

Media literacy and Civic Engagement among University Students

Case Study for "Partners 2 Project"

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Introduction

Youth are the driving force of the civil society and their participation in political, social, and cultural affairs strengthens the community. Thus, reviving and stimulating youth involvement in civic life is become very importance after the Arab spring in Egypt. Millions of Egyptian youth from different socio-economic and religious backgrounds demanded the overthrow of Mubark regime the longest President in Egypt's history.

The situation in Egypt is very delicate right now and there are many challenges face achieving the Egyptian revolution goals. Freedom of expression and rebuilding Egyptian media for a democratic future in Egypt is a real challenge, the atmosphere of common purpose, tolerance and inclusion experienced by protesters between January 25 and February 11 have already led to significant changes in attitudes, practices freedom of expression, and the right to mobilize. Nowadays, the cultural challenge is about how to preserve these attitudes and practices to be part of every Egyptian culture.

Media literacy is the keyword to overcome these challenges. It is a set of skills that anyone can learn as it refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media messages of all kinds. These are essential skills in today's world. Today, many people get most of their information through complex combinations of texts, images and sounds. We need to be able to navigate this complex media environment, to make sense of the media messages that faced us every day, and to express ourselves using variety of media tools and technologies. Media literate youth and adults how to decipher

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complex messages they receive from television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, billboards, signs, packaging, marketing materials, video games, recorded music, Internet and other forms of media. They can understand how these media messages are constructed, and discover how communicators create meaning.

Media literacy education helps to develop critical thinking and active participation in our media culture. The goal is to give youth and adult's greater freedom by empowering them to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media.

Many researchers indicate the importance of media literacy as a tool for democratizing the society, **Thomas Lee (2009)** in his M.A Thesis titled, "A desire for active citizens: an exploratory analysis of citizenship education for young migrants in New Zealand" found that the introduction of citizenship education in New Zealand would increase the levels of active citizenship of young migrant New Zealanders¹. The same goes to **Billy Fito (2009)** Master of education thesis about Citizenship education in the social studies curriculum of Solomon Islands found that teaching appropriate values to develop good and active citizens would improve the chaotic situation of the Solomon Islands². **Bader Abdullah (2007)** study discussed the concept of media literacy from the perspective of the integration of information technology in education. Briefly the study addressed the definition and justification and taught strategies and skills. The paper proposed a framework for media literacy in Saudi public education stems from the overall perspective of the educational reform. Bader study suggested the following recommendations: planning for media education as sub-system in a comprehensive plan for educational reform based on the integration of information technology in education, establishment of departments for media literacy through cooperation between colleges and sections of media, rehabilitation of these sections faculty members to teach media education for teachers and pre-service teachers, and planning for the provision of training programs in media education for teachers in service³.

Nicole Pogue (2004) also in her M.A. Thesis asked an important question: "How Important is Media literacy and community participation?" The study found that the way which civics is taught to

students might have an effect whether they feel a duty or obligation to vote ⁴.

This learning process should include also practical participation and engagement in the political process even in a micro scale, literature indicates to the importance of practice in civic learning Kahne and Westeimer (2003) examined ten educational programs within the United States school system that were designed to develop democratically active citizens, a function of the education system which, in the opinion of the authors, is being neglected in favor of employment and career skills. The authors concluded that the best method to insure healthy and secure democracy is by exposing school students to direct community participation, enhancing student knowledge, participation and conception of themselves as members of a community⁵. The same goes with Kerr and Lines research paper that examines the results of participation of 14-year-old school students in the International citizenship education study. The report was prepared by the national foundation for educational research. It detailed the performance and results of England's students, their civic knowledge, attitudes towards civic institutions and social groups, their political activities and associations and the role of teachers and school-based on media literacy programs. The findings suggest that while the students have an understanding of democratic values, the depth of understanding is limited; civic engagement is better promoted in schools that employ democratic practices⁶.

Menezes (2003) also investigated whether the participatory experiences of secondary school students affect their attitudes towards citizenship and the nature of their political engagement as adults, and considers implications for the development of citizenship education projects. Menezes based on findings from the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of educational Achievement) media literacy Study, which surveyed high school students in the Czech Republic, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland about their participation activities, citizenship concepts, and political trust. She found positive impact of the frequency of participation on civic concepts and political engagement, but argued that the quality of participation is more important than the quantity. In terms of citizenship education, Menezes concluded that participation in clubs

and organizations is a powerful learning tool, but it should be intentionally designed and systematically supported to improve the quality of the participatory experience⁷.

In Egypt, teachers, curriculum, activities, and administration in public schools have failed to promote or support democratic values and practices⁸. Big gap exists between the concept of citizenship education espoused by the ministry of education in Egypt and the content of social studies textbooks. An analytical study indicated that tourist attractions rather than citizenship are emphasized in school textbooks because tourism is a main source of the national income. Basic concepts in citizenship education such as rule of law, social justice, and political participation are rarely mentioned. The term “authority” prevails in the social studies textbooks over the term “citizen” (by nearly two to one), a clear indicator of state dominance of citizens⁹.

The reform needed required strong political parties and viable civil society structures that can launch this kind of media literacy mentioned earlier, or these uprisings will be only the first step in a process that will not follow a clear path and will take years to unfold.

Literature Review:

The Importance of Media literacy for Youth

Media literacy can be defined as: the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in a variety of forms (Aufderheide & Firestone, 1993, p. 7). It describes a set of capacities related to media consumption and creation that one can acquire¹⁰. It also, aims to engage people in more active civic lifestyles based on critical thinking skills and the ability to access, evaluate, analyze, and produce information, media literacy aims to teach evaluation and analysis, sharing and production skills, informed decision-making, and active participation in local, national and global dialog. Learning how to communicate in peer-to-peer spaces and engage with public issues in large forums is at the core of media literacy education¹¹.

