and a programmatic level.
- Bureaucracy in general. Rules and procedures are very tight and processes are lengthy.
- The difficulty of attracting more funds for the women's rights cause especially in developing countries that suffer the most of degradation in women's situation.

### Opportunities:

- Strong interest from donors to partner with UN women (multi-lateral and bilateral organizations) is an opportunity to mobilize more technical and financial resources.
- More resources allocated by the United Nations body for the fulfillment of the mandate.
- Formation of strategic partnerships.
- Further expansion of UN women operations.

- Decentralization will gradually take place, giving more opportunity for efficiency as the bureaucracy is relatively eliminated.
- Globalization and interconnectedness on the regional and the interstate levels increased the awareness about women's rights and the necessity of their empowerment.

### Challenges:

- The women's rights agenda is at risk in some countries, like the Arab region as it is witnessing political instability.
- The abolition of national counterparts and the restructuring of government and changes in mandates.
- The rising voice of fundamentalist groups may affect the level of coordination on a grass roots level (civil society partners) in priority countries.
- Lack of coordination and duplication of work among other civil society organizations on a country level.
- Impact evaluation.
- The cultural heritage in many countries especially the developing ones weakens the UN women's ability to advance its cause and fulfill its agenda.

Based on an extensive interview with Dr. Maya Morsi at UN women office in Egypt, it was confirmed that the organization went through an in depth assessment process that produced the following analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges/Threats (SWOCT) for UN women.

**Strategic issues identification:** The main strategic issue for the UN Women was how to identify women primary needs and how to address them in an effective way that is up to the women's expectations and empower their rights worldwide. This issue reveals a strong impediment for the UN women since the primary needs expressed by women differed in terms of their environment and faced problems which require different tools, strategies and intervention projects. Accordingly, this issue was formulated as an important question that requires an immediate and long term action in terms of the vision approach. Hence, the widespread gender inequalities detrimental to women and the limited attention accorded as well as the reluctance in resolving and addressing them let the organization to consider the question of both increasing awareness about women's concerns and the means to address them as a main issue. Therefore, the organization focused to tackle this issue on the regional and country level by carrying out a serious of consultations with different partners and groups. Many questions were derived from this main issue that faces the organization related to its mission and objectives. Most of these questions constituted the main framework that guided the consultation process that was held on several levels.

In light of its ambition to tackle women's needs, the UN women formulated the following subsequent concerns: How and where would UN women add value in light of its capacities, financial resources, social and academic networks as well as its legal mandates and potential areas of action and partnership especially on the country level. Another concern was to determine the changes that the UN women would support in order to enable women's empowerment in their societies. Accordingly, the consultations on the country level, like the one

that was held in March 2011 in Egypt, came up with a vision that entails the different priorities of the 100 day action plan of the UN women that it aims to achieve in Egypt. Upon the agreement of the different consulted partners, the vision mainly focuses on the women's empowerment through the establishment of a democratic community where gender equality prevails on the principle of liberal citizenship and equal opportunities in the public and the private domains.

With more details, this vision provided a set of priorities that the organization perceives as the most important and visible principles that manifest women's right like the economic empowerment, the leadership and participation, the assurance of women's rights and their preservation by the national budgeting planning in terms of resources orientation towards actions that tackles the enhancement of women's situation and the respect of the CEDAW convention that aims to eliminate all aspects of violence against women. Moreover, the vision attributed an important weight also to the improvement and the consideration of women machinery in terms of endorsing women's presence and involvement in the enhancement of various public issues that manifest discriminatory aspects against women. Finally, the monitoring and evaluation accountability was mentioned as a comprehensive mechanism that would guarantee the achievement of these priorities and that would enable to rectify any sort of violations that would impede their realization. A third concern that the UN women waved in its series of consultation is the accountability process in terms of how the governments and non-state actors would be involved in the reassessment and the implementation of the organization's policies, programs and actions on the different levels. The last concern couched by the organization into its strategic planning process was about how the UN women would undertake its coordination role in order to ensure the realization of its priorities on the regional and national levels through some UN agencies like the UNCT "UN country teams".

