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

**Bridging the Gap: Analyzing Volunteerism Barriers to the
International Humanitarian NGOs in Egypt**

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

By

Heba Mohamed Fouad Ibrahim

Supervised by:

Dr. Shahjahan Bhuiyan

Fall 2024

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List of Acronyms

CAF	Charities Aid Foundation
CDS	Centre for Development Services
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation (in English)
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ERC	Egyptian Red Crescent
HR	Human Resources
ICRC	International Community of Red Cross
IDSC	Information & Decision Support Center
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRB	Institutional Review Board
MOSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
NACDW	National Alliance for Civil Development Work
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NSDRR	National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIS	State Information Service
STARS	Saint Andrew's Refugee Services
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNV	United Nations Volunteer

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Abstract

In Egypt, volunteerism, within international humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), functions in distinctive characteristics influenced by, among other things, cultural, educational, and economic factors. NGOs face challenges and obstacles in attracting motivated volunteers, engaging and training volunteers, as well as managing the staff-volunteers relationship, and implementing adequate human resources (HR) policies and strategies. In this context, this thesis seeks to bridge the knowledge gap of volunteerism challenges in Egypt, delving deep into understanding the barriers existing within the international humanitarian NGOs that directly and indirectly influence its volunteer engagement levels. The thesis also aims to understand the successful implementation of policies and procedures that encourage and facilitate effective volunteering engagement. In order to fulfill these objectives, semi-structured interviews were conducted with volunteers and employees of the Egyptian Red Crescent, the Catholic Relief Services, and the Cares Egypt international humanitarian NGOs. The findings of the study indicate that while the Egyptian ecosystem and NGOs' policies and procedures may affect individuals in diverse ways, a professional volunteer management approach that addresses factors such as volunteers' motivational aspects, effective relationships with direct supervisors, and proper recognition for the workload and volunteers' availability can directly and positively impact volunteering engagement when implemented effectively. Therefore, it is essential to advocate for a professional volunteer management approach that ensures effective volunteer selection and onboarding, effective implementation of supervision techniques and volunteer feedback and communication, implementation of a volunteer recognition program that emphasizes high performance, identification of volunteers' strengths and interests to provide opportunities for skill development and ensuring volunteer flexibility and work-life balance. Ultimately, the implementation of such management policies and strategies can provide volunteers with a pleasant experience while ensuring the effective operation of NGOs, leading to constant and effective volunteer engagement.

Chapter 1: Introduction

What defines the perceived essence of volunteering? Numerous definitions have been offered for volunteering, yet scholars have always emphasized its special aspects of this unselfish behavior. Handy and Srinivasan (2004) define volunteering as giving one's time and abilities without receiving anything in exchange for the goal of helping others or advancing a particular cause. According to Handy and Srinivasan, volunteerism depends mainly on the participants' will and determination, emphasizing the concept of altruistic actions. Wilson (2000) also draws attention to the link between making a positive difference in the lives of others without any expectation of personal gain or material rewards. Volunteers are widely acknowledged as playing a crucial role in addressing social and community issues, fostering social solidarity, and driving positive change in public policy to improve the quality of life for communities and nations (Hodgkinson, 2003). Accordingly, volunteering is considered as a practice that goes beyond simple acts performed by individuals and instead serves as a means of promoting larger social interaction and community impact.

The impact of Volunteering also encompasses direct influence on the NGOs, as these organizations depend heavily on volunteer assistance to carry out their operations; it can be argued that volunteers are the source of their strength, and NGOs cannot function effectively without them (İslamoğlu, 2022). The paper focus on volunteering in international humanitarian NGOs, emphasizing these organizations long-standing presences and substantial role in Society. Volunteerism within the humanitarian NGOs involves proactively participating in charitable endeavors to help, aid, and relieve people or communities in need, especially during challenging or substantial emergencies (Pringle and Hunt, 2015). Humanitarian aid, according to Pringle and Hunt (2015), holds the humanitarian ideals of impartiality, neutrality, and independence. Humanitarian action is usually carried out by international NGOs and intergovernmental organizations. Moreover, volunteering in international humanitarian NGOs, according to Franz (2022), allows activists to form bonds of solidarity with vulnerable and disadvantaged people and participate in a process that may ultimately advance mental awareness. In the Egyptian context, volunteer engagement is pivotal in such organizations. The international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt contribute to local and international communities,

offering vital assistance and support to empower individuals to pursue improved health and well-being. Nevertheless, despite the importance of volunteer engagement in these organizations, various barriers hinder realizing its full potential. The study identifies several challenges that arise in the context of volunteering in international humanitarian NGOs, including the misallocation of skilled volunteers, inadequate communication between staff and volunteers, and the failure to train and invest in volunteers (Eisner et al., 2009). These barriers are believed to be attributed to the existing volunteering management strategies employed by the NGO, as well as various factors within the Egyptian ecosystem, such as education, culture, and economic factors. Additionally, the unique, complex, and challenging environment of the international humanitarian NGOs operating in Egypt contributes to these challenges. The thesis also examines the effective implementation and positive collaboration between staff and volunteers employed by international humanitarian NGOs.

In this context, this study focuses on the barriers and facilitators influencing the level of volunteering in the international humanitarian NGO sector in light of the policy talks on volunteerism in Egypt (Ministry of International Cooperation, 2016). The rationale for examining this sector is its vital role in addressing humanitarian needs such as disaster response, poverty alleviation, healthcare, human rights, and other services. Given these organizations' multifaceted nature and significant global impact, they present a captivating subject for research. The main objective of this thesis is to bridge the knowledge gap by analyzing the obstacles and challenges faced by international humanitarian NGOs that impact volunteer participation in this field. The study intends to contribute to a greater understanding by answering the research question of how do the volunteering challenges and facilitators influence volunteer engagement, with a specific focus on the international humanitarian NGOs operating in Egypt? emphasizing the significance of understanding the facilitators and resolving the challenges, and offer ideas to improve volunteers in international humanitarian NGOs by illuminating these aspects.

1.1 Research problem

According to the State of the 2018 World's Volunteerism Report, the total population of Egyptian individuals aged 15 and above, which is the recommended age for volunteering, stood at 60,664,000 individuals. Nevertheless, from this eligible population, only 1,729,734 individuals engaged in both formal and informal volunteering activities (UNV-SWVR, 2018). This number of volunteers represents a relatively low proportion of the total eligible population, precisely when compared to other countries as reported in the noted United Nations Volunteers (UNV) study. In 2018, China recorded the biggest number of registered volunteers, with over 67 million people, according to the UNV report (2018). China has been recognized for having a relatively high percentage of volunteering of 7% of the total eligible population aged 15 and above stood at 951,685,000 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2019). The high volunteering rate in China is referred to government initiatives to promote and facilitate volunteer activity as well as a rich cultural legacy of civic engagement and community service (UNV, 2018).

Notably, Egypt ranks last out of 142 nations in the CAF Charity Index survey with an extremely low volunteering involvement rate according to the CAF report (2024). This indicates that there are substantial restrictions on the range and level of participation in civil society volunteerism in Egypt. Although the CAF Charity Index reports offer broad insights into global trends in volunteering and generosity, including Egypt's ranking till 2024, it is crucial to consider that the most detailed information on Egyptian volunteers came from the UNV report in 2018. Since then, no official records have been made public because, as mandated by the UNV and the International Labor Organization (ILO), national statistical measurements of volunteering have not been included (UNV- SWVR, 2022). Denmark, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States of America are just a few of the twenty-five other nations that have participated in the UNV 2022 and 2023 reports and officially documented their volunteering records and activities. The lack of data prevents governments from acquiring the benefits of their efforts in volunteering measurement as more comprehensive and advanced models of volunteerism may be developed and used with the use of high-quality and comparable data.

Building on the available data on volunteering in Egypt, and despite the acknowledged significance of volunteering as a valuable social capital resource, and despite the government efforts towards launching development plans, the act of volunteering still encounters numerous challenges and remains far from normalized within the Egyptian culture. It has become crucial and also relevant to raise awareness about the inherent value of volunteering, as well as to comprehend the barriers and facilitators associated with it. In this context, a particular focus is placed on NGOs as the primary providers of community services, with a specific emphasis on humanitarian NGOs as crucial contributors to humanitarian aid efforts.

The study focuses on international humanitarian NGOs, precisely in light of their naturally complicated and challenging environment. Organizations in this field are regularly concerned with significant issues, including crisis management, poverty reduction, and disaster assistance (ICRC, 1986). Moreover, they manage and operate volunteers in vulnerable and stressful circumstances. An additional perspective on humanitarian aid and volunteer work in international humanitarian organizations has been added to the study by taking into account fundamental values such as impartiality, independence, humanism, and neutrality. In the end, international humanitarian NGOs' methodical organizational structures and regulations provide opportunities and insights for examining the effects of these techniques on improving volunteer engagement.

1.2 Research Focus and Questions

The focus of this study is to identify and investigate the current volunteer engagement and management techniques used by international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt. The purpose of the study is to evaluate these techniques' efficacy in terms of attracting new volunteers, maintaining them on board, engaging them, and promoting general involvement. The study examines the elements that determine these processes' success or failure while taking the distinctive features of the Egyptian ecosystem into account. In order to better address the difficulties and enablers of volunteerism, the study intends to have a better understanding of the possibilities and obstacles faced by volunteers in international humanitarian NGOs through an investigation of this association. The thesis's main objective is to

emphasize volunteering for international humanitarian NGOs and identify possible processes and strategies to overcome existing challenges and barriers, rather than investigating volunteering in its entirety. The study also intends to highlight the facilitators that operational procedures may present to enhance volunteer involvement. The ultimate goal is to develop an effective and efficient volunteerism model that embraces the importance of volunteering in NGOs, covers all stakeholders involved, and addresses the current challenges of volunteering management in order to attract more participants and better engage the community in civil society development. The literature has drawn attention to other external factors that might affect the volunteering ecosystem in Egypt, such as cultural, educational, and economic factors. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research or evidence on the extent to which these factors are affecting the relationship between the volunteers and the NGOs.

In order to fulfill the thesis's objectives, the researcher aims to answer multiple research questions to gain insight into the current volunteering processes implemented by international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt. The purpose of the thesis is to understand the impact of the current volunteering ecosystem on volunteering engagement levels, specifically within the international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt. Thus, the main question of the thesis and the subsequent questions address various aspects of volunteering, including understanding the current challenges encountered by volunteers participating in international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt and comprehending the volunteers' motivation and satisfaction factors. Additionally, the thesis questions tackle the impact of the culture, economy, policies, and other external factors affecting volunteerism effectiveness. Lastly, there is a questioning of the best practices that can be established toward reaching an efficient and successful volunteering model.

Main Research Question

How do the volunteering challenges and facilitators influence volunteer engagement, with a specific focus on the international humanitarian NGOs operating in Egypt?

First sub- question: What challenges do volunteers encounter with the current operational procedures employed by international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt?

Second sub-question: To what extent do the operational procedures influence the motivation and satisfaction of volunteers in international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt?

Third sub-question: How does the context, such as cultural norms, socio-economic conditions, and policy frameworks, influence the effectiveness of volunteerism?

Fourth sub-question: What best practices can be employed to develop and implement effective volunteering strategies?

1.3 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters:

Chapter 1: Provides background information on the research issue of volunteers in international humanitarian NGOs and serves as an introduction to this thesis. It starts with introducing the different definitions of volunteering and draws attention to the issues preventing the current practices from reaching their full potential. The chapter describes the main goals of the research and defines the study's scope. Moreover, it provides an overview of the research's main question and sub-questions, explaining how the study will be structured across different chapters to investigate the challenges and facilitators of volunteerism in the international humanitarian NGO sector in Egypt. It outlines the specific objectives of each chapter, which collectively aim to comprehensively address the central research question on the current state of volunteerism in this context.

Chapter 2: Provides illustrations from a literature review on the impact of volunteering on individuals, civil society, and NGOs. Additionally, it offers insights into relevant earlier research on the use of technology, processes, and people in the volunteering management process in NGOs. Furthermore, it examines volunteering within the framework of the Egyptian Ecosystem, stressing some of its distinctive features, including aspects related to education, culture, religion, and the economy. Finally, it reviews the literature on the operations and activities of international humanitarian NGOs.

Chapter 3: Introduces the study's conceptual framework, providing a clear and insightful structure of the thesis. It starts with a foundational framework for the study, reflecting the relevant published literature and factors that affect the research subject. Moving forward to the research's main subject, to bridge the gap of knowledge, analyzing the volunteers' barriers and facilitators, the framework is organized into three sections: volunteering journey, volunteer-staff nexus, and volunteering life cycle management. Each category is divided into three sub-sections to elaborate more on its components.

Chapter 4: Discusses the research methodology. It explains the methodology selected for this study as well as the rationale for the research design. It also presents data collection methods and strategies, interview criteria, and relevant details. This chapter also includes the data analysis process and how the data gathered from different sources was themed up and coded. Moreover, it explains the ethical considerations and data limitations of the thesis.