The interest in the subject of media literacy has started since 1982, UNESCO assured of youth preparation for life in the world characterized by messages through TV, radio and press, media

education have begun mainly as a tool to protect citizens "protection model" from the negative effects of mass media, and the media when it became part of the mass culture for Individuals that widened the perception of education to enable the individual to be a critic in the interpretation controls of what they watch and hear" Critical Autonomy model " From this perspective the goal of media education is to transform the consumption cash Messages to enable participation process to help build awareness to Individuals community about different issues and civil¹².

Media literacy educates people about the value of news and information, about the power of media messages, about the role that the public can — and should play — in setting the public agenda. It teaches individuals that the free and fair exchange of information is vital to the establishment and sustaining of civil society. The goal of media literacy is to empower those who educates — empower them to take action to defend their access to information and to secure their participation in the process of governing¹³.

Audubon McKe (2010) in his M.A thesis, " **New Medium, New Practice: Civic Production in Live- Streaming Mobile Video'** analyzed the content of 1,000 mobile videos on Qik.com, and went on investigating the motives and practices behind the production of civic content specifically. Looking at live streaming mobile video production as a social practice through the lens of civic engagement, he analyzed how and why people are beginning to use this medium to become active citizens for the sake of educating or inspiring others. Research included mobile production by general users but focuses more narrowly on those who self-identify as activists, journalists, educators and community leaders. The study concluded that digital video production could be embraced as a means of civic participation¹⁴.

İlkin Mehrabov (2010) research about "Video Activism" explored the conduct of video activism in Turkey through a case study on video activist website in Turkey in order to find out whether the video activism was able to provide empowerment for the socially excluded and oppressed, or the practices conducted by it further contributed to the surveillance culture? the research was based on

qualitative data gathered through semi structured interviews and content analysis of the videos on website., and found that the website diminished empowering effects of video activism and on the contrary contributed to the proliferation of spectacle society ¹⁵.

Mihailidis (2009) looked at the civic learning outcomes of a course at the University of Maryland. His quasi-experimental study of 239 students found that those enrolled in a media literacy course increased their ability to comprehend, evaluate, and analyze media messages. At the same time, the study found that these courses promoted negativity and cynicism about the news media, and that more could be done to promote active citizenship¹⁶.

In his PhD thesis, **Jason John Wood (2009)** "Young People and Active Citizenship" investigated how young people define and experience active citizenship in their life every day. He comprised workshops and focus groups with 93 young people aged 14-16, and found that 'active citizenship' needs the introduction of citizenship education in schools and universities in more modern and technological manners¹⁷.

Bradford Thomas (2007) in his M.A Thesis "Student Provocateurs: Empowering Student Voice and Democratic Participation through Film" found that developing digital literacy is the key word for good media literacy. He said that Digital media, specifically video, needs to be prominent in students education. There is no denying that the penetration of media into children's lives, while school activities and assignments lag behind in incorporating digital resources and teaching digital literacy¹⁸.

Satu Riutta (2007) PhD dissertation titled "Empowering the poor? Media literacy and local level of participation in rural Tanzania and Zambia" examined the effects of media literacy on local level participation among the rural poor. Data consists of semi structured oral interviews of 280 adult citizens in five villages and one rural town in peripheral areas in Tanzania and Zambia during election year, the researcher suggested that raising awareness about rights increases citizens democratic participation ¹⁹.

Leo Burd (2007) also in his PhD dissertation “Technological Initiatives for Social Empowerment” designed Experiments in Technology-Supported Youth Participation and Local Civic Engagement, he concluded that governments and funding organizations have been investing in bringing computers and Internet connectivity to underserved communities. Unfortunately, many of those initiatives end up privileging the community residents who were the most visible, literate or active, leaving behind those who would need additional support and reinforcing even more the status quo²⁰.

The Institute for Conflict Research report (2006) titled: ‘Youth Participation in the Democratic Process’ investigated youth participation in Northern Ireland. It considered young people's views on elections and their perceptions on politicians, and discussed how young people might be better engaged in the electoral process. The study draws on qualitative and quantitative data, including workshops conducted with young people, focus group discussions and a survey of 1,100 youth, which tested the findings from the workshops and focus groups. The key conclusion of the report is that while many young people are not interested in politics and find the subject area is boring, in fact they feel passionate about the political issues that affect their lives. The authors concluded that young people want more education about politics, and feel that politicians need to respond better to the concerns of youth.

In her paper titled: “Children, youth, and civic (dis)engagement: Digital technology and citizenship” **Bell (2005)** discussed the recent academic literature concerning youth civic engagement, and how technology can be utilized to engage young people in civic participation. She concluded that young people are not suffering from civic disengagement; they participate in their own capacity and within their own communities. Those who concerned about youth participation should change and refine their perceptions to adequately observe the objects of their inquiry²¹.

Graeme Aitken (2005) based on Derek Heater’s (1999 and 2004) work to argued that citizenship education should enable children to understand citizenship as: identity (belonging to groups and personal identity), virtue (valuing freedom, fairness, tolerance,

truth and reasoning), civil and legal rights, a social concept (receiving welfare support) and a political concept (active participation in public debate). Aitken offered a definition of citizenship education, which might teach these skills and encourage student participation in political, economic and social decision making at local, regional, national and international levels²² .