On the other hand, there are further issues that impede the UN women's mission towards the realization of gender equality like the lack of resources, the difficulty to undertake an ideational change and the disparities of women's needs and concerns worldwide. The funding problems emanate from the unattractiveness of the cause of gender equality for the different institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations which don't prefer to invest in projects related to the annihilation of all sorts of discrimination against women. This problem incites the organization to reconsider the question of how to reassess and reformulate project proposals in a more attractive way in order to get the required financial support and how the organization would get access to media and electronic campaigns so that it would reach a wider scope of supporters and convince them with more innovative means.

Besides, the ideational change constitutes a considerable impediment that has to be tackled on the long term since most of the powerful decision makers don't manifest an engagement into the gender equality issues which is a frequent obstacle in many developing countries. Moreover, women's needs are different around the world which implies that the organization has to adopt different strategies and action plans for each

country or a group of country in order to tackle women's problems and concerns. In other terms, the UN women became more faced with some emerging issues like how to enable and empower militant women in societies dominated by an ideational heritage that underestimates gender equality as a cause and how UN women would address the different needs of women worldwide in light of its limited budget.

**Strategies' formulation for issues management:** UN women developed a country level strategy by adopting a participatory approach as an integrative dynamic to engage different parties and stakeholders concerned by its mission and objective. Accordingly, the organization developed a serious of consultations on several levels in order to come up with a strategy that enables it to serve its mandates, take into consideration the different stakeholders' needs and implement its action plans successfully. These consultations were undertaken within the framework of the 100 day action plan that was developed by the UN women organization in order to empower it and make it a stronger institution that would achieve its goals and objectives. Accordingly, this plan is a strategic planning process developed for the 2012-2013 and aims essentially to enable the UN women to rally the different UN agencies around its principle of annihilating the gender inequality through a coherent process based on accountability within the UN system. The organization made clear in this plan that it aims to carry out a set of actions on the country level in order to develop the capacities and potentials of the national partners. Therefore, a field capacity assessment was initiated by the organization to identify the weaknesses of the UN women in addressing problems on the country level in terms of supporting and participating with national partners and UNCT. The provision of a stronger administrative and operational support for the realization of the UN women's core priorities and the nomination of a senior management team for the UN women was stressed as the key point of the different formulated strategies and action plans on the country level.

In light of the 100 days action plan, 8 strategies were formulated in order to carry out a strategic intervention and action plans in different countries starting from the beginning of 2011. First, the enhancement of a UN coordination system among the UN agencies including the UN Women with the participation of the UNDG (UN Development Group) aims to develop a more coherent system that integrates all the different UN agencies in line with their mandates and regulations in terms of gender equality. This coordination system will develop a resource tracking system that looks for deploying further efforts on different areas related to gender equality that has been tackled by the UN agencies.

Besides, this plan aims to empower women on the political and economic level through two means. The first consists of creating partnerships with different universities in order to increase the global awareness of gender inequality and the second is mainly based on the attribution of funds and grants to governments and non-state actors from the multi donor fund for gender equality in order to support them in the implementation of policies that empower women on the economic and political level in their societies (UN women: Vision and 100 days action



plan: A summary briefing, 2011). In addition, another strategy is oriented towards ending violence against women in cooperation with the UNITE campaign and other UN agencies. This action aims to encourage countries to react firmly against all aspects of violence against women by taking concrete measures. By relying on the coordination with the different instances of the UN system starting from the secretary general and the UNICEF, the UN women will retrieve the most valuable data and potential actions that will be diffused worldwide through the virtual knowledge center on ending violence against women.