Chapter 5: Presents the context of the Egyptian volunteering policy through which the study was conducted. It provides a review of the Egyptian government's various initiatives for volunteering, such as Egypt Vision 2030 and the national strategy for volunteering. Additionally, it illustrates the laws and policies regulating volunteering in Egypt. The chapter also presents the successful international implementation of volunteering in various countries, representing their achievements and the reason why they successfully achieved international recognition in their volunteering levels.

Chapter 6: Presents the study's main findings and analysis conducted by reviewing the literature review and analyzing the interviewee's comments and experiences. It is divided into three sections, each section represents the current experience of volunteers and NGO representatives formerly or currently participating in international humanitarian NGOs. The chapter validates the conceptual framework and answer the first three sub-questions.

Chapter 7: Concludes the study, summarizing the main findings and reviews from the participant's actual experiences. Listing the barriers and the facilitators found to be employed in the international humanitarian NGO in Egypt. The chapter also provides recommendations to achieve an effective and efficient volunteerism model.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter discusses four categories of literature. The first category of literature focuses on the impact of volunteering on both society and NGOs, highlighting the essence of volunteering and its significant role in developing communities and achieving the NGOs' objectives. The second category focuses on the multifaceted aspects of volunteer engagement, encompassing the significance of volunteers' motives and contentment and its reflection on NGO operations, the influence of NGO policies and strategic management, and the identification of the role of digital technology in volunteer engagement and effectiveness. This section will analyze the three main pillars, namely people, policy, and technology, that influence the process of volunteerism within an NGO. By delving into these pillars, a comprehensive understanding will be gained regarding the motivations behind individuals' engagement in volunteering activities. The third category discusses volunteering in the context of the Egyptian ecosystem, examining the conditions influencing local volunteering in Egypt. This part highlights how the culture, religion, education, and other factors affect the engagement of volunteers in Egypt. Lastly, the fourth category reviews the characteristics of the international humanitarian NGOs along with previous studies on volunteering in these organizations, referencing its sensitive operations, missions, and vision and how this might also affect the practice of volunteering engagement and management.

2.1 Volunteerism: Impact on Society and NGOs

2.1.1 Volunteerism's Impact on Civil Society: Strengthening Communities and Fostering Social Change

Volunteering is asserted to be associated with dedication and efforts to create long-term, sustainable charitable activity instead of providing quick relief to unfortunate circumstances and those in need (Wilson, 2000). In light of the attributes of volunteering and its giving nature and strong potential to support other people and communities, the role of volunteering in contributing to enhancing the quality of life and developing modern societies is undeniable. It is acknowledged that volunteering plays a significant role in social contact (Zappa & Zavarrone, 2010). It is additionally considered an influential social factor that promotes social development (Jiang et al., 2018). As per Alsehaimi's (2023) analysis, volunteering plays a crucial role in civil society services due to its ability to foster human relationships, human abilities, and life management skills, as well as fulfilling fundamental and social demands. Together with their sense of satisfaction in meeting fundamental needs, volunteers' acts of service distinguish volunteering from government-run initiatives aimed at improving people's quality of life. In addition to meeting people's needs and offering better services that are more personalized to suit their preferences, volunteering is an invaluable instrument for achieving social goals because it assists in bridging the gaps in the needs of particular groups and demographics (Yumagulova & Handmer, 2021).

While highlighting the benefits of volunteering for the community, it is also essential to note that volunteering directly benefits the volunteers themselves, enhancing their capacities and skills, motivating them to take charge of their social lives, and facilitating their engagement in society (Yumagulova & Handmer, 2021). Engaging in volunteer work impacts an individual's quality of life, providing participants with different experiences (Al-Safety, 2019). These experiences help the volunteer develop their personality and teach them new skills and techniques for forming social connections, which can help them avoid feeling alone and isolated (iAl-Safety, 2019). According to Wu (2011), volunteering has a positive impact on volunteers' self-esteem, helps them acquire new skills and talents, improves their physical and mental health, and opens up new career opportunities. Additionally, volunteering fosters the virtues of

benevolence and social generosity. Volunteers can enhance participants' quality of life and well-being by developing their talents through volunteering engagement (Ramkissoon, 2023).

Even though volunteering has an advantageous impact on both the volunteer and society as an entire, it's vital to acknowledge the contextual limitations of civil society participation in NGOs—specifically in Egypt. Scholars have often criticized civil society engagement in NGOs, arguing that they are both captured agents of global capital and are the motors of the neo-liberal assistance regime (Rahman, 2002). According to Rahman (2002), the reform that promotes the reduction of the state's role, shifting its role to the NGOs and civil society engagement, is at the foundation of this neo-liberal project. The civil society engagement in NGOs has also been criticized by Hearn (2001) as being considered an essential place for progressive politics. Also sometimes considered as an arena where states and other powerful actors intervene to influence the political agendas of organized groups with the goal of weakening opposition. Thus, it is essential to emphasize the actual role of civil society participation in empowering people or promoting progressive change while considering all other factors or agendas that may affect or suppress groups within civil society. It is also crucial to recognize that civil society organizations are both the products and components of the broader social context, shaped by ongoing changes in domestic social forces, the state, and their complex interaction (Rahman, 2002). This contextual knowledge is critical to assessing the opportunities and constraints of civil society engagement in NGOs.

2.1.2 Volunteerism's Impact on NGOs

In order to understand the impact of volunteerism on NGOs' operations, it is essential to delve deep into the NGOs' role in community development and poverty alleviation. NGOs have been defined in the literature as a crucial factor in developing countries and social evolution (Baviskar, 2001). The reason behind considering NGOs as essential factors is the belief that “NGOs efficiently and cost-effectively are able to implement projects in a sustainable manner, particularly those close to the grassroots” (Marcussen, 1996, p.3). According to Baviskar (2001), many international organizations, such as the World Bank, shifted toward collaborating with NGOs to carry out development projects, favoring NGOs in terms of less risk of corruption or financial leaks and higher probation of benefits. Furthermore,

NGOs are renowned for being significantly less restricted by ineffective administrative practices and bureaucratic processes (Baviskar, 2001). Nevertheless, these organizations approach volunteerism to achieve their objectives and goals due to financial and human capital constraints, considering volunteers as primary stakeholders in their programs and projects (Bhiri et al., 2004). Numerous NGOs, if not all, incorporate a voluntary component that relies on the active participation of volunteers. Hernandez et al. (2021) succinctly state the importance of volunteers:

“A substantial majority of those organizations that work with volunteers recognize that their volunteers increase the quality of services or programs, provide cost savings, increase public support for programs, provide services or levels of service the organization (...) Clearly, when engaged in productive ways, volunteers have a lot to offer.” (p.1)

The engagement of volunteers in NGOs plays a crucial role in driving various initiatives and facilitating successful operations within these NGOs (Martinez & McMullin, 2004). Different scholars have emphasized the significant role that volunteering plays in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of NGOs, particularly the local development NGOs. Volunteers give their time and skills in a variety of fields within NGOs, from administrative work to primary operations and support of various services; their involvement is particularly noteworthy as they act as a critical capital resource for organizations, supplementing the efforts of paid employees (Pauline, 2011). The positive impact of volunteers extends to the capital budget efficacy of NGOs, as their contributions serve as a valuable resource that organizations can leverage to achieve their objectives (Flood et al., 2005).

Acknowledging the importance of volunteers in the NGOs' daily operations and outcomes, it is also crucial to consider all impacts of volunteerism, including the possible potential issues and challenges associated with overreliance on volunteers. It was shown in the literature that although volunteers can enhance NGOs' functioning, an overdependency on them may have negative implications (Hager & Brudney, 2004). One possible concern is that volunteers may experience burnout, particularly if they are asked to do crucial tasks that are usually performed by paid employees (Hager & Brudney, 2004). This alleged over-reliance on volunteers may have an impact on the services the organization offers and, as a result, the efficiency and sustainability of the organization. Thus, acknowledging that volunteers are essential to improving the effectiveness of capital budgets and NGOs' operations, it is critical to

maintain balance and avoid becoming overly dependent on them. Optimizing the advantages and reducing the difficulties of working with volunteers requires the development of a well-managed volunteer program (Hager & Brudney, 2004).

2.2 Volunteering in NGOs: People, Processes, and Technology

2.2.1- People: Volunteers' Motives and Satisfaction Impact on Volunteer Engagement

Comprehending the impact of volunteerism on civil society and NGOs, it is crucial to understand why participants engage in volunteering activities while shedding light on how the NGOs acknowledge and attract those interested individuals. Various studies have been conducted to determine why individuals volunteer and the advantages of volunteering (Bussell & Forbes, 2003). The fundamental incentive is usually seen to be **altruism**, where the benefit is inherent in the volunteer work itself (Bussell & Forbes, 2003). Reflecting the spirit of altruism, volunteers tend to participate in voluntary activities, giving their time and effort not for the reason that they are obligated to do so out of duty or religious considerations but instead because they genuinely intend to support. In addition to humanitarian and altruistic motives, people might also volunteer for self-serving reasons.

According to a data survey conducted by Lindsey and Mohan (2018), various motives for **acquiring or utilizing skills and certifications** have been highlighted. Volunteers tend to be interested in joining voluntary activities that might develop existing or added skills, precisely if it helps in achieving their career goals or gaining an added qualification. Discovering the work field and acquiring specific knowledge or skills while participating in voluntary activities can be a social objective for the volunteers to achieve through volunteering. Additionally, according to Lindsey and Mohan's noted survey, the other factors that influence volunteers to participate in volunteering activities, such as, the cause of

the activity, the willingness to help other people, being asked to assist, having spare time, and other various other factors were given as reasons for volunteering.

Table 1. Factors that Encourage Volunteering

Factor	Reason	Suggestion
Altruism	Material, social, and psychological	The severity of needs increases volunteering
Solicitation	Social	Directly asking individuals to volunteer increases it.
Reputation	Social	Recognition by people at large encourages volunteerism
Psychological costs and benefits	Psychological	Volunteering is increased by cost aversion and self-reward expectations.
Values	Social and psychological	Supporting particular social ideals improves volunteerism for groups in the third sector that promote these values.

Sources: Bekkers et al. (2016). Mechanism Driving Volunteering date were retrieved from extensive literature from Clark & Wilson (1961) and Chinman, Wandersman & Goodman (2005) and extending Gidron (1978) .

Besides altruism and acquiring skills and knowledge, volunteers tend to participate in voluntary activities because of **social reasons** such as solicitation, social values, and reputation, **material reasons** such as the higher benefits they acquire compared to the low costs involved in volunteering, and finally, for **psychological reasons** such as self-rewarding and well-being, and efficacy and productivity of services to recipients (Bekkers et al., 2016). The volunteering motivational factors mentioned in table 1, and according to Bekkers et al. (2016), is a summary from different, extensive literature studies they have examined, identifying the reasons drive volunteers to participate in voluntary activities. According to these authors, the volunteering mechanisms show that the volunteers are more likely to volunteer for the below reasons mentioned in the table with different or similar natures. The social reason,

according to Widjaja (2010), is that volunteers participate in unpaid helpful behavior to build relationships, expand their social circle, and socially integrate and interact with society. Additionally, volunteers are likely to engage in voluntary activities with high benefits and low costs. Although it is less common for volunteers to receive material incentives in the form of money, this can also have an adverse impact on their internal desire to volunteer (Fiorello, 2011). However, it is argued that benefits like complimentary items that non-volunteers do not receive have an impact on the engagement levels of volunteers (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2011). Furthermore, psychological costs and benefits were argued to affect the volunteers' participation significantly. The volunteers are motivated by a sense of pride, a rise in personal value, and the validation of their identity. (Matsuba, Hart & Atkins, 2007). Another crucial source of psychological support that encourages volunteers is respect from NGO supervisors; this also acts as a psychological benefit that affects the volunteers' motivation. (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014). According to Bekkers et al. (2016), other psychological and social factors influence volunteers' motivation and reasons to participate in voluntary work, such as reputation, values, and efficacy.

Acknowledging all factors that attract individuals to volunteer, it is worth noting that volunteers may lose interest and engage less in voluntary work when they do not feel that they are creating a positive impact worthy of their efforts and are less satisfied (Points of Light, 2015). Thus, it is crucial to understand the direct correlation between the volunteers' motivation and satisfaction and the NGOs' processes. It is significant for NGOs to maintain an adequate engagement and motivation level to ensure sustainable volunteer encouragement. Peterson (2004) highlights the necessity of providing an effective foundation for volunteer participation in an organization by emphasizing the initial recruitment processes. This process entails starting the volunteer connection from the very beginning and choosing volunteers in accordance with the unique requirements and operational guidelines of the NGO. It also involves developing a strategic recruitment plan that aligns with the different motivation factors of the volunteers (Peterson 2004). Finally, it is critical to identify and describe exactly what volunteers offer and where they fit into the organizational structure. NGOs may create a robust framework for volunteer engagement and management by following these methods.