Metz & Youniss (2005) and **McFarland & Thomas (2006)** demonstrated that providing opportunities for engagement during the formative years of citizen's life increased levels of engagement in early adulthood. Metz and Youniss (2005) conducted a longitudinal study on two different groups of high school students: one with a mandatory 40- hour community service requirement and one without such requirement. The authors found that students required to participate in community service later reported greater levels of civic involvement than those without requirement²³. McFarland and Thomas (2006) used data from two longitudinal national datasets to examine the role of participation in high school voluntary associations on adult political participation. The research found that "youth organizations that demand student time commitments and concern service, political activity, and public performance, have the most significant and positive relation to long term political participation"²⁴.

Thomas S. Dee's (2004) article empirically examined the hypothesis that education influences the political knowledge and civic engagement of adults. Dee utilized data obtained from the United States High School and beyond longitudinal study to estimate the impact of college attendance on adult voter and volunteer participation, and then he used the data from the General Social Surveys 1972-2000 to estimate the effects of years of schooling on adult voting behavior, group membership and attitudes towards freedom of speech. Dee thoroughly illustrated and discussed his methodology and included an extensive bibliography on education and political participation. He concluded by stating that that both high school and tertiary education have large impact upon adult civic attitudes and behavior²⁵.

In this extensive article, **James Bernard Murphy (2004)** challenged the universal practice of teaching media literacy within the

school system, and described the practice as both ineffective and a violation of the civic trust that underpins the public school system in the USA. Murphy's article began by discussing the educational response to the September 11 terror attacks, and the political conflict that developed between Liberals and Conservatives in response to the content of the civics lessons that were being taught to American students. While Murphy acknowledged the significant role that the school system had in teaching civic knowledge and promoting civic participation, he argued against the use of the school system to foster civic motivation²⁶.

Weber (2003) article examined whether the Internet mobilizes or demobilizes citizen participation in public affairs. An Internet-based social scientific survey conducted in 1998 at Northwestern University. It provided a comprehensive literature review detailing the sociological research that has already been conducted on the ability of the Internet to enhance the efficacy of citizen participation. The authors concluded that Internet has a positive impact on the political efficacy of citizens; however, they also stated that it exacerbates the socio-economic inequalities and biases presented within society, which help to determine the civic and political participation of citizens²⁷.

Mutch (2002) paper summarized five ways to define and teach citizenship: citizenship as status (teaching responsibilities and rights); citizenship as identity (exploring membership in groups, cultures and individual beliefs); citizenship as a democratic ideal (modeling values for democratic leadership and social justice); citizenship as public practice (teaching rules, laws and organization procedures); and citizenship as participation (in making decisions, resolving differences and managing resources). Mutch identified how these visions of citizenship education were currently embedded in the curriculum and detailed the way a primary school teaches citizenship through teachers and principal as role models, use of teaching devices such as classroom contracts and participation in education outside the classroom (e.g. group decision making and activity on school camps)²⁸.

Gibson (2001) report summarized different perspectives on the issue of **youth civic engagement**, discussing the arguments of political scientists, educators, and youth development specialists. Gibson argued that despite a shared interest in promoting active citizenship, members of these various disciplines often overlook the contributions of the others because of their differing assessments of what should be done. She concluded that a multi-disciplined approach should be adopted that combines the best of what each discipline has to offer, and that interdisciplinary collaboration should be encouraged. Gibson advised a hybrid approach to improving youth civic engagement, including longitudinal research, school-based media literacy, civic training for teachers, improved democratic practices at schools, use of diverse media as learning tools and information sources for youth, and community-based media literacy programs²⁹.

Levinson's (1999) article discussed the contemporary return of academic and political theorists to civic participation and the citizen foundations of liberal democratic states, with the specific objective of developing a coherent curriculum for liberal political education. She began by outlining the characteristics of the liberal state and the type of citizens that liberal states need to develop to maintain them, and continued to develop citizens with autonomy, the impact of liberal values and education on traditional values and religious communities. Throughout her article, Levinson considered the work of theorists such as Amy Gutman, John Rawls and Will Kymlicka. She concluded that democracies should embrace liberal political education despite the impact on other social, cultural and political structures³⁰.

Some argues that less structured type of media literacy may be more effective for example the citizenship education in New Zealand is less structured than in the United States, but according to **Barr (1998)** study it might be more effective at producing confident and informed citizens. Barr noted that children in New Zealand were given considerable responsibility, including road patrol, library duties and group decision-making on class camps. These informal opportunities provided more holistic approach to citizenship education and the development of "confident, informed and responsible" citizens³¹.

Simon & Merrill (1998) examined the merits of the Kids Voting Program which was delivered to 2.3 million American students in 1994. The aim of this media literacy initiative was to “increase student awareness and intellectual involvement in the 1994 election, and to raise those students to get additional adults to vote in larger numbers [than] they would have in the absence of the program”. The study involved a random survey of 24,976 respondents. The authors acknowledged the role that schools play in political socialization, along with the family, peer groups and media. However, the decline in turn out within the US since the 1960s has caused the effectiveness of “schools and other socialization agents” in encouraging greater political participation to be questioned. Results of this study revealed that "Kids Voting Program" had a variety of positive effects on the students and their parents, including greater political awareness and enthusiasm, coupled with higher turnout figures for adults in areas where students were involved with the course³².

A pilot study conducted in Australia investigated the nature of primary-level teachers knowledge in the area of civics and citizenship education. The authors developed an experimental unit of work in civics and citizenship education, and assessed how the knowledge and beliefs of teachers affected the implementation of the classroom unit. Findings were based on innovative methods: video-documentation of the lessons, in-depth interviews with the teachers involved in the study and focus groups with children in their classes. The authors concluded that there were seven major themes of knowledge and thought that occupy teachers’ minds when teaching civics and citizenship: (1) knowledge of content and resources; (2) knowledge of pupils; (3) pedagogical knowledge; (4) knowledge of community context; (5) management of time; (6) affective outcomes; and (7) control and discipline. They argued that these findings have important implications for teacher education and the development of teaching resources³³.