UN women will take part into the global safe cities for women and girls initiative in order to improve local authorities, women's and youth groups, and community based organizations' potentials that would significantly decrease the level of violence against women and girls and would viably participate in the development of commonly shared public spaces between women and men. The UN women developed an action plan to implement the UNSC resolution number 1325 about the inclusion of women and the endorsement of their presence in peace settlement negotiations as well as other processes related to the conciliation of antagonist parties. Hence, in light of the elaborated 7-point action plan on women's participation in peace building, the UN women will collaborate with the peace building support office and the secretary general to work on several issues related to sexual violence in conflict and determines some alarming indicators that would prevent the increase and even the occurrence of sexual violence incidents. In addition, with the participation of the OHCHR, the UN women will focus on the reparations and compensations that should be paid by the aggressing parties in case some sexual violence incidents are proved to be happened in conflicts or temporary turbulences. Furthermore, different mechanisms were thought about in terms of preventing conflicts and the severe repercussions that women incur especially by the development of peacekeeping troops' innovative training with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) for the troops' deployment in different underdeveloped and unstable countries.

In addition to the aforementioned strategies and actions, the women empowerment on the economic level occupied a significant level in the UN women strategic planning. This importance was highlighted by the serious of partnerships that were developed with different international organizations like the UNDP, ILO, and IFIs in terms of developing a comprehensive UN strategy that mainly addresses the question of empowering women economically. Accordingly, the organization will work on adding further efforts in cooperation with different UN partners in different areas that include trade and employment in terms of policy making to enhance the rural women farmers' situation. Another partnership was also developed with the world bank in order to not only produce a women's economic opportunity index but also to include this issue of women's economic empowerment on the international and global conferences' agendas.

The concretization of gender equality within countries on the national, local and sectoral levels as well as in the different processes of planning, budgeting and creating statistics is a

preliminary concern for the UN women. Therefore, the organization incites its national partners to prepare regular reports that analyzes women's situation in all countries and that would consequently influence and orient the national decision making process in terms of better legislation and budgets that are allocate funds towards areas that suffer from gender inequality. Besides, the UN women developed joint initiatives and partnerships with different organizations in order to ensure the implementation of further policies and laws that promote gender equality on the country level. For example, it developed the UN-EC partnership on gender equality and women's empowerment with the ILO in order to support this cause through the allocation of more funds towards countries. Moreover, by underlining the centrality of the UN human rights mechanisms, it collaborated with the OHCHR so that it would ensure the respect of the CEDAW convention by national legislations and develop a monitoring system based on technical expertise about women's situation in the different countries in light of the reports provided by national partners. Moreover, the realization of the MDG as the basic means of gender equality implementation and development, the UN women in its strategies formulation focused on different areas underlined by the MDGs like HIV and AIDS, migration, rule of law, climate change, social protection, education, maternal and child health. In other words, it will deploy additional efforts in order to help the different countries in these areas by relying on experts in gender equality.

Another issue of interest that emerged in the strategies formulation was the emphasis on the creation of further partnerships with the different UN women stakeholders like the worldwide countries, women's and UN organizations, and UN organizations as well as women movements in civil societies and excluded women like the disabled, HIV, minority, poor and migrant. On the other hand, UN women accord a major importance to partnerships with academic institutions and research centers as well as with the different UN agencies in terms of common initiatives and action plans. These partnerships will be more endorsed through a series of consultation that will be held in the different regions with representatives of the aforementioned groups of stakeholders by the UN women executive director.

More resources will be mobilized for gender equality through the various partnerships that the UN women has established recently. Accordingly, the consolidation of partnerships with the UN agencies ensure a sustainable and long term provision of fund since it is expected that almost 50% of the UN women fund will be attributed by the UN member states as well as the fund for gender equality and the un trust fund to end violence against women. Besides, the multi donor funding pattern implies a diversification of partnership with more trusted institutions and constituencies like the private sector and wealthy individuals as well as a wide spread electronic advertisement through internet. In addition to the financial support, UN women cares about seeking political support for its cause since the governmental involvement increases the UN women's position and help to accelerate the effective implementation of its action plans and the realization of its priorities.