2.2.2- Process: NGOs' Policies and Strategic Processes Affect Volunteer Engagement

It is useful to acknowledge the critical role that NGOs' strategic policies and processes play as a complementary component that directly impacts the whole volunteer experience, in addition to taking into account volunteers' motives as the primary pillar influencing volunteer involvement. The interactions between NGOs and volunteers in various contexts have been explored in the literature, with an emphasis on the value of establishing a good rapport and creating an atmosphere that benefits both sides. Cho et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of this constructive interaction and support volunteer management programs that organize the volunteers and NGO's working environment. He also highlights the crucial role that volunteer satisfaction plays in shaping behavioral intention and urges volunteer organizations to identify aspects that could improve volunteer satisfaction by incorporating volunteer management into consideration.

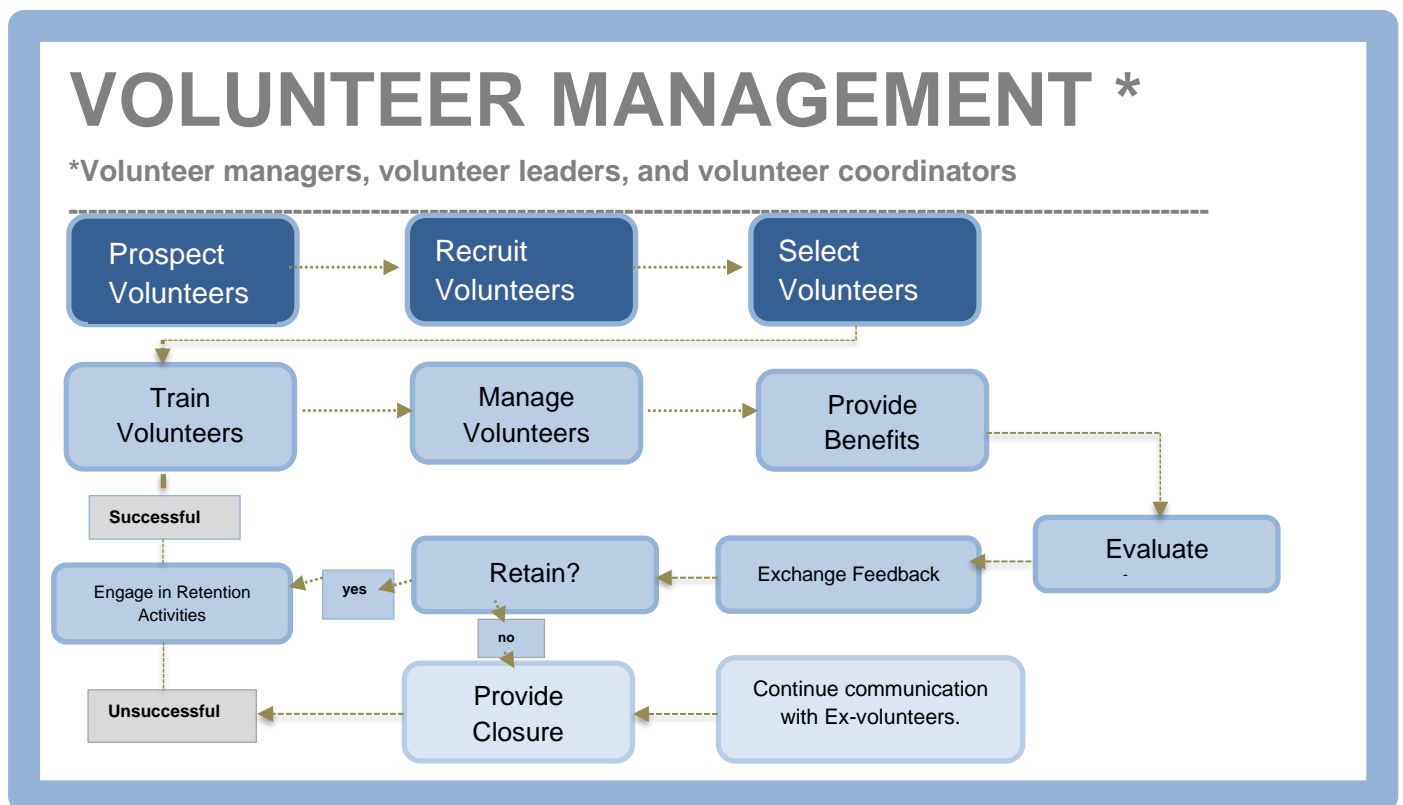


Figure (1): Volunteer Management. Source: Abushadi et al., 2012, p.8

Abushadi et al. (2012) propose a comprehensive framework consisting of eight essential steps for maintaining a viable volunteer process and ensuring effective volunteer management within an NGO. First, the organization must establish a rationale for engaging volunteers. Second, proper job descriptions that align with the volunteer roles are essential. The type of tasks mentioned in these job descriptions has to match the volunteers' qualifications and skills. Allocation of activities that are compatible with the volunteer's skills is a significant influencer on the volunteer's experience in the organization. Moreover, an effective recruitment process enables the NGO to attract suitable candidates. Potential volunteers are screened via an application process to assist find people who share the organization's beliefs and goal. Organizing an orientation session for recently recruited volunteers also helps to ensure their effortless incorporation into the organization. Giving volunteers appropriate instruction is essential to improving their abilities and productivity at work. The organization can track its accomplishments and identify opportunities for development by establishing in place an assessment system for both volunteers and staff. Finally, acknowledging the accomplishments and hard work of volunteers boosts their morale and creates a feeling of gratitude among the volunteer population.

Lough and Turner (2017) emphasized creating a proper culture of service and an adequate environment for the volunteers to remain motivated and increase their engagement. After ensuring an effective NGO strategic process, it is crucial to focus on capitalizing on volunteer incentives as a direct tactic to impact the volunteer engagement level. According to Lough and Turner, volunteerism is likelier to be encouraged by rules and procedures that speak to workers' inherent incentives, such as gaining new skills or socializing. MacPhail and Bowles (2009) suggested other incentives and motivation tactics, such as day-of-service events, incentives for community involvement, and skill-based opportunities. The same was recommended by other scholars through which offering a wide range of corporately sponsored volunteer opportunities, rewards, and initiatives tap into staff members' abilities, interests, and passions should, in theory, boost employee volunteering (Points of Light, 2014). Lastly, it is hypothesized that efficiency and effectiveness are ensured by NGOs' policies and practices that are better suited to the various motivational variables of the volunteers (Lough and Turner, 2017). Giving volunteers a flexible schedule and the chance to take part in the organization's many events all year long may also have an effect on their experience as volunteers. Qvist (2021) demonstrated that the highest degree of flexibility in work arrangements, which includes the

flexibility in timings, freedom to work from home, and entire control over when to work, helps in increasing volunteer participation. The flexibility required for effective volunteering also includes offering volunteering opportunities throughout the year to allow volunteers to join whenever it is convenient.

Between engaging, managing, and retaining volunteers, NGOs have to maintain adequate relationships between staff and volunteers. Research has highlighted the significant impact that the quality of the relationships between paid employees and volunteers may have (Rimes et al., 2017). It impacts the volunteers' experience and level of engagement in an organization. According to Macduff (2011), the rapport between volunteers and staff can be a decisive factor in the volunteering program's success or failure as well as the capacity to implement constructive organizational changes. When the volunteers and staff team are managed with better thoughtfulness, the volunteers are more likely to have fewer intentions to quit the organization, less stress, and more stability if the volunteer and staff team is managed with better thoughtfulness. In this context, Macduff (2011) underlined how crucial it is to promote cooperation at all organizational levels in order to guarantee the effective and efficient provision of services to beneficiaries. This means focusing on how harmony may be formed and attending to the needs of volunteers as well as staff. Accordingly, factors such as teams are sized appropriately, formed with members who are suitably chosen, receiving task-specific training, team leaders who are eligible to supervise volunteers, and administrators providing support to staff members and volunteers, are all mandatory to reach the adequate balance needed (Macduff, 2011). Macduff (2011) has also highlighted the importance of having a team with notable aims and goals, staff members and volunteers who respect and encourage one another, communicate in both vertical and horizontal directions, and function implying genuine accountability. By attending to these factors NGOs may cultivate a cooperative and constructive staff-volunteer relationship and ensure the general success and sustainability of volunteering as well as the organization's service delivery.

2.2.3- Technological Platforms' Role in Volunteer Engagement

It is imperative to thoroughly examine the influence of technological advancements as a significant determinant of volunteer engagement levels. This examination becomes particularly relevant after addressing the other two fundamental components that impact volunteer engagement: volunteers' motivations and satisfaction and NGOs' strategic policies and procedures. The role of technology in influencing volunteer engagement and management was emphasized in the literature among various scholars. These literature studies, as noted by Chui and Chan (2019), highlight the use of technology in several important aspects of volunteer management, including the capacity of nonprofits to hire professionals, the rapidity and precision of volunteer selection, recruitment by expanding and diversifying the volunteer pool, and the overall administrative load of volunteer management within these nonprofits. It has become widely acknowledged that technology and digital transformation can be used across all processes related to volunteering management, from ensuring that volunteers' skills align with the needs and requirements of the non-profit to building a sufficient database to support the organization's various operations and initiatives.

Arnon et al. (2023) stress the significance of creating a sufficient technological framework that successfully engages volunteers in the context of leveraging technology towards efficient volunteer administration and engagement. By facilitating the fundamental needs of volunteer management, this framework strengthens relationships between NGOs and the community. A key component of volunteer management is the use of social media and technology (Arnon et al., 2023). Moreover, Falasca and Zobel (2012) noted that by using a variety of websites and applications to make volunteering possibilities easily publicized, information technology could help in volunteer recruitment and retention. It's important to remember that technology also provides virtual accessibility, so people may volunteer from the comfort of their homes (Eisner et al., 2009). Hence, technology not only enhances regular volunteer engagement but also provides flexible options for those seeking to contribute remotely, prompting various volunteering alternatives and providing better volunteering opportunities. Thus, technology encourages a variety of volunteering options and improves volunteer chances while also improving regular volunteer participation and offering flexible options for individuals seeking to contribute remotely.

“Fostering Communication and Building Community Communication can help groups be better aware of similar struggles across the region and support people in dealing with issues collaboratively. Hence, most nonprofit organizations seek technical solutions to foster communication and forge a sense of community. Social media provides communication tools and a virtual space through which people can prompt conversation, maintain communication, and exchange information.” (Kim et al., 2014, p. 1942)

Kim et al. (2014) gave prominence to social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter as significant technological advancement tools to circulate information on NGOs' demands for volunteers and other objectives. Communication can be fostered, and significant flaws in social media communication dialogues. A successful implementation of using social media on youth volunteerism and community engagement in the United Arab of Emirates was presented in a study by Abdallah (2021). According to the study, social media use positively and significantly correlates with youth community engagement. It also helps to facilitate and engage social issue discussions and the dissemination of information about volunteer opportunities among young people (Abdallah, 2021). In this context, it is essential to note that social media not only helps circulate information on NGOs' demands but also provides information on the entire NGOs' operations and identity (Palos-Sanchez et al., 2018). In order to help participants to know more about the organization's social project and innovative ideas, the social media platforms help the participants better know the organization they will join and help them make a better decision on what they think will match their interests (Palos-Sanchez et al., 2018). Consequently, in this context, technology assists volunteers in better engaging with the NGOs they are convinced of its cause, providing better quality volunteering delivery.

2.3 Volunteering in the Context of the Egyptian Eco-System: Religious, Cultural, and Educational Factors

The practice of volunteering has existed in Egypt since the very beginning. According to the Civil Society Index Report for the Arab Republic of Egypt (CIVICUS, 2005), religious organizations, such as churches and mosques, have been involved in volunteer work since the early 1800s, providing social, cultural, and humanitarian services. Afterwards, NGOs were founded to further this effort (CIVICUS, 2005). In the Arab world, precisely in Egypt,

volunteering is strongly influenced by several external variables, including education, culture, and religious issues. According to a study conducted by the Center for Development Services (CDS) (2004) as part of the CIVICUS (2005), **religious** factors significantly impact Egyptian volunteers, through which volunteers perceive volunteering as a religious duty. 62.3% of the volunteers responded that religious reasons drove them to volunteer. The importance of religious philanthropy in Egyptian culture is confirmed by a survey done in 2006 by El Daly at CDS. About 45.8% of respondents to the study opined they donated to charity in order to complete their religious obligations, and 45.5% said it was a means of becoming closer to God. Furthermore, 38% of respondents reported having made no contributions, whereas 62% of respondents had given to charities of some kind—aside from donations to mosques or churches.

According to El Daly's study (2006), the most popular way to give was with cash, while the least popular way was by volunteering. Religious factors were emphasized in the literature as a fundamental source of impact on the philanthropy and response to humanitarian needs of the Egyptian citizens, precisely at times of crisis. The literature emphasizes how important religious considerations are for philanthropy and how it responds to the Egyptians' humanitarian needs, especially in times of crisis. El Taraboulsi et al. (2013) used the 2011 Revolution as an example of this influence, pointing out that religious organizations, including Kasr el Dobara Church, Omar Makram Mosque in Cairo, and Al Qaed Ibrahim Mosque in Alexandria, all played a significant part in delivering a variety of essential humanitarian relief.