The relationship between educational culture and media literacy is not complementary and it is not a contradiction as well, but that relationship riddled with many influences and reasons that's why this relationship is not as it should be it (integration) and not as described (contradiction). A number of programs had many

experiences in many countries to employ the media in the service of educational purposes and these experiences sometimes are supported by some regional and international organizations³⁴.

Other works suggested that many traditionally conceived literacy skills, such as interpersonal skills and strategic planning, can be effectively taught through media because of youths' familiarity with, and regular use of it (Buckingham, 2003). Buckingham, Jenkins, and many others also expressed the need for critical media literacy skills; youth need support to learn how to effectively judge the credibility of what they find online, and how to identify and compare various ideological and political messages³⁵.

In conclusion - as we mentioned above-, media literacy is about the basics, teaching youth:

- 1- To identify what "news" is and how media, as well as other factors, decide what matters;
- 2- To monitor and analyze media coverage of people and events;
- 3- To understand media role in shaping global issues.

And second, media literacy is about individuals exercising their right to freedom of expression. Media literacy teaches youth how to:

- 1- Defend media in their oversight of good government, corporate accountability and economic development;
- 2- Promote civil society by themselves is becoming a responsible part of the communication chain;
- 3- Motivate media to cover news better, by reaching their voice to media about their expectations for accuracy, fairness and transparency

The Relationship between Media and Civil Society

Away from pluralism in the definition of civil society and the stages of its inception we can say that "civil society is a social association based on individual voluntary choice where individuals enter without forcing and applying to organizations based application to join the membership of their own free choice that make them

adhere to its principles and contribute hard in their activities and the existence of this social association is to achieve more stability for society, as it ensures that setting limits to restrict the states authority and prevent them from tyranny" 36.

This form of social organization is consisting of a group of diverse institutions, religious and educational, professional and political, cultural and human rights such as trade unions, labor unions and professional associations, as well as charities and political parties etc. That was dominated by the values and principles of tolerance and acceptance of others, peaceful dialogue, and individual privacy.

Arab civil societies play an influential role in embracing the demands of media freedom and independence by providing a guarantees for professional practice, and monitoring government abuses and securing rights and freedoms of workers in this field ..All these roles nominates civil society for an essential and pivotal role in supporting the media's ability to contribute in the process of democratic transition, as well as the support of syndicates union organizations and professional associations for the media, and provide legal support and research to consolidate and strengthen the efforts of these organizations³⁷.

There is no specific characteristics of the relationship between media and civil society can be considered a measurment or indication of good or effective relationship only when the two agendas closer to the goals of the other, or move away from it. So one could say that the relationship between the parties is a complementary relationship with mutual influence and services, in case the two parts have close or identical goals. And then, effective and productive relationship between media and civil society organizations in were taken into account the common interests of both sides, or when they meet the goals declared or undeclared for each, so media involved in campaigns carried out by civil society organizations, and adopted as one of the issues fundamental, contributing to raise public opinion and mobilize it , but not contribute to the industry that the public is capable of responding to the challenges of change 38.

NGOs have gained significant importance in Egypt due to its vital role in development and creating bonds between itself and

international interest groups, but the sources of funding of NGOs by foreign countries interests and intentions has raised enormous suspicion after the 25th of Jan revolution. The importance of NGOs increasing in Egypt is referred to its dynamic role and its size that exceeded 28 thousand NGOs in Egypt and over 27 million beneficiaries³⁹. Advocacy for human rights and constitutional changes have created a new momentum in Egyptian society, introducing new forms of political participation. Any research effort to measure the state of civil society, thus, has to take into consideration the peculiar circumstances facing civil society in Egypt today, the dynamics of the time it lives in, and its transforming growth and development⁴⁰.

The interviewed NGOs' managers believed that they are followers of the donor organizations that have the upper hand in determining the scope of work of domestic NGOs according to a previously set agenda. Foreign NGOs also imposed the western management style regardless of cultural differences. Such attitudes evident in previous studies must have paved the way to the foreign-funding case developments in 2012, which created a negative public opinion towards foreign-funded NGOs working in Egypt with increasing skepticism of the nature of their work, and credibility⁴¹.

Other studies discussed the influence of the American AID on the development of Egyptian political and media spheres. A recent study traced a negative influence of American AID on the censorship policy of Egypt's state-owned media. It concluded that Egypt external dependence on US foreign aid and its fear of upsetting internal Islamic groups restricted the Egyptian media discourse against both the US and the Muslim Brotherhood⁴².

Two researches studies explored the role of the Internet and social media for civil society in creating a public sphere away from the authoritarian regimes and controlled media. Both studies examined the Muslim Brotherhood website and its increasing function during Mubarak era as an example for creating civil society of free public sphere with its inaccessibility to official mass media.⁴³

A few number of Arabic studies measured attitudes towards NGOs among its measurements of other variables related to such

organizations. Among the results of these studies was that the public's developed a positive attitude towards civil society organizations in Egypt despite the public minimal participation in the decision-making process inside these organizations⁴⁴.

The study of **Laila Elbetar and Aliaa Elasaaly (2009)** achieved its purposes in answering three questions aims to: identifying the source of media in Civic and national education, identifying the role of media education presented in personalities and equipments with the media skills. This was achieved through content analysis for media sources and its function through finding frequencies and percentages. The results showed that the focus was on readable media sources in civic education books for seventh, eighth, and ninth grades and visual sources in national education books for fifth, sixth, and seventh primary grades. Also results indicated that the civic and national education books dealt with media education in a non-scientific way. Based on this, the two researchers recommended that the curriculum designers should include activities related to scientific education in a scientific way in Civic education, National education and other school subjects⁴⁵.