In October 2010 and in light of the aforementioned wide framework of action, the UNIFEM as an integrated part of the UN women, within a consultative meeting held in Amman, announced the different tools for empowering women in the Arab world. In this meeting, different representatives from the civil society, women and regional organizations as well as different universities' students from the Arab world gathered in order to have the feedback of all these stakeholders and participants about the UN women before its start in 2011. By stressing the importance of Beijing's conference resolutions, the consultative meeting emphasized the necessity of women's participation in the preparation of national plans in their respective countries and the assessment of the previous ones in light of its fulfillment of gender equality criteria. Besides, it pledged for the adoption of laws, policies and programs that would enhance women's situation in the different Arab countries. Moreover, the UNIFEM has to exert pressure on the different national governments in order to comply with the terms of the international conventions and treaties about women's rights and gender equality in their legislations and policies.

**Review and adopt the strategic plan:** The 100 day action plan will be presented to the executive board in June 2011. The UN women generally adopt a broad and holistic strategy that defines its identity, mission and priority. Accordingly, the UN women is an agency of the UN organization that aims to promote gender equality worldwide by eliminating all sorts of discrimination and violence against women on different levels that vary from the global to the regional and the country level. Although the organization developed a set of core principles and priorities that it is looking forward achieving them everywhere it can, most of these principles stem from only one value which is gender equality. This means that the organization would adopt many subsequent strategies but they are all derived from the main strategic mission of the organization. However, due to the disparities of women's needs around the world, this main strategy has to be elaborated into further strategic intervention on the three aforementioned levels in order to adapt to the specificities of the field where the UN women intervenes. Besides, the strategic intervention is furthermore formulated into action plans for each country.

Before adopting a strategic plan, UN women went through a series of consultation processes on different levels in order to know the feedback of the different stakeholders who indicate their opinions about the UN women's priorities and obstacles while stating their expectations and needs from the organization in the future. Thus, before the merger, the UN women made a strategic consultative meeting in Jordan with different stakeholders in the world and specifically from the Arab world in order to have their feedbacks and points of view about the women's situation in the Arab world. This consultative meeting would be illustrative about how the organization proceeded for the revision and the implementation of its strategic planning. In this meeting for example, the different stakeholders debated about the different challenges that still face women in the Arab world on various levels like the political, economic, social and cultural ones by highlighting the main causes of women's marginalization from these domains of public spheres.

There was a debate between the UN officials in general and particularly the UN women ones about how the organization would resolve these problematic issues in the Arab world related to gender equality and how it is going to empower women within the framework of human development. Moreover, some detailed recommendations were given to the representatives of the UN women about the necessity to create a bureau for the organization in each Arab country and exert pressure on national governments to abide by the CEDAW and adjust laws and decrees according to its terms. In addition, the participants indicated that the UN women should accord the priority to work on the causes of women's mediocre situation while shedding light on the adaptation of intervention projects that suit the different contexts in the Arab countries. Therefore, these consultations help in the identification of the different priorities on the regional and country levels regarding gender equality and the needed resources and efforts in order to undertake a strategic planning and the first 100 day action plan.

## CONCLUSION

UN women in the consultative meeting held in Amman, made a sort of categorization of the different questions of its stakeholders and responded to each of them in light of their needs, expectations and degree of expertise in the issue. Generally, the organization emphasized consultation as well as the coordination and the networking are as the main tools to which the UN women refers in order to render its implementation process successful. Besides, it underlined that by endorsing its partnership with other organizations especially with the UN agencies, a better implementation would be guaranteed by coordinating the policies between the different UN agencies while undertaking a strategic planning. Hence, the different issues discussed in the consultative meeting helped somehow in defining the 100 day action plan priorities and strategic issues since the discussions held with the different stakeholders focused on the priorities and the main roots of gender inequality in the region which inspired the UN women planners. In addition, the participants shed light on accountability as a regulatory mechanism that would ensure transparency and effectiveness in the planning and the implementation of the strategies and action plans assigned for the different countries. The different concerns that were expressed by the stakeholders at this three days meeting reorganized the UN women's perception about its function, mandates and structures regarding the achievement of gender equality. This reconsideration paved the way for the empowerment of national actors as a strategic action plan that would be adopted by the UN women towards Arab countries in order to eliminate the different forms of women's discrimination.

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