Having said that volunteers are greatly affected by religious aspects, it is noteworthy that **education** is also one of the main, crucial factors that directly impact volunteering. According to Franco and Parker (1999), through education, a person can develop empathy, self-confidence, and awareness of the issues that are present in his community. Thus, it stands to reason that those actively involved in their communities are probably well-educated. However, the specific type of volunteer work required will determine the degree of education required (Franco and Parker (1999). Shetewy (2000) conducted a study on the volunteer community in Egypt and encountered that individuals with higher levels of education tend to engage in volunteer work more frequently. According to the study, individuals with lower educational backgrounds tend to participate in volunteer work less frequently. Individuals with bachelor's degrees

make up 51% of the population, followed by those with only a secondary education certificate (28.5%), higher education (11%), and those without a secondary education (34.4%). A college degree is acknowledged as a significant benefit of volunteering since most volunteers come from educated backgrounds and are more aware of societal issues and current events in addition to having higher-status jobs (Gesthuizen et al., 2008). This highlights the significance of motivating kids to volunteer at a young age and imparting volunteering principles through educational institutions and curricula (Serag, 2017).

The way that Arab youth—and especially Egyptian youth—participate in volunteer work is significantly shaped by **social and cultural** variables. Sedky (2011) argues that the obstacles faced by youths who are interested in volunteering include the emphasis on academic achievement, the lack of support from educational institutions, budgetary constraints, and cultural difficulties in setting up volunteer programs. Arab youth's mentality and culture, shaped by their families, favours grades and academic success above volunteerism, which has affected the participation of youth in volunteering (Sedky, 2011). Sika (2018) has also shed the light on a crucial aspect in the Egyptian context which is the lack of trust in the civil society organizations. According to Sika (2018), young people's participation in civil society is impacted by the cooptation of civil society and the tightening of prohibitions against its operations. Combining the unconventional varieties of engagement and the lack of adequate or active curricula supplied by schools or universities to inspire students to volunteer, the Egyptian youth participation is negatively impacted. Shahine (2011) provides further context for understanding the cultural obstacles Arab teenagers have while attempting to engage in volunteer activity. One such disadvantage is the lack of appropriate training and initiatives addressing youth interests. As a result, some young volunteers have encountered problems while collaborating with particular organizations. Problems including poor planning, disregarding the welfare of volunteers, and giving them monotonous jobs were frequently cited as significant setbacks in various contexts.

Economic factors are also crucial factors that influence the Egyptian context of volunteering. According to the CDS (2004) survey, there is a unique correlation between an individual's occupation and their involvement in volunteer work in Egypt. Specifically, professionals in white-collar jobs such as doctors, engineers, accountants, and businessmen make up 70% of volunteers, while volunteers in other groups make up a very small percentage. The

literature also shows the connection between unemployment and volunteering in the Egyptian context. Sedky (2011) highlighted the financial challenges that frequently drive youth to prioritize paid work over volunteer work, resulting in limited time for such activities. A survey published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) states that 25% of Egypt's youth, or those in the 15–29 age range, do not have job. It has been demonstrated that upon completing education, college graduates often wait many years before finding full-time employment. It is three times more difficult for youths to get employment than adults (Sedky, 2011). Given that businesses might recruit recent college graduates conditioned to have experience through extracurricular activities, students are encouraged to expand their educational knowledge, and volunteering is subsequently encouraged (Holdsworth et al., 2010). Furthermore, given the perception that volunteering has benefits for work environments, it is important to note that volunteering and employment have a mutually beneficial connection. Because volunteers often have larger social networks than non-volunteers, volunteering can be a means of accessing paid employment for jobless persons (Sedky, 2011). Volunteering has the potential to increase an individual's self-esteem, provide them with access to networks inside the business, and improve their employability (Sedky, 2011). Notably, studies show that the quantity of volunteer work a person conducts and the number of social connections a person makes are positively correlated, regardless of variables like hours of volunteer work, educational attainment, money, and work position. Moreover, it is thought that volunteering improves job opportunities for those who are currently working, enabling them to progress in their career pursuits (Sedky, 2011).

2.4 The NGOs in International Humanitarian Operations in Egypt: Types of Humanitarian Assistance and Operations

A substantial amount of academic literature on the topic attests to the widespread recognition of NGOs' critical significance. NGOs have taken on expanded accountability for providing public services, therefore filling in the gaps that governments have failed to address in many aspects. Close coordination with governmental bodies, advocating for improvements in development, and providing direct support to marginalized groups are some of these strategies (Banks & Hulme, 2012; Moriatis, 2024; Volmink & Van der Elst, 2017). As highlighted by Banks and Hulme (2012),

the indisputable capacity of NGOs to pursue participatory and people-centered approaches to development and their willingness to address the needs of the most vulnerable segments of society in developing nations are widely recognized.

In light of that, it is critical to comprehend the concept of humanitarian assistance as it is presented in the literature, which refers to the support, relief, and aid that the NGOs provide to impact individuals and communities during times of crisis or disaster in order to lessen suffering and provide other necessities. The identity of humanitarian NGOs, as defined by Hodgkinson and McCarthy (1992), is a humanitarian discourse with a specific focus on helping marginalized or neglected groups and offering assistance to those in need. The moral duty to alleviate human suffering serves as the foundation for the humanitarian philosophy (Rieff, 2002). Of its three essential tenets—impartiality, neutrality, and independence—the first is particularly relevant to the distribution of aid made by humanitarian NGOs (Rieff, 2002). Impartiality, as defined in the Preamble of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, entails offering assistance to alleviate the suffering of individuals based solely on their needs, disregarding factors such as nationality, race, religious beliefs, class, or political opinions. It places emphasis on giving priority to the most serious situations of emergency (ICRC, 1986). Examining the humanitarian operations in Egypt is crucial, with a particular emphasis on the role and participation of NGOs in conflict resolution and humanitarian relief. First and foremost, the United Nations (UN), a major actor in the global humanitarian system, has been deeply engaged (Ferris, 2011). Ferris (2011) places a strong emphasis on the UN's leadership, coordination, service delivery, and normative role in advancing humanitarian standards and values. However, it is crucial to remember that the reach of humanitarian efforts goes beyond UN agencies, as other groups also adhere to and support humanitarian operations in addition to working with all relevant parties to protect individuals during times of conflict (Ferris, 2011). According to Stoddard (2003), humanitarian organizations are categorized into three categories: identities with three attributes. The first type is called the Wilsonian organization, named after Woodrow Wilson, and it follows the principles of cooperation and multilateralism that are followed by international institutions and governments (such as CARE Egypt NGO). Secondly, faith-based organizations act in accordance with religious principles (such as

organizations affiliated with the Coptic Orthodox Church or Al-Azhar Institution). Lastly, the organizations that adhere to the principles of impartiality, neutrality, and independence (like the Red Cross).

The Worldwide Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Oxfam, CARE International, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Saint Andrew (STARS), Save the Children, and Ford Foundation are merely some of the well-known **international NGOs**¹ that have helped those impacted by conflicts by providing humanitarian aid. The main international NGOs function worldwide, applying organized functioning structures in numerous nations into operation and providing assistance to refugees from other countries or individuals impacted by the ongoing conflict. The main objective of these organizations is to strengthen humanity's capability to deliver an efficient and prompt response in times of disaster and assist individuals in surviving and recovering. Moreover, it assists communities at risk of crises and enhances their ability to respond to and recover from them (Egyptian Red Crescent, 2017). The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) mission is to help the poor and disadvantaged only based on need, regardless of race, religion, or other characteristics (CRS, 2007).

Volunteerism within international humanitarian NGOs has been particularly reviewed by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in their published study titled "The Global Review of Volunteering" (Hazeldine & Smith, 2016). Through eight in-depth case studies, the researchers have examined the roles that local actors play in conflict and humanitarian crisis situations, aiming to fully comprehend the intricate requirements and motivations of volunteers involved in these organizations. The study considers the particular difficulties and experiences of volunteers in humanitarian aid, which should be taken into account in discussions about the meaning, accessibility, and best practices of volunteering (Hazeldine & Smith, 2016). The key challenges encountered include volunteers not being given enough credit and receiving insufficient assistance and safety both during and after their

¹ While these NGOs are well-known for providing humanitarian assistance, this is just one aspect of their broader operations. These organizations engage in a diverse range of activities beyond humanitarian relief, including community development, advocacy, and long-term sustainable initiatives yet for the vulnerable segments in the community. Their humanitarian aid efforts, though critically important, are part of their multifaceted approach to supporting vulnerable populations affected by conflicts and other crises.

volunteer work. The research also indicates that, despite their significance to humanitarian operations, individuals have limited influence over decision-making within these organizations. To address these issues, the study recommends that the role of volunteers be strengthened in conflict environments and globally, alongside improved funding and suitable safety and security measures (Hazeldine & Smith, 2016). Furthermore, the researchers suggest further discussion involving volunteer organizations, governments, aid and donor actors, and volunteer managers to examine the effects of volunteering and devise ways to mitigate its negative impacts, as well as refine procedures for volunteer remuneration in development and humanitarian contexts.

Despite the existence of a variety of literature on volunteering definitions, information on NGOs' processes, the Egyptian ecosystem and its impact on Egyptian volunteers, and information on the international humanitarian NGOs operation, current data on volunteering in international humanitarian NGOs operating in Egypt is relatively few. There is considerable absence of recent, thorough studies that mainly analyze volunteering within international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt, as well as lack of information on the actual experiences of volunteers working for these organizations. While there are some studies on volunteering in Egypt, they don't offer detailed information or analysis on the actual experiences or numbers of official or informal volunteers working for various organizations. Moreover, the literature that is now available is either generic, exploring the idea on a global scale and concentrating more on national or local development NGOs than on international humanitarian NGOs that work in Egypt. This makes it difficult to thoroughly comprehend the unique challenges and obstacles that volunteers have when working in the international humanitarian setting. The gap in the literature highlights the need for this thesis to address the particular motives and challenges volunteers have in this setting and to better comprehend their experiences and contributions.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework aims to analyze the barriers and facilitators to volunteerism in international humanitarian NGOs within the Egyptian ecosystem. This framework addresses the thesis's main research question, which explores how the volunteering challenges and facilitators influence volunteer engagement within the international humanitarian NGOs operating in Egypt, emphasizing the significance of understanding the facilitators and resolving these challenges.

The framework begins with four main factors that have been studied in the literature and affect volunteering engagement in general and in the international humanitarian sector in particular: the volunteering definition, the Egyptian Ecosystem, the Humanitarian NGO operations and characteristics, and the suggested volunteer management model. Within each component, some sub-components further contribute to the analysis.

The first component, the **volunteering definition**, describes how volunteering is defined in this thesis study according to different scholars' definitions. Wilson (2000) emphasizes the volunteering definition as an altruistic action, defining volunteerism as using one's free time to improve the lives of others, through which individuals use their leisure time to benefit others. According to Wilson (2000), voluntary work refers to the choice and willingness to be involved in acts of service rather than a chore or obligation. Individuals can choose with their willingness to participate in helping others and provide assistance when it is needed. Paine et al. (2013) emphasized the personal participation and freedom of choice, expecting no monetary reward from volunteering and emphasizing the definition of volunteerism as actively engaging in activities that entail giving one's time, skills, and energy to others without expecting payment, either formally or informally. Paine's definition, which emphasizes the lack of financial gain, also supports the volunteering perspectives of other scholars about the selfless and altruistic nature of volunteers. Smith et al. (2010) address the concept of voluntarism from the perspective of individual involvement and autonomy. They emphasize that opting for volunteerism involves deciding to leave aside their paid employment or home responsibilities in order to participate in activities that benefit the community and others. This perspective emphasizes the importance of

volunteering for activities that benefit society as a whole and other people. Ultimately, the research provides validity to the concept that volunteers are driven by empathy, a sincere aim to improve the lives of others, and a feeling of social duty. To conclude, the volunteering was defined in the literature as an altruistic action, personal participation and freedom of choice, and individual autonomy.

The Second component, **volunteer management**, focuses on the strategies and practices suggested by scholars to be employed by NGOs to effectively engage and manage volunteers. This part's main subcomponent is the people who identify the reasons for volunteer engagement in the literature. The process explores the methods, policies, and approaches utilized to recruit, train, support, and retain volunteers within the context of NGOs. Finally, the last subsection sheds light on the role of technology and digital transformation in the volunteer management system.

The Third component, the **Humanitarian NGO operations and characteristics**, encompasses the unique aspects of the international humanitarian NGOs. This includes various overviews of these organizational distinctive roles (Hodgkinson & McCarthy, 1992), distinguished operations (Ferris, 2011), and types. The three subcomponents show how the international humanitarian organization influences vulnerable beneficiaries while operating in an international context with different structured systems and processes. The forth and final component, **the Egyptian Ecosystem** recognize the contextual variables and dynamics that might affect the volunteers in general and the volunteer in humanitarian NGOs in particular. The Egyptian ecosystem include Subcomponents such as education, religion, and culture that might either support or undermine volunteer management and involvement (Shetewy, 2000). The rules and laws that regulate volunteering in Egypt are also one of the subcomponents. Finally, the government initiatives show the current government strategies and directions toward promoting or suppressing volunteerism. By understanding and analyzing the interactions between these components, this section provides insights into the factors affecting NGOs' volunteering engagement and management systems.