Some foreign researchers found that there was a correlation between civic participation, government and media, such as: **Hun Park (2007)** PhD dissertation about "How does electronic government affect civic engagement?" She found that E-government has a significant positive impact on nonpartisan civic engagement (sending emails about campaign and voting), but moderate or negligible effects on partisan engagement (i.e., solicitations for votes, financial contributions, and attendance at a campaign rally)⁴⁶.

In **Chaeyoung Chang (2006)**, Study of "The Effect of the Civic Participation on Reducing Political Corruption", found that an efficient and sustainable fight against corruption can be done only on the collaboration of three partners: government, private sector and civil society. And he focused on the potential role of video activism⁴⁷.

Margaret Piasecka (2006) in her M.A Thesis "Where are the Active Citizens of Tomorrow?" said that Local governments around the world are now attempting to regain community respect and support through seeking to implement government policies relating to

concepts variously described as community engagement, capacity building, active citizenship or public participation. Her thesis had identified a methodology for finding people who are motivated to act in the public interest in one local government in Western Australia. It had also identified how they can be encouraged to take a part in opportunities to participate and ultimately become active citizens⁴⁸.

In Deborah Lynn (2003) dissertation "Exploring the Process of Civic Engagement" the researcher expressed the need to develop ways that encourage civic responsibility. As the need to educate and encourage citizens to be more civic-minded increases, higher education, communities and agencies need to learn more meaningful ways to engage constituencies in the process that will result in greater civic responsibility⁴⁹.

"Partners 2" as a Media literacy Program

Internews is an international media development organization based in California whose mission is to empower local media worldwide to give people news and information they need, the ability to connect, and means to make their voices heard. Internews envision a world where everyone can communicate freely with anyone, anywhere, and exchange news and information they need to shape the future of their communities and the world. Internews Cairo is one of the few NGOs which are registered in Egypt under Egyptian foreign ministry and ministry of social solidarity.

Through a grant from USAID-Egypt, Internews network implemented an 18-month project called "Youth and media for community participation. It was started in May 2008 but the project was extended for 15 months starting from November 2010 to January 2012. The **overall goal** of the project aimed to strengthen media literacy in Egypt. This will be achieved through building up understanding of citizenship and participating among universities students at 6 of the country's universities inspiring the next generation of Egyptian citizens about the power of democracy and media.

The efforts exerted focused on the achievement on 3 key **objectives**:

المؤتمر العلمي الدولي السادس والعشرين
(الإعلام الرقمي والإعلام التقليدي: مسارات التكامل والمنافسة)

- 1- Understanding of citizenship and participation practices enhanced in Egyptian Universities, strengthen the building capacity of the targeted universities' students.
- 2- Promote the democratic practices inside these universities.
- 3- Address the key salient community issues via media outlets.

The “**Arab Spring**” created more enable environment for promoting more effective role of the youth where they can participate significantly to respond to the current events through the current project carried out by internews in Egypt, As such, the project stands as a model for youth participation that preceded the revolution.

It is worthy said that the above mentioned attention has been increased & promoted significantly after starting the Arabic spring revolutions especially Egypt 25th January revolution initiated by the youth & student universities. Considering the enabling environment where the youth had the opportunity & space to start practical initiatives in the field of the civic engagement & engagement in the political life aspects, by actual exercising of their civic rights on the ground using different mechanisms and tools leaded by the new media.

Research objectives:

The performance and quality of higher education in Egypt is currently severely compromised by overly centralized order to improve the already outdated system, rigid curriculum and teaching practices. Improving media literacy in such higher education system is a very difficult task and that’s why advocates for media literacy have established programs across Egypt to promote media literacy. This study aims to: evaluate the program out- comes as a case study for the efforts of civic society sector in Egypt in the field of media literacy.

Research Questions:

As detailed above, there is a significant need for studies that examine both the frequency and the distribution of current practices, and their impact. This study contained three parts:

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Part 1: Includes respondents responses toward chosen statement indicating the level of civic knowledge among them, by answering how much they disagree or agree with the following statements: (Every person should give some of his/her time for the good of his/her town or country- Egypt would be much better if there weren't so many elections and people didn't have to vote so often- People would be much better if they could live far away from other people and never have to do anything for them- So many other people vote in the national elections that it doesn't matter much to me whether I vote or not- If a person doesn't care how an election comes out, s/he shouldn't vote in it- If you love your community, you should notice its problems and work to correct them- Being concerned about local issues is an important responsibility for everybody).

Part 2: Includes respondents responses toward chosen statement to measure the level of civic Engagement among them, by *indicate* "yes" or "No" for certain activities, such as:

- 1- Have you ever contacted (met, spoke to – wrote to) any official member of Alexandria governorate about problems?
- 2- Have you ever expressed your opinion about any issue in newspapers, magazines, Radio or TV shows?
- 3- If you had some complaint about a government activity and took that complaint to official member of the government, what attention do you think he or she would pay?

Part 3: this part for only those who participated in INTERNEWS workshops. Questions of part Three addressed the effectiveness of the workshops part of the "Parteners2" program. Concerning the question of the way students heard about the program - the reasons behind the student decision to participate in the program - what the participants think that will improve for the future of Internees workshops - what could the Internees workshops do to get more people to participate.

Research Methodology:

This is a descriptive study that seeks to collect data, explain and analyze results that lead to the possibility of making

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generalizations. Two-Group posttest-only randomized experiment Designs is used to assess the civic knowledge and engagement of the students participated in the program and those students who did not participate in the program from Alexandria University. The students of all categories were selected randomly with total sample size 100 students distributed as follows:

Table (1)

	Participants	Non-Participants	
Alexandria University	50	50	100

The study measured the groups on two scales (civic knowledge measure and civic engagement scales). The questionnaire included 4 parts as follows:

Part one: Demographics

Part two: the scales of civic knowledge consisted of 20 questions

Part three: the scales of civic engagement consisted of 15 questions

Part Four: for only those who participated in workshops, consisted of 11 questions concerning the workshops answered by 100 students.

The data was collected through **electronic survey** on the Internet for over two months (June and July 2012) and Systematic random sample was chosen through the participants and non- participants.

Results:

Part one: Measure of Civic Knowledge:

Table (2)

Measure of civic knowledge

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Have No Opinion		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	N
1. Every person should give some of his/her time for the good of his/her town or country.	45%	47%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
2. Egypt would be a lot better if there weren't so many elections and people didn't have to vote so often	1%	1%	4%	11%	0%	1%	10%	5%	35%	32%
3. People would be a lot better if they could live far away from other people and never have to do anything for them.	1%	3%	2%	8%	0%	1%	11%	10%	36%	28%

**المؤتمر العلمي الدولي السادس والعشرين
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4. So many other people vote in the national elections that it doesn't matter much to me whether I vote or not.	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%	7%	4%	1%	45%	40%
5. If a person doesn't care how an election comes out, s/he shouldn't vote in it.	1%	5%	5%	23%	1%	2%	8%	1%	35%	19%
6. If you love your community, you should notice its problems and work to correct them.	42%	30%	3%	11%	1%	5%	2%	2%	2%	2%
7. Being concerned about local issues is an important responsibility for everybody.	42%	40%	3%	1%	1%	5%	2%	2%	2%	2%

*P: for participants

**N: for non participants

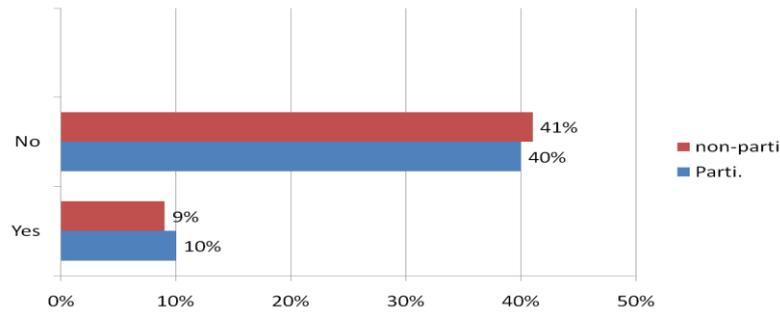
The above table indicates that the majority of respondents (participants and non participants) reflected positive attitudes towards civic knowledge, such as: " Every person should give some of his/her time for the good of his/her town or country" (92%), (45%) for participants (47%) for non participants, " Being concerned about local issues is an important responsibility for everybody" (42%) for participants (40%) for non participants, " If you love your community, you should notice its problems and work to correct them" this statement gained (42%) for participants for (30%) among non participants.

In contrast, the statements which reflect negative attitudes towards civic knowledge were: " So many other people vote in the national elections that it doesn't matter much to me whether I vote or not" (45%) for participants (40%) for non participants, also, (35%) from participants supported the statement of "Egypt would be a lot better if there weren't so many elections and people didn't have to vote so often" (32%) for non-participants.

Part Two: Measure of Civic Engagement

Have you ever contacted (met, spoke to – wrote to) any official member of Alexandria governorate about problems?

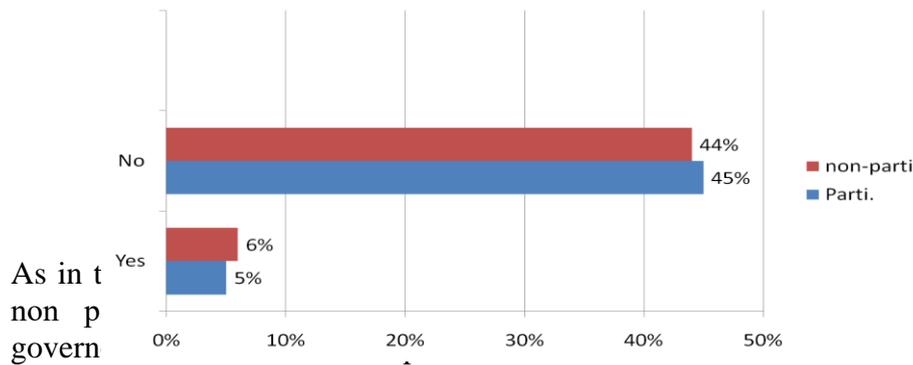
Figure (1)



The figure shows low civic engagement among both participants and non participants, (40%) of participants and (41%) of non participants sample didn't make any positive steps in informing the official members of Alexandria governorate about their community needs.

What about government officials outside? Have you ever contacted or written to such a person on some need or problem?

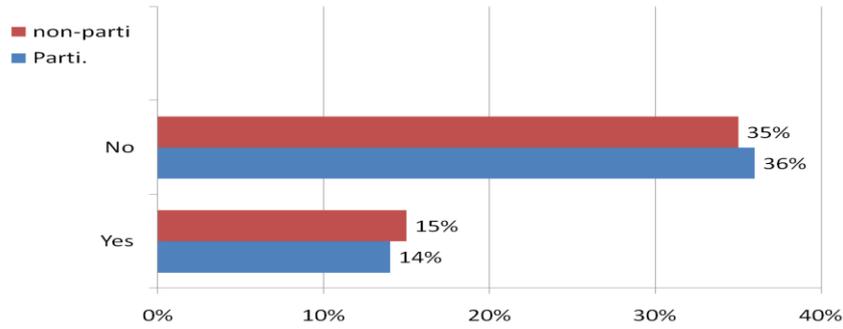
Figure (2)



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Have you ever expressed your opinion about any issue in newspapers or magazines?