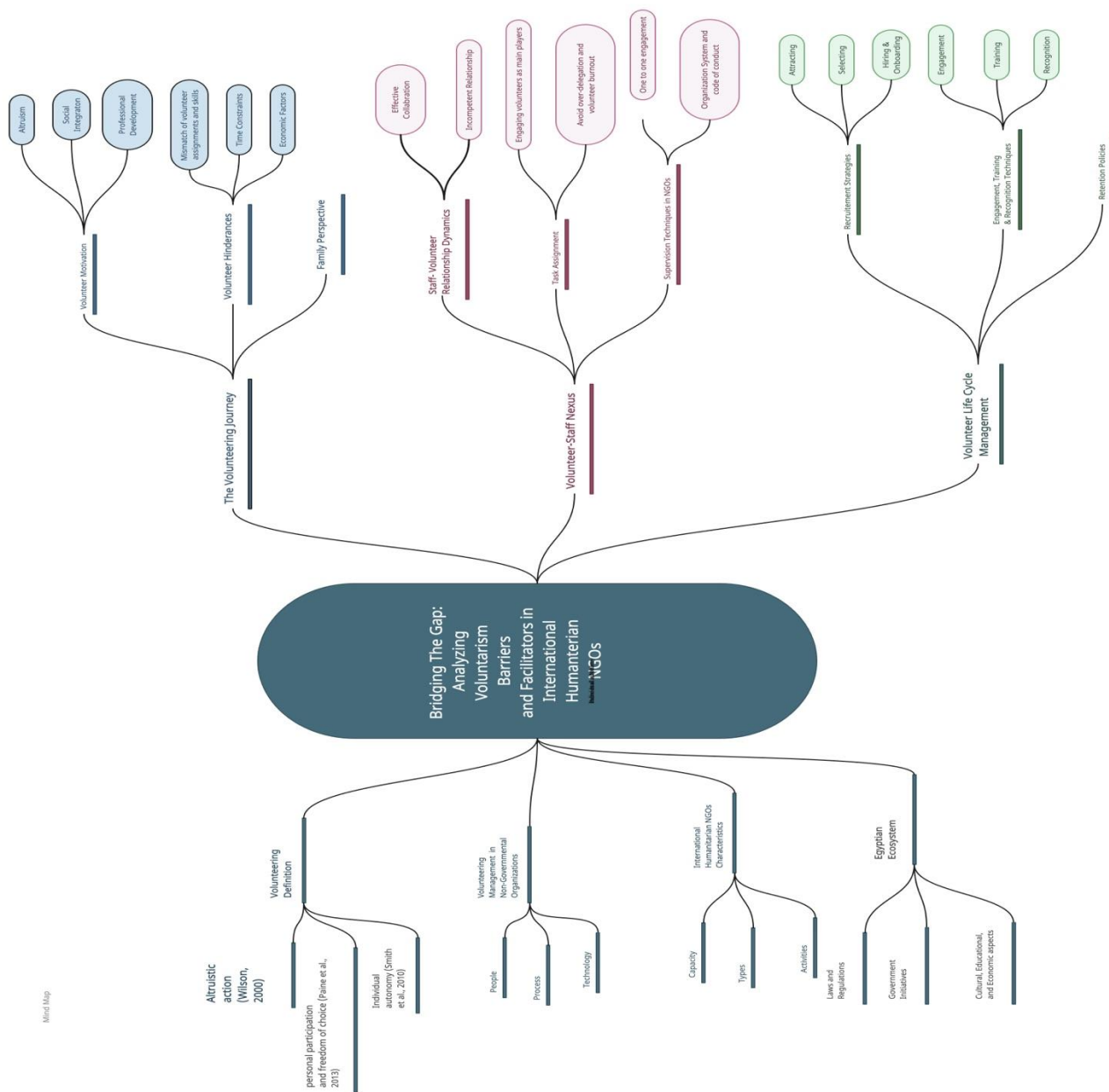
Figure 2 illustrates the efforts to bridge the knowledge gap by examining and addressing the barriers to volunteerism in international humanitarian NGOs operating in Egypt. Based on the data collected from interviews and data gathered

from the literature, three themes have been identified that are supposed to impact the overall volunteering and NGO experience and, consequently, influence the effectiveness of the volunteering management system. These factors include the volunteering journey, the staff-volunteer nexus, and the volunteer life cycle management, as well as the HR policies and strategies implemented by international humanitarian NGOs. All of the factors have different sub-components that might cause challenges for the organization. The framework's beginning section is devoted to exposing the volunteer experience, including the reasons and obstacles that they face as well as other elements that impact their choice to volunteer, such as the perspectives of their friends and family. Aspects such as altruism and psychological gain, professional development and skills elevation, and social integration play a crucial role in influencing the volunteer's experience and level of motivation. Time constraints, economic factors, and mismatch of the task assignments with the volunteers' capabilities were identified as hindrances to the volunteers' engagement. The different community and family visions and perspectives on volunteering were also identified to measure their impact on the volunteers.

The second section focuses on the correlation between volunteers and the NGOs staff. The section aims to illustrate the relationship between the NGOs' staff and volunteers' dynamics, considering how this relationship can either support or challenge the volunteering experience. Second, the impact of task assignment on volunteer participation, examining the level of volunteer engagement in the NGO primary tasks and the degree of delegation of the tasks to volunteers. Lastly, the sub-section on supervision techniques provide an understanding of the impact of different techniques that affect the collaboration between volunteers and staff members such as the one-to-one engagements and the organization's policies and code of conduct. The last section in the framework addresses volunteer life cycle management, identifies the various HR policies and strategies employed by the NGO, and examines its effectiveness or disaffections. The section is divided into three subsections, identifying the international humanitarian NGOs' HR strategies, including recruitment, engagement, training, recognition, and retention methods. It reflects the significance of these strategies for attracting and retaining volunteers and optimizing their contributions to the organization's core operations.

The conceptual framework aims to highlight the necessity of comprehending the Egyptian Ecosystem and its components to shape volunteering as an experience as a whole. It also seeks to examine the barriers and challenges that hinder the advancement of practical approaches to managing and influencing volunteer participation. The framework's ultimate goal is to close the gap between volunteers and the organizations they work with, improving volunteer management systems in foreign humanitarian organizations in Egypt.

Figure 2: Roadmap to an effective and efficient volunteerism module.



Sources: Researcher's conceptualization based on the literature review and the findings of interviews with NGO representatives and current and former volunteers; the findings from an interview with Volunteer One inspire the volunteering in NGOs model (April 2024).

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Methodology Selected and Design Rationale:

The study is conducted using qualitative research methods. The researcher selected the qualitative method with the goal of utilizing an exploratory approach to address the study topics effectively in a natural context (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Since the thesis mainly aims to dig deep into the field of volunteerism, and since volunteering is a human behavior significantly impacted by the environment in which it takes place, research on volunteering in real-world settings is necessary. According to Cresswell (1998), the qualitative method allows the researcher to construct an intricate, comprehensive image, scrutinize language, document informant particulars, and conduct the study in a naturally occurring context. Additionally, the qualitative method was needed to reflect “what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what’s going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting” (Patton, 1985, p.1). Consequently, in order to answer the research question: how do the volunteering challenges and facilitators influence volunteer engagement, with a specific focus on the international humanitarian NGOs operating in Egypt? Moreover, the researcher employed the qualitative technique to examine the relationships and processes experienced in the international humanitarian NGO sector.

In order to comprehend the real-life viewpoints of the volunteers and NGOs, the researcher employed the interpretive research paradigm. Using this method, the researcher performed semi-structured interviews with NGO representatives overseeing volunteer teams as well as actual volunteers operating in the field both in-person and online. According to Edwards and Skinners (2009), the study's interpretivism method examined participants' perspectives of volunteering and the social world from their point of view in an effort to support the development of conceptual thinking. The transition to the qualitative research approach was also brought about by the quantitative method's limitations in acquiring numerical data and how it worsened human experiences' displacement (Flick, 2018). In contrast, the qualitative approach allows for a more thorough investigation of actual experiences, providing more in-depth investigation.

4.2 Research Design

The study mainly focuses on actual individual experiences. It mainly relied on in-depth interviews and content analysis as qualitative strategies; following Creswell and Poth (2017), interviews and content analysis are among the primary data collection techniques for research. The in-depth interviews assisted in stipulating primary data collection from individuals with current or previous humanitarian volunteering experience. Moreover, interviewing NGO representatives working in the field helped me gaining adequate knowledge of the processes and challenges currently faced in this sector. The interviews with government officials and representatives from the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the UN supported comprehension of the current government agenda, including initiatives and regulations on civil society and volunteering activities in Egypt. The content analysis was also used as a quantitative strategy to obtain secondary sources. The approach was used to gain deep insights into the volunteerism landscape within humanitarian NGOs. The content analysis of relevant studies offer additional contributions to the thesis.

By employing qualitative strategies, in-depth interviews, and content analysis, the researcher leverages thematic analysis to understand the volunteerism landscape within humanitarian NGOs and its influence on volunteers.. During the study, the researcher gathered data on the current processes and challenges of volunteering employed by international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt. The thematic analysis played a crucial role in creating connections and positive linkages between all of the material collected from the various participants.

4.3 Sample Selection

Purposive sampling, which entails specifically choosing people with particular traits or experiences that correspond with the study aims, was used to guarantee a suitable selection of participants (Neuman, 2014). Most of the participants in this thesis' data collection phase have previously worked or are working for international humanitarian NGOs. In particular,

most participants were chosen from organizations such as *Catholic Relief Services*², *CARE Egypt*³, and the *Egyptian Red Crescent*⁴. These three organizations were selected based on their affiliation with globally recognized organizations that provide humanitarian aid in Egypt. Whether the participants were volunteers or employees of these NGOs, the decision was made to understand their exposure to global experience and the impact of international structures on the Egyptian community. Moreover, participants working with the Ministry of Social Solidarity in the civil society field were requested to participate in the research study. This ensures that the sample includes individuals who can provide valuable insights into the volunteerism landscape in Egypt.

Additionally, snowball sampling was used to increase the number of possible interviews. Snowball sampling enabled selecting of more related crucial participants who fit the research requirements by asking the initially selected interviewees to refer more people who would be a good fit for the study (Neuman, 2014). The approach has assisted in identifying individuals who are actively engaged in the volunteer scene within humanitarian non-governmental organizations. By employing both purposive and snowball sampling, the research aimed to guarantee a comprehensive range of viewpoints from those directly active in volunteering for humanitarian NGOs. While purposive sampling allowed picking participants with specific traits and experiences, snowball sampling made it easier to include people who could have particular connections and insights inside the target community (Naderifar et al., 2017).

² Catholic Relief Services Egypt is a non-governmental organization that is affiliated with CRS international. The organization currently supports economic opportunities for refugees, women and other marginalized groups. CRS Egypt also offers education assistance to refugees from Africa, Iraq and Syria (CRS official website, 2024). It collaborates with the UNHCR to provide education grants that help finance education opportunities in Egypt to refugees (UNHCR, 2024).

³ CARE Egypt is a non-profit organization that is affiliated with CARE International. The organization serves thousands of refugees annually through its humanitarian, emergency response, and development programs, reaching 17,869 individuals by 2020. Furthermore, CARE has been responsive to the emerging challenges posed by the pandemic, providing food, shelter, and housing assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers registered with the UNHCR in Egypt (CARE Egypt 2020 Annual Report, 2021).

⁴ Egyptian Red Crescent is affiliated of the global Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, ERC works to help people survive and recover by providing an efficient and prompt response in times of need. It also responds to crises nationally and internationally

4.4 Data Collection

The study followed the semi-standardized interview during the data collection phase (Ryan et al., 2009). The method assisted the researcher in having pre-planned themes and questions from her research in the literature review while also providing room for unexpected answers and problems that might arise while using the open-ended questions. Because of the semi-standardized approach's flexibility, the interviewee's spontaneous issues were explored (Ryan et al., 2009). The questions were written in relatively simple language, and more explanation was given during the interviews. This entails that the interview questions were clearly explained, enabling the researcher to gain insight into the participants' perspectives on their experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The researcher establishes a foundation of trust between herself and the participants during the interviews, aiming to gather all necessary information from the participants smoothly and effectively. In order to guarantee that the participants are sharing their experiences openly while feeling comfortable and relaxed, the researcher has practiced effective listening strategies, question framing, and skillful engagement (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The participants' perspectives and views were acknowledged and valued during the interviews.

The data collection process took two months after IRB approval (copy enclosed) was obtained. Interviews were conducted with three groups of participants: volunteers, NGO representatives, and government officials. Eight interviews were conducted with participants with previous or current experience in volunteering in international humanitarian NGOs to gain insights into the challenges faced by volunteers and the motivation and satisfaction aspects of their previous experiences. Five interviews have been conducted with international humanitarian NGOs' representatives to obtain knowledge about the organizations they are previously or currently working in, processes, motivation factors, and challenges of volunteerism from their standpoint. Finally, two interviews were conducted, one with government officials and one with a UNV representative. The interviews were conducted to learn about the government's vision on volunteering and whether the Egyptian government is directing its strategy to encourage volunteerism among the youth. Most of the interviews were conducted with participants mainly online due to their preoccupied schedules, specifically, the volunteers, who have their main jobs and volunteering work. When it was suitable, the researcher had the opportunity to communicate with the interviewees in person.