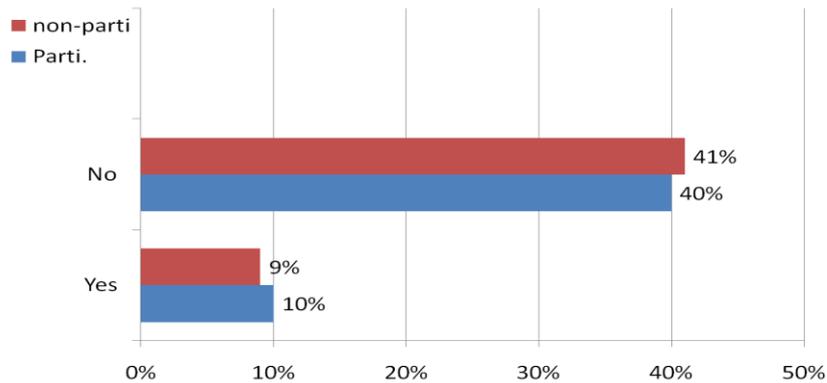
Figure (3)



14% among participants and 15% among non participants).

Have you ever expressed your opinion about political issues in Radio or TV shows?

Figure (4)



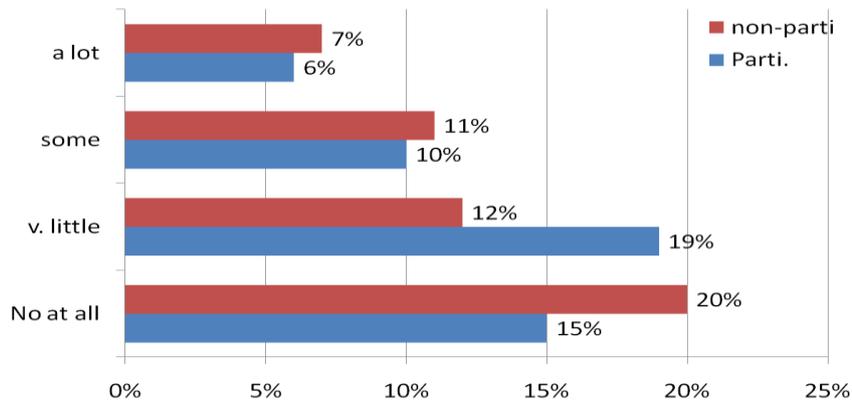
According to the previous graph, when the respondents were asked to answer if they called in Radio or TV shows to express their opinion on political issues, we found a little differences between the answers of the previous question –graph 3-, participants expressed their opinion through radio and TV by (10%) versus (14%) by press, and among non participants the percentage was (9%) versus (15%).

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This result shows low active civic engagement among both participants and non-participants.

If you had some complaint about a government activity and took that complaint to official member of the government, what attention do you think he or she would pay?

Figure (5)

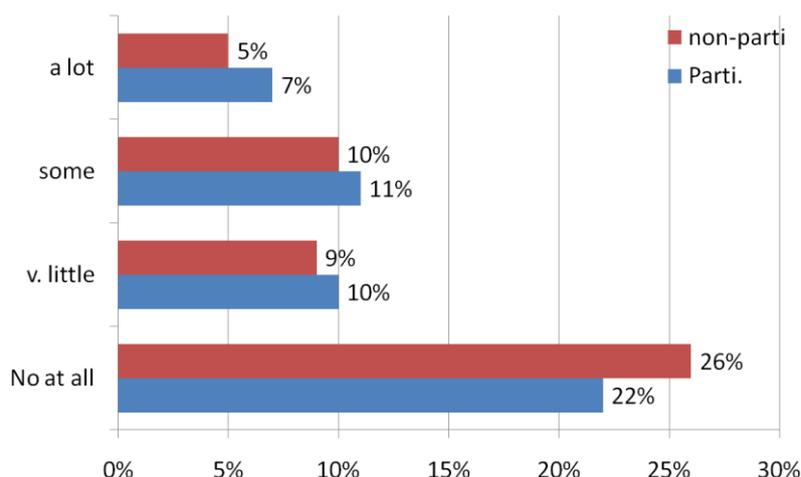


Both participants and non participants have quite the same percentage. “one third ”of the sample (34%) thought that the official members of governorate will pay “very little attention” or “no attention at all” toward their complaints and opinions. Also, the majority of the non-participant (32%) expressed the same opinion.

This result shows that both participants and non-participants have a great mistrust toward official government members, and they don’t trust them in solving Alexandria problems.

How much influence do you think someone like you can have over governorate decisions?

Figure (6)



Most of participants and non-participants (22%-26%) indicated that they don't think their opinions could make a big difference over government decision.

Part Three: Recommendations for future program in Egyptian universities

Questions of part three addressed the effectiveness of "Parteners2" workshops. Concerning the question of the way students heard about the program (10%) of the sample knew from an instructor announcement it in class, (20%) from ads in the university campus, (30%) through a friend, (40%) from groups and pages on the face-book which indicates that networks were the best way for students to get information about the program.

Internews Egypt may want to consider starting a campaign to encourage current participants to tell more of their friends about the program through the use of face book.