4.5 Data analysis

The data used in this study was gathered from 4with fifteen different participants. Interviews were transcribed to capture all interviewees' comments and perspectives. As recommended by Khan (2014), during the transcription and analysis of the interview materials, an ongoing comparison and coding were followed; interview analysis data and literature analysis were compared and utilized to integrate and develop conceptual thinking and theory building. In order to fully understand volunteerism challenges in Egypt and construct plausible explanations based on the data gathered from various sources, the triangulation method has been adapted, helping to create a comprehensive understanding of the matter (Mathison, 1988).

Throughout the data analysis, the ideas, connections, and themes were explored and improved. Based on information from field notes, interview transcripts, and surveys completed by other organizations, coding was manually integrated. The themes included in the data were found, examined, and reported using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis assisted in developing insights directly from the data collected to make it suitable for interpreting volunteerism in humanitarian NGOs. It has assisted in providing a flexible and systematic approach to organizing and interpreting qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study's thematic analysis assisted to identify the recurrent themes, subjects, or problems related to volunteering involvement, management, and difficulties that surfaced from the content analysis and in-depth interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, it has given the researchers a deeper insight of the underlying themes and challenges associated with the data by enabling them to examine the opinions, experiences, and challenges faced by volunteers inside humanitarian NGOs.

Throughout the process, the researcher aimed at validating the data gathered by cross-checking the data gathered from the interviewees' input, surveys conducted by other entities, and other data gathered from the literature. Additionally, the researcher obtained the assistance of her colleagues, who aimed at validating the themes gathered and ensure that they eliminated prejudice and enabled the rejection of possible opposing theories so that an accurate claim on social occurrences could be made.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Following Neuman's (2014) guidelines, this study complied with ethical issues to guarantee the security and welfare of the interview subjects. The researcher acknowledged that it was their duty to supervise the study's ethical behavior, protect participant interests, and offer direction. The researcher adhered to the IRB guidelines and approval before conducting interviews. Interviewees were provided with an informed consent form detailing the study's aim and methodology, as well as a promise of anonymity and record confidentiality (Neuman, 2014). After completing the research, the researcher promised to disclose the findings to the participants if needed and properly discard the research data and interview records.

4.7 Limitation of the study

Even though the planned study aims to shed light on the processes employed by humanitarian NGOs in Egypt and how they influence volunteerism, it suffers from several limitations. Various limitations and constraints have impacted the research's breadth, validity, and comprehensiveness. Sampling size is considered one of the limitations. Due to practical constraints, the researcher has been only able to interview a limited number of participants. Consequently, it has yet to fully represent the opinions and experiences of all pertinent persons engaged in volunteer work for humanitarian NGOs. The time constraints and resources at hand have also limited the sample size. Data validity has also posed a potential limitation due to the sensitive nature of the research topic and the NGO field. It is possible that participants did not feel comfortable sharing their experiences or points of view, which impacted the accuracy and genuineness of the data. In order to ensure that participants feel secure enough to express their honest ideas during interviews, the researcher has taken the necessary steps to create a trustworthy and welcoming environment.

The researcher has tried to lessen this constraint through extensive literature studies and searches for other information sources, including government records and reports from non-governmental organizations. Finally, interviewing government officials encountered accessibility issues, through which this limited access has restricted the researcher's ability to gather comprehensive perspectives on the topic. Nevertheless, the study aimed at engaging with relevant government officials through alternative means, such as interviews with NGO representatives who collaborated with governmental entities.

Chapter 5: Egypt's Volunteerism Policy and International Experiences with Volunteering Management

In this chapter, the researcher delves into the state of government policies and activities related to volunteering in both Egypt and internationally. The chapter briefly reviews the local government's approach toward encouraging volunteering activities and engaging civil society in the process of achieving its development goals through volunteerism, along with reviewing the successful international implementation of volunteering. It is divided into three sections. It first discusses Egypt's government's approach to volunteerism, which is reflected in initiatives like Egypt Vision 2030, the government's initiatives to create a national volunteering plan and then volunteering in the Egyptian National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the successful implementation of volunteering program to the youth for the Egyptian Fund for Combating and Treating Addiction and Abuse.

The second section discusses the rules and regulations that Egypt's government put into effect to regulate volunteering. In the Egyptian settings, laws like Law 76 and Law 149 play a crucial role in managing and controlling volunteer activity. Finally, the third section reviews Sri Lanka, the US, and Kenya's volunteering management implementation, providing insights into volunteering participation rates, techniques, and initiatives that may be applied successfully to various contexts. This section also provides an opportunity to review innovative approaches, successful plans, and volunteer program designs by reviewing the best practices of other nations.

5.1. Government initiatives toward volunteering

5.1.1 Egypt Vision 2030

Given the importance of community participation and youth initiatives in fostering civil society development, particularly in alignment with the Egyptian government's strategic vision, Egypt 2030, there has been a notable emphasis on voluntary work within the government's agenda. To enhance this agenda and accomplish the government's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particular focus has been placed on volunteerism, capacity-building initiatives, and promoting civil society dialogue. The Egyptian government has formed partnerships with the UN system, the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR), and other pertinent entities to design and carry out

developmental endeavors in Egypt that include the promotion of voluntary work in achieving its SDGs, according to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) (2023). In pursuit of the SDGs, the Ministry of Social Solidarity has prioritized the enhancement of youth capabilities and the cultivation of active participants through diverse capacity-building initiatives such as *Hayaah Kareema* (Decent Life), Waii, and Egyptian development programs (UN Volunteers, 2022). With the contribution of a large number of volunteers and volunteer-related organization participation, the government initiative, *Haya Kareema*, provided targeted support to the poorest villages, achieving several goals, including SDG 9,1,6.7.3, and 8 (UNSDCF, 2023). The overarching objective of the Egypt Vision 2030 is to foster greater collaboration between the state and civil society, particularly the voluntary sector, in order to reinforce social justice programs and cultivate an environment that embraces diversity. Accordingly, consistent with the Egyptian SDGs, the Government Action Program (GAP) 2023-2027 will aim to develop and invest in human capital, expanding volunteering and civic participation possibilities (Ministry of International Cooperation, 2023).

5.1.2 National Strategy for Volunteering

The Ministry of Social Solidarity is unveiling a recent national strategy for volunteering. This strategy has several goals, such as building multiple channels for volunteer involvement and Egypt's first all-inclusive database on volunteering (SIS, 2024). The ministry is additionally seeking to ensure sure that volunteers have a pleasant experience, improve their living circumstances, and increase their ability to deal with country's developmental issues (SIS, 2024). Furthermore, the strategy recognizes the evolving development of volunteers' personalities, their diverse range of experiences, their ability to forge meaningful relationships, and their demonstration of qualities such as patience, generosity, adaptability, and sacrifice. It emphasizes the volunteers' realization of their potential to contribute to their communities, be responsible future leaders, and be role models for future generations in Egypt. According to Elkhoully (2022), a Strategic Planning Researcher at the General Administration of Strategic Planning - Information & Decision Support Center (IDSC), Egyptian Cabinet, one of the preparatory steps for the national strategy for volunteering is carrying out an evaluation study on the state of volunteering in Egypt. Through a quantitative analysis,

this evaluation study seeks to determine the current state of volunteering with various partners and throughout all governorates. For this study, articles, questionnaires, and international research addressing the perspectives and attitudes of volunteers and voluntary organizations were also explored. The study's original suggestions finished with the significance of establishing a nationwide volunteer committee, collaborating with pertinent ministries, and involving civil society organizations and voluntary entities to execute the plan. Along with broadening the definition of volunteering to encompass all age groups—children, youth, and the elderly—the issuance also establishes a mechanism for coordinating efforts to provide website-based clarification of volunteer opportunities, encourages digital volunteering, opens the door to volunteer initiatives, and develops a charter for volunteer work in Egypt to protect the rights of volunteers (Elkhoully, 2022).

5.1.3 Egyptian National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction

Voluntary work was additionally part of the Egyptian National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (NSDRR) objectives, aligning with the country's vision and support for civil society, dedicating 2022 to be the year of civil society (Human Rights Watch, 2023). According to the Cabinet of Egypt Information and Decision Support Center (2017), the government aims to establish communication with civil society, especially NGOs and social groups, to foster national collaboration in the area of volunteer work and lower the likelihood of catastrophic events. Emphasizing the importance of the NGO role, namely the local communities, in reducing the adverse effects of catastrophes and raising preventative knowledge, the NSDRR promotes and supports the voluntary field (Decision Support Center, 2017).

5.1.4 The Egyptian Fund for Combating and Treating Addiction and Abuse Volunteering Initiative

The Fund managed and recruited volunteers as part of the Ministry of Social Solidarity's efforts to raise awareness about addiction prevention and treatment. This project reached a significant milestone by obtaining the support of over twenty-seven volunteers from a variety of backgrounds to offer vital assistance to people in recovery from addiction

and their families (National Volunteering Training Guide, 2019). Notably, these volunteers were effectively recruited and trained at “Volunteer Houses” at Cairo University by the Egyptian Fund for Combating and Treating Addiction and Abuse, which increased the effectiveness of their intervention efforts in this crucial field (National Volunteering Training Guide, 2019). The Anti-Addiction Fund's official website (2024) declares that the fund's "Volunteer Houses" have been effective in persuading a large number of young people to commit to volunteering for "100 hours of service." With an emphasis on being attentive to the face of deceptive influences, these initiatives seek to warn against deception. Over 4,000 students have demonstrated interest in becoming members of the Volunteer Association of the Fund. The selection process was relatively meticulous, involving tests and interviews to determine the candidates' abilities for teamwork, communication skills, fieldwork abilities, and unique talents for carrying out awareness campaigns. Over 33,000 volunteers from different governorates have volunteered so far under the Fund (Fund for Combating and Treating Addiction and Abuse, 2024).

5.2 Policies and Regulations by the Egyptian Government

The Egyptian social solidarity and volunteering context includes several policy efforts and frameworks emphasizing community support, developing society in general, and volunteering engagement in particular. The government has several significant policies for regulating societal participation. It was initiated in 1973 with the Public Service Law No. 76, regulating a volunteer-like context (Faisal, 2021). The public service is similar to volunteer work; it supports the development process by offering community services and assistance. It mainly requires one year of work in a nationally focused field and corresponds with the state's development requirements, such as family planning, literacy eradication, community development, productive families, educational services, and children services (Faisal, 2021). Even though a number of legislations have already been passed, nothing pertaining to the regulation of volunteering has been put into force until 2019. Law 149 of 2019 governs and regulates the operations of Egyptian civil society organizations and NGOs. In addition to ensuring the freedom of civil work and facilitating the creation of NGOs, the law also aims to improve community involvement and volunteerism while fortifying the institutional capacities of civil society organizations (Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights, 2021). The

constitution fosters the promotion of a culture that advocates for voluntarism by offering a comprehensive perspective on voluntary work, its objectives, and the necessary conditions and regulations for its implementation. The law highlights the need for proper training, the supply of sufficient resources and equipment, and the skills and capabilities of volunteers when assigning voluntary work, as specified by the institution (Supreme Standing Committee for Human Rights, 2021).

Second, Law 171, regarding the National Alliance for Civil Development Work (NACDW), was approved by the parliament in July 2023. The law is one of the government regulations that aim to support NGOs that work in the humanitarian and civil development field to perform social safety programs and carry out development projects in partnership with the government and other civil society organizations (Official Gazette, 2023). The law's main objective is establishing an alliance as an autonomous non-profit organization endowed with legal capacity, enjoying independence in technical, financial, and administrative matters. The alliance facilitates collaboration with relevant state institutions, leveraging the expertise and voluntary developmental projects to enhance the performance of public services and other social protection programs. This collaboration utilizes the knowledge and workforce of NGOs' staff and volunteers to effectively support the implementation of comprehensive social development projects and initiatives, resulting in a more robust collective entity (State Information Service, 2024).

According to the legislation, the ultimate goal is to achieve social equity by elevating the individual's character and recognizing their fundamental role in building the community, thus encouraging volunteering services (Official Gazette, 2023). As outlined in the alliance's strategies and programs, this is intended to be achieved by direct and coordinated access to target social groups. Following the enactment of the law, an initiative to promote volunteerism was launched, with the aim of raising awareness of its significance and highlighting the potential of Egyptian youth in achieving the strategic goals of the government and the alliance (Official Gazette, 2023). This platform includes extensive training courses focused on different volunteering principles and is available to both paid and unpaid participants. A vast network of partner and member associations, numbering in the neighborhood of forty-five thousand associations, can access the training programs (Official Gazette, 2023).

5.3. International Experiences with Volunteering Management

Reviewing other countries' successful volunteering management implementations offers a variety of cultural, social, and economic perspectives for various countries, assisting in the comprehension of how socioeconomic circumstances and cultural variations may affect the sustainability and effectiveness of volunteer programs. The countries selected from different continents to provide a global view of the best practices are Sri Lanka, the US, and Kenya. According to the CAF⁵ index (2023), in 2022, 4.2 billion individuals—or 72% of the world's adult population—gave money, their time, or support to someone they didn't know. **Sri Lanka** is one of the top ten countries with the highest rate of volunteering in the world. According to the CAF World Giving Index (2019), each year, an average of around seven million people volunteer their time, nearly half of those aged over 15 in the country. Volunteerism has a long history and a rich culture in Sri Lanka, shaped by sociocultural traditions that are present in practically every facet of human endeavor. It has mostly taken the form of labor donation, or "Shramadana," and ingrained traditional knowledge in Sri Lankan communities. Numerous ideas of volunteering have been reflected by the nation's diverse ethno-religious traditions, giving rise to a wide variety of volunteer behaviors. Additionally, Sri Lanka is now moving toward advancing voluntarism through organized volunteering, gaining a greater social status. The latter has persisted in changing and come to play a significant role in the nation's social and economic growth (United Nations Volunteers, 2019)

One of the world's greatest volunteer rates is found in the **United States of America**. According to the Volunteering and Civic Life in America research, 124.7 million adult Americans, or more than 51% of the population, participated in both official and casual volunteering (Schneider & Marshall, 2023). American culture is fundamentally based on voluntarism, which is based on the ideas of altruism and social participation. Helping those in need builds stronger communities and is a great way for people to make the most of their free time. According to Volunteer Statistics of 2023, 63 million people regularly provide some of their free time to charitable organizations, despite their busy

⁵ The CAF Charity Index reports offer insights into patterns of giving, national ranking scores, and evaluations of volunteering across countries based on data from Gallup's World View World Poll, which is an ongoing research project carried out in more than 100 countries surveying individuals on their participation levels (CAF, 2024). The UNV reports include comprehensive information on the overall number of volunteers, whereas the CAF Charity Index concentrates on higher-level, more general trends in volunteering and charity giving among nations.

schedules and financial struggles. In American society, volunteering is extremely significant. This corresponds to around 25% of the adult population (Schneider & Marshall, 2023). Interestingly, the volunteering rates vary significantly across different states. Utah is the state with the greatest percentage of volunteers. The strong humanitarian and charitable principles of Utah are widely acknowledged to be reflected in this. The incredible influence of volunteering is demonstrated by the fact that the state's volunteer population recorded contributions of about \$3 billion in 2021 alone (Volunteer Statistics of 2023, 2023). The United States' high volunteering rates are evidence of both the strength of its civil society and the enduring desire of its people to improve their areas. Other nations hoping to promote a culture of civic engagement and community service can benefit greatly from understanding and learning from the successful implementation of volunteering programs in the United States.

According to the CAF (2023), Kenya scored three, recording one of the world's most generous countries as one of the top three countries. The respondents record 51% of the adult population volunteering in formal and informal activities. The high volunteering rate achieved in Kenya refers back to the government initiative to advocate for volunteerism and collaboration with relevant parties to incorporate policy suggestions into development plans and initiatives aimed at fostering an inclusive and equitable Kenyan society (SWVR, 2022). According to a study conducted by Ochieng (2020), the political, social, and cultural variables do affect young people's decision to volunteer. Notably, socio-cultural and economic considerations ranked second and third, respectively, with political issues having the greatest influence on adolescent volunteering decisions in this study.

Gaining insights into different practices by different countries has offered an understanding of various perspectives on volunteering participation, strategies, and management. It has also provided insightful information about creative approaches and effective program designs that can be applied in a variety of contexts. Ultimately, the broad scope of the government initiatives and policies related to volunteering, with a primary focus on Egypt and additional insights from Sri Lanka, the US, and Kenya, emphasizes the potential direct benefits of government contemplation toward volunteering. It is strongly believed that advocating suitable volunteering systems, setting regulations and initiatives into

place, and promoting a culture of volunteering among people are all necessary to strengthen the country's commitment to volunteering and other social activities that benefit their communities.

Chapter Six. Analysis and Findings

Aiming at comprehending the thesis's main question of how do the volunteering challenges and facilitators influence volunteer engagement, with a specific focus on the international humanitarian NGOs operating in Egypt? the chapter focuses on the variables influencing volunteer participation in these organizations and explores the volunteering environment in Egypt. The analysis is linked to the conceptual framework and reviewed relevant major literature that revolves around the volunteering journey and NGOs' policies and strategies. This framework includes aspects such as volunteers' motivations and hindrances, staff-volunteer nexus management, and NGOs' current practices in volunteer recruiting, training, and retention. In parallel, the conceptual framework also considers volunteering various definitions, the Egyptian ecosystem, the suggested volunteering management model including people, process, and technology, and the distinctive qualities of international humanitarian NGOs, such as their types, capacities, and operations. The goal of this framework is to get a greater knowledge of volunteer involvement, which is essential to the viability of international

humanitarian NGOs. In this context, based on insights from 15 interviews with volunteers, NGO staff, and officials who addressed their perspectives on volunteering, the findings sections of this thesis examine the barriers and facilitators to volunteerism in the international humanitarian NGO sector with the aims at reflecting on all facilitators that encourage and the barriers that they face that obstruct, restrict, or prohibit people from volunteering.

The chapter is structured into three sections. The first section examines the internal and external variables that influence volunteers' decisions to give their time and effort to international humanitarian NGOs. It clarifies the primary factors that attract and retain volunteers, the barriers preventing them from participating fully, and the viewpoints of the volunteers' families and their surroundings on their volunteer experience. The second section focuses on the relationships, interactions, and collaboration and examines the relationship between volunteers and NGO staff. The effectiveness of the coordination, communication, and supervision between volunteers and NGO staff is the main focus in the second section, along with the impact these factors have on the overall volunteer experience. The HR procedures used by international humanitarian NGOs to oversee volunteers are examined in the third and final section. It explores the techniques and strategies used by the organizations to attract, train, and retain volunteers. It also showcases effective volunteering management programs that international humanitarian organizations currently employ, assisting volunteers to advance their skills and get acknowledged for their achievements.

6.1 Unveiling the Volunteer's Journey: Motivations, Hindrances, and Family Perspectives

This section explores the elements and variables that volunteers encounter while choosing whether or not to volunteer. It especially focuses on the motivations, obstacles, and other factors that affect their involvement in international humanitarian NGOs. The main goal is to investigate the different factors that impact volunteers' decisions to participate in volunteer work. In addition, it offers perspectives from the families of volunteers and the local community, as well as insights into the obstacles preventing their active participation.

6.1.1 Volunteer Motivation: What drives volunteers to volunteer?

6.1.1.1 . Altruism and psychological gain

In order to fully comprehend the landscape of volunteerism participation in international humanitarian NGOs, it was crucial to fully understand the factors that inspire and motivate volunteers to volunteer, as well as to have a deeper understanding of what these individuals expect from the organizations they join. According to the interviews conducted with the participants, volunteers showed an interest in contributing their time and energy to support the vulnerable cases of people in need. According to Bekkers et al. (2016) altruism hypothesis, when the material, social, or psychological requirements of the recipients are more compelling, individuals will volunteer more. Delivering aid to those in extreme circumstances is the main goal of international humanitarian NGOs. Those who volunteer for these organizations exhibit compassion and a selfless desire to support these kinds of worthwhile causes. Based on the responses during interviews, the interviewees often stated that they volunteer because they are passionate about helping those in need and feel obligated to continue volunteering. A former staff, and a current volunteer at the Egyptian Red Crescent, joined the organization in 2019 as a full-time employee and then as a consultant volunteer, emphasizes the importance of volunteering to serve people in need, precisely in organizations that believe in humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence in delivering its aid. He (the interviewee) demonstrated the role of volunteering in international humanitarian NGOs not only because they alleviate people's suffering and serve people in urgent situations of distress but also because they have principles of neutrality and impartiality that make them act only in accordance with the beneficiaries' requirements.

“For me, participating in volunteer work and giving of your time and energy is very important, particularly when you serve in nonreligious communities. It's not as if you're a Muslim volunteering your skills only in mosques or a Christian helping only in churches. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) are two organizations that uphold the seven values of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, unity, and universality. Joining these groups and adhering to their values enables me to offer worthwhile services as well as increase my productivity and a sense of self-fulfillment. I'm really thankful that God made it possible for me to have this amazing chance to serve and volunteer.” (Interviewee 1, Volunteer, April 2024)

Another volunteer, with former volunteering experience in the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) organization, has attributed her passion for volunteering in international humanitarian NGOs to her urge to assist people in need, precisely

the refugees, knowing how hard it is for them and what they have been passed through until they arrive in Egypt, unaccompanied and lost. Out of altruism and selfless concern, the interviewee joined the education program and other volunteering programs in CRS and other organizations to serve refugees and people in need.

“The reason why I joined volunteer is my strong feeling of empathy and sympathy for migrants led me to decide to volunteer. As I saw the hardships and injustices these people were facing, I was filled with a great desire to change things for the better and deal with the problems in society. Seeing a lot of films that illuminated the reality of being a refugee strengthened my resolve to act and offer assistance.” (Interviewee 5, Volunteer, April 2024)

From the quotes expressed by the volunteers above, it is clear that altruism is one of the major factors that impact the individual's decision to participate in activities that advocate societal welfare and help others. From their experiences, the purpose was to support their surroundings and help those in need by offering the necessary services, which was the motive to volunteer. These findings support Handy and Srinivasan's (2004) definition of volunteerism as altruistic behavior that primarily depends on the individuals' will and resolve. It corresponds to their idea that volunteering primarily contributes to one's time and skills without expecting anything in return to benefit others or forward a cause. In the same vein, Bussell & Forbes (2003) state that volunteers typically engage in voluntary activities because they are motivated by altruism rather than duty or religious beliefs. This is because they give up their time and energy because they want to, not because they are required to. The volunteers' replies align with the volunteering management model, recognizing the importance of people's motivational elements in shaping the volunteering experience and advancing the model toward effectiveness and efficiency.

6.1.1.2. Professional Development and Skill Enhancement

In addition to internal variables associated with the volunteer's motivations by internal altruism and psychological well-being, other variables related to the beneficiaries' needs to acquire certain skills, knowledge, or even prosperous career opportunities were also motive factors. The researcher interviewed several previous and current volunteers and found that one of the key motivators was their desire to learn about fieldwork and investigate the fields of development and humanitarian initiatives. Simultaneously, participants indicated a significant desire to gain valuable skills and information from their involvement. This tendency can be connected to the focus on volunteer work as a pathway to

employment, which has been prominent in discussions on the advantages of volunteering in the past several years (Lindsey & Mohan, 2018). The volunteers who demonstrated interest in volunteering because of their need to discover the working field and mingle in the work were mostly youth volunteers who were either fresh graduates or had graduated from a year or two. Volunteer with prior experience in CRS claimed that volunteering was her gate path to discovering their working needs and starting real work-life experience.

“I was excited to learn more about the development and humanitarian fields and decide whether or not I would like to pursue a long-term career in them. I realized that getting started in this sector usually entails volunteering first, then applying for staff roles in order to advance up the organizational ladder. Usually, a person starts as a case worker and can progress to positions like program officer and higher. Through this volunteer opportunity, I was able to determine my level of passion for the field and its compatibility before considering advancing in my career. (Volunteer Interviewee 4, April 2024)

Another volunteer who had also just graduated from university expressed the significant role of volunteering in acting as an introductory period after graduation, providing the necessary setting for introducing people to the profession. She asserted that she was motivated to volunteer to help her personally in acquiring the needed knowledge and encourage the development of essential skills, precisely that she was not a political science graduate and she did not study development or social science before, so she was considering that experience as a shift in her career.

“For me, volunteering with CRS has been a transformational experience. It arrived at the ideal moment—exactly one year after I graduated from Law school, I felt like a new graduate with little life experience, unsure about how I would proceed with my career and skeptical about continuing in the law career. My eyes were opened to fresh viewpoints and things I had never observed before, thanks to volunteering. It had a big impact on how my personality developed and how I evolved as a person. It was almost like a career shift for me, as someone who did not complete their degree in political science and knew very little about the development area; volunteering opened my eyes to a whole new universe.” (Interviewee Seven, Previous Volunteer, and Current Staff, April 2024)

The interviewee's narrative demonstrates the connection between the volunteers' motivation to join voluntary activities and their desire to acquire or utilize skills and knowledge, precisely if it will assist in achieving their career goals or provide a career opportunity.

A former employee of ERC who worked for a considerable amount of time in volunteer management has also joined the discussion about the value of volunteering for people's talents and how it significantly affects them. He emphasized that volunteering is just as vital as schooling and that there are many benefits to volunteering for volunteers.

“After 7 years of Volunteering, I can say that volunteering is not less important than education; the self-confidence you gain from volunteering is comparable to that gained from education. (...) Volunteering fosters the growth of people's character more so than formal schooling.” (Interviewee Eight, Former NGO Staff, May, 2024)

Given that the respondent is an NGO employee with experience in volunteer management and a deep comprehension of the benefits and results of volunteering, her statement highlights the value of volunteering for professional development. This is consistent with the literature's emphasis on the ideas of skill improvement and professional growth as the main sources of volunteer motivation that affect the journey and engagement of volunteers. Gaining knowledge and skills is one of the reasons that motivate volunteers to participate in voluntary activities, claim Lindsey and Mohan (2018). According to Lindsey and Mohan's (2018) theory, after participating in the volunteer program, volunteers may acquire new skills, accomplish a particular professional objective, or even obtain a new qualification. However, considering the diversity of personalities among volunteers, it was imperative to ascertain whether there are additional motivational factors that might drive volunteers to volunteer as well as other elements that contributed to an efficient and successful volunteering model.

6.1.1.3. Social integration

Besides the altruistic motives and the aim to gain certain skills and knowledge, the interviewees also acknowledged social factors as a driving mechanism. Volunteering was emphasized to be the volunteers' path to integrating and interacting with the Egyptian community. Widjaja (2010) highlights social incentives and social interactions as sources of motivation. For instance, an interviewee who had spent her whole childhood in Yemen but came to Egypt for college saw helping with the ERC as a means of integrating into the community and learning more about the customs and culture of the area.

“I have spent all my childhood in Yemen and then came to Egypt with limited knowledge of the Egyptian culture or the nation itself. By joining the Red Crescent, I was able to obtain priceless experiences that profoundly enhanced my cultural and personal development. It taught me how to interact with the Egyptian community and gave me a greater

knowledge of the principles upheld by the Red Crescent. ERC acted as a microcosm of Egyptian culture for me, helping me to manage social interactions and create a feeling of belonging, considering the different obstacles I first encountered when attempting to integrate into the local society.” (Interviewee 2, Volunteer, April 2024)

Consequently, this section's narratives have helped clarify the different factors that encourage people to volunteer, especially in international humanitarian organizations. It aligns with the extensive body of research by scholars seeking to understand volunteer incentive mechanisms. It is precisely in line with the "seven mechanisms driving volunteering" theory put forth by Bekkers et al. (2016), which holds that volunteers are motivated by social, material, or psychological motivations. The findings have also provided an explanation for why some NGOs are thought to be better options for committed volunteers than others. . It was discovered that certain humanitarian NGOs offer a range of incentives that could motivate volunteers, including professional advancement, skill improvement, personal fulfillment, and social integration. Simultaneously, the majority of respondents said that their motivation was not solely derived from one or two factors but rather from a combination of many variables.

6.1.2 Volunteer Hindrances: Factors that deter individuals from volunteering

6.1.2.1 Time Constraints

While there are motivators that drive volunteers to engage in voluntary activities, there are challenges and hindrances that deter individuals from participating and continuing to volunteer. In this context and with alignment to the "Volunteer Journey" concept in this study, the qualitative findings provided important insights into the hindrances and current practices employed by the international humanitarian NGOs that might impact the volunteers' experience. Time constraints are observed to be one of the significant factors that impact the volunteering journey, precisely in the international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt. The findings have shown that organizations such as CRS and Cares are following time-limited volunteering programs. The programs are only six months long, allowing the volunteers to participate only in this period and then leave for a minimum of one year to rejoin as volunteers again. Volunteers have cited that this type of time constraint has affected their willingness to continue involvement as they lose interest in waiting for a whole year and then rejoin. Some of the participants didn't even know that there was an option to return as a volunteer after one year. The relationship between flexible work schedules and volunteering has been emphasized by

Qvist (2021). The availability of flexible volunteering options throughout the year, with fewer constraints on timing and duration, has a positive impact on volunteer engagement and participation. One volunteer who participated in a six-month program at CRS highlighted that the fixed time frame limited her ability to fully benefit from the anticipated learning and personal growth opportunities. Additionally, despite having a successful volunteering experience, and her desire to continue volunteering at the same organization, the inflexible timing of the program prevented her from doing so.

"My limited time in the CRS volunteer program has made it challenging for me to take advantage of all the opportunities available. While the official duration was stated as 6 months, in reality, It was only an actual work of 2 and a half months, and the other period was spent on orientation and other introductory work, including a month and a half of training in 6th October city. My contacts with supervisors were limited by this time constraint, which also hindered my capacity to fully engage. To avoid the limitations of the volunteer term and because I really enjoyed working in CRS, I am now excitedly looking for a chance to join CRS as staff." (Interviewee 5, volunteer, April 2024)

Another volunteer, who also volunteered in CRS for 6 months, described her volunteering experience as a successful one, yet she had to leave after 6 months.

"I can say that volunteering at CRS was the best thing that happened to me. Working there just after graduation shaped my personality and helped me discover my interests. Unfortunately, I had to leave after the six months were done" (Interviewee 6, Volunteer, April 2024)

The volunteers' comments showed the impact of the time constraints on the volunteers' journey in international humanitarian NGOs. It emphasizes the importance of flexibility in opportunities offered to volunteers to avoid volunteers' indecisiveness. Qvist (2021) asserts that flexible work schedules have a favorable impact on the overall number of hours volunteered, mostly because they increase the likelihood that someone will volunteer. His view of the time constraints emerge with the study findings that even though the six-month volunteering program was justified by the NGOs' staff as an opportunity to increase the number of volunteers joining the programs, it had unintended consequences. The limitation of the volunteering program time frame has unfortunately limited the volunteers' long-term commitment. It also hindered the volunteers' choice to return to the organization when they had the will to volunteer their effort and time. The experiences of the volunteers highlight the important dynamic between volunteers and time constraints in regard to the hinderances that the volunteers may face during their volunteering journey.

6.1.2.2 *Economic Factors*

Long-term volunteerism is significantly challenging for Egyptians due to the country's economic circumstances. Research has indicated that young people often prioritize paid employment over volunteer work due to financial restrictions and the need to concentrate on their education, which leaves them with limited time and resources to engage in such activities (Sedky, 2011). Youth in Egypt are driven by the country's high unemployment rate and high cost of living, which are driven by the need to prioritize securing stable jobs, sometimes at the sacrifice of volunteer activity that may not provide immediate financial benefits (UNDP, 2022). Interviewees have expressed their thoughts on the economic factors associated with continued volunteering, precisely within the male than the female volunteers. A volunteer who is currently working in the ERC described the economic situation in Egypt as a big challenge for everyone, especially for the males, as they have a lot of other financial commitments.

“Because of the current financial and economic conditions, volunteering is not widely recognized or adopted in the Egyptian environment. Because of this, it is not common for recent graduates—especially men—to prefer voluntary work to paid employment. It is noteworthy that most of the ERC volunteers were female, indicating that societal norms and expectations around volunteering may be more tolerant of women in Egyptian culture than of males.” (Interviewee 2, Volunteer, April 2024)

Despite the dominating perception that volunteering is a luxury activity that does not align with social norms, particularly among Egyptian men (Interviewee 2, 2024), and the priority being placed on paid employment and education (Sedki, 2011), there are still individuals who engage in voluntary activities. However, the economic challenges faced by Egyptian youth, such as high unemployment rates and rising living expenses, further exacerbate the dynamics of volunteering (CIVICUS, 2005). While the main issues confronting Egyptians vary based on their age, gender, and socioeconomic status, the socioeconomic hindrances extend beyond just unemployment and high cost of living. A crucial obstacle, as highlighted by Sika (2018), is the restrictive laws governing civil society, which can significantly influence and shape the socioeconomic landscape of a given society. In the context of this study volunteers' hinderances—such as the lack of flexible volunteer opportunities that meet their unique needs and financial circumstances—need to be carefully addressed and developed in order to create an effective volunteering model.

6.1.2.3 *Mismatch of Volunteer Assignments and Capabilities*

Upon further investigation, it was revealed that one of the factors that discouraged volunteers and led to their discontinuation of service was the mismatch between their assigned tasks and their respective capabilities. The volunteering management pillar "people" is emphasized by Boezeman and Ellemers (2014), highlighting the direct connection between matching the volunteers' talents, knowledge, and background and the volunteers' productivity. Implementing a "Skills Matrix" is one useful strategy Abushadi et al. (2012) suggested to increase efficiency. According to the study, managers may guarantee the highest level of productivity and engagement from their volunteer workforce by properly assigning tasks based on volunteer abilities. The significance of closely assessing and matching volunteer skill sets with assigned duties is highlighted by this study. Failing to do so may result in volunteers losing faith in the program and being more likely to stop volunteering. An international humanitarian NGO volunteer who provides awareness sessions and training for low-income women in a variety of beauty disciplines has expressed her negative experience of not matching her skill set with the tasks assigned.

"I have volunteered in a program that aimed to empower women, and one of the things they were supposed to do was working with women to get the fundamentals of hairdressing. In particular, I was responsible for "protecting the resources" of the project, which included keeping a careful eye on the trainer's usage of hair clips and making sure they were stored properly after training sessions. Instead of focusing on more meaningful or skill-related duties, I was physically in charge of collecting and keeping track of the clips and hairpins. Within this program, there were no means by which participants might improve or hone their abilities." (Interviewee 5, Volunteer, April 2024)

Capturing from this experience, it is undeniable that assigning adequate tasks to volunteers to ensure their effective participation and sustain their engagement is crucial. The volunteer comments reflect how devastating the volunteering experience could be if the organization failed to match the volunteers' abilities and capacity appropriately. This finding contradicts the expectations of volunteering outlined in Al-Safty's (2019) study that demonstrates that volunteering fosters emotional balance and self-confidence to volunteers. Instead, it genuinely demonstrates how an unpleasant volunteer experience can ruin the entire process and have negative effects on the volunteers. Providing more significant and impactful responsibilities instead of assigning volunteers to administrative tasks that do not make the most of their abilities along with designing volunteer positions that correspond with their

skill sets, ensuring proper contribution to the program's goals, and developing a feeling of purpose was Abdushadi et al. (2012) recommendations to avoid these hinderances.

In this study, the interviewees identified many major barriers to their sustained volunteerism, including time restraints, financial restrictions, and a mismatch in volunteer responsibilities and skills. Different factors, yet all of them affect the volunteer's productivity, efficiency, and commitment to the organization and the volunteering experience. By identifying these barriers, the thesis contributes to the validation and improvement of the framework's emphasis on efficient volunteer journey and life cycle management as a vital components of long-term volunteer involvement and achieving effective volunteering model. This study argues that international humanitarian NGOs need to consider these obstacles thoroughly and develop specialized plans for tackling them, such as offering more flexible hours, providing funding, or establishing more thorough volunteer placement and training procedures.

6.1.3 Family and Community Perspectives

Unveiling the volunteers' journey, it is essential to understand the influence that varying perspectives from friends and relatives have on an individual's choice to serve. The Egyptian context offers its distinctive structure in terms of cultural, economic, and social aspects. The interviews among volunteers in the international humanitarian NGOs on their family perspectives mainly revolved around the question of how your family and friends thought about your volunteering experience. Among the most important variables that might influence the volunteering culture in Egypt is public trust in civil society organizations and NGOs, the level of trust among people, and socioeconomic situations are some factors that affect the Egyptian culture of volunteering.

A volunteer who participated in the ERC elaborated that the Egyptian Red Crescent was well known among her family and friends as an NGO but they didn't know that it also provides development and humanitarian activities. It was mistakenly thought of as a medical organization, a moving clinic, or a hospital. She explained further that since the

beginning of Israel- Gaza war (since October 2023), the community's mindset has changed and a lot of friends came and asked her about a volunteering opportunity there. She explained that:

“Because of the ERC reaction in Gaza, my friends have been asking me about it; before, they thought it was only a medical organization. In my opinion, it's critical to promote volunteerism in Egyptian households, particularly among the younger generation. Young people may learn a great deal about the labor market and how society functions outside of their volunteer activities. Volunteering, in my opinion, is just as significant as rearing and educating a child. It aids in the growth and preparation of children and teens for the demands of the workforce and other obstacles they may encounter in the future. In addition, I've seen that volunteering progresses through many phases, enabling people to gain a variety of talents. In my opinion, volunteering is a great way to empower and influence the future generation of involved citizens. This advancement and skill development are essential parts of the experience.” (Interviewee 2, Volunteer, April 2024)

The volunteers' response as perceived by their family corresponds to the CIVICUS survey (2005) results on public trust in CSOs and NGOs. The survey shows that people are typically more confident in the organizations that they are aware of their philanthropic operation than those run or governed by the government. However, there may be significant differences in the way that families and the community view volunteering within these organizations.

Another volunteer who joined CRS has confirmed that she has successfully convinced her family and friends' perspective of the value of her volunteering experience. She was able to demonstrate to them how this experience would contribute to the development of her personality and further her career path. She further stated that:

“My friends are well aware of my passion for volunteering; they have always encouraged me to volunteer, yet CRS seemed more like an internship to me personally. I saw the opportunity as I'll be introduced to the profession and given many opportunities as a result of this voluntary work, which most of my relatives and friends recognize. (...) Although all of my friends have been employed elsewhere, I have always suggested the volunteer program to them. However, the distance has been the biggest obstacle for them, as the volunteering opportunity is located far away.” (Interviewee 3, Volunteer, April 2024)

The degree of trust that exists among individuals, especially with regard to their sincere desire to assist others, also plays a significant role in the family's choice to support volunteering. The CIVICUS (2005) study also asserts that people prioritize their own interests the