Answers of the question about the reasons behind the student decision to participate in the program, (5%) of the sample said frankly

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to get a day off, while (45%) participated to be able to list it on their CV/resumes, (20%) to connect and meet people, (15%) to get a leadership experience, (10%) To become more involved in their community, (5%) to solve problems in community. Number one reason was to list their participation in their CV and I believe that Internews Egypt team should highlight what the skills learned in “Partners 2” will benefit students in other areas of life, such as work. The other top two reasons current participants said they participated was for leadership experience and to become more involved in their community. These would be two great aspects of the program to emphasize when talking about the benefits of participation.

Answers of the question about what the participants think that will improve for the future of Internews workshops, (45%) of the sample mentioned the Internews workshop was too structured and making it less structured will improve it more, while (35%) of the sample mentioned that there aren’t enough preparation meetings before the workshops, Internews Egypt may want to consider organizing more preparation meetings before the workshops in the future programs.

The participant also after thinking of their peers who did not participate, recommended that what could the Internews workshops do to get more people to participate through holding the session during a different time of the year (5%), Providing transportation to the preparation meetings (10%), Having the preparation meetings at different times (10%), Better explain the benefits of participation (40%), Have instructors offer extra credit for participation (35%). Since so many participants said that better explain of the benefits of participation as the most effective way to encourage other students to participate it should be a priority of internews to focus more on these benefits in their ads and publications (posters and flyers) and train student leaders in citizenship clubs to explain these benefits for their classmates.

After giving definitions of media literacy as a structured learning situation that promoted civic engagement and political engagement and Civic Engagement as “Organized voluntary activity focused on problem solving and helping others “(65%) of the

participants see their- selves to be more engaged after their participation in the “Partners 2” program, while (35%) think they are the same after participation.

The initial results of the study show that the program can have significant and positive impact on certain key aspects of civic knowledge and attitudes, and it also may leads to more participants’ engagement. However, the program appears to have little effect on changing democratic values, such as trust in political institutions.

The gaps doesn't seems to be between only participant and non-participants but also it appears that there is a new gap the study didn’t intended to tackle in the beginning, which is the gap between civic knowledge and civic engagement among participants.

Recommendations:

In this area civil society organizations and the media can work to prioritize the issues directed towards some of their activities - with the uniqueness of each other activities - leading to the completion of those issues some examples are:

- 1- Activate the role of media to raise awareness of problems and overcome all constraints of students participation in civil society.
- 2- Upgrade the role of civil society to provide material assistance and knowledge of youth and health services, and Develop outreach programs to fight AIDS, drugs, poverty, unemployment, youth centers and other activation of student unions through the promotion of a culture of volunteerism and motivation to serve the community.
- 3- Strengthen the role of the private sector in supporting youth projects and providing job opportunities supporting youth Organizations and establishing of developmental projects.
- 4- Establish a smart partnership between the components of good governance (state - civil society organizations - the private sector) in order to promote the positive role of youth and address their problems.

- 5- Reform civil service, improve recruitment procedures and the adoption of efficiency standard of work.
- 6- Rais capacity, training and rehabilitation for young people to activate their role in society and the state.

Limitations and Future Research

The most significant limitation of this study was the sample, the researchers tried to achieve the similarity between the members of each of the four groups of the students. But they can't claim the causal impact of the partners 2 program (the intervention) on the target population (Alexandria students). Quasi-experimental research designs share many similarities with the traditional experimental design, but they specifically lack the element of random assignment to treatment or control. Instead, quasi-experimental designs typically allow the researcher to control the assignment to the treatment condition, but using some criterion other than random assignment.

For future research it is highly recommended to get more complete dataset of the participants and non-participants in each university and the data collection tools should include more important questions about family structure, and demographics in order to achieve the perfect experimental comparison.

A second limitation that arose from working with the university students during the administration of the survey was the problem of having students take a 40-minute survey. Some students discussed the survey and the responses they were making with one another, and a number of surveys were rushed through or left incomplete so that students could finish more quickly and continue socializing with friends. Future research should but this in consideration usually participants group take more efforts since the group members already know each other while working with the non-participants was much easier since many of the selected students sow the others for the first time.

With these limitations in mind, There are many things can be for future research, but the researcher does encourage "Internews" to continue to keep thorough records of participant contact information in the event that additional research opportunities come up and need

access to that information. Additionally, a longitudinal study should be conducted to see if the effects of participation are consistent across time. Further research is needed to continue to find ways to strengthen and expand media literacy programs across the country.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to assess outcomes of Partners 2 as a media literacy program, provide recommendations for improving the quality of the program, and determine implications for developing other media literacy programs. The findings accomplished all of these purposes. Civil society initiatives for media literacy like “Partners 2 program” is clearly an effective mean for promoting citizen engagement among youth and demonstrates signs of a long-term impact on participants. Fostering participation of universities' students require a real investment in building their capacities to work their role as agents for social change and their Involvement in the different project phases including the project design, monitoring and evaluation is necessary. The short time specified and planned to conduct short term indicated significantly for the need to have other program design in the upcoming projects which giving more attention to work with the same group of students over at least one year to capture quality level of outcomes and contribute in the achievement of the long-term results. Also, this will contribute in addressing some of the salient hottest community issues more effectively.

Finally, It is highly recommended to continue giving more attention to the students' ideas, views and suggestions is always resulted into quality, creative and innovative products rather than dealing with them as just recipients. The role for young people in civil society is absolutely essential. Historically, they have always been at the forefront of big efforts for change, as both leaders and followers. The tools available now for young people to organize and be heard are unprecedented, and we think that all of us need to encourage that. We should all be held accountable for shaping the kind of world we want to have.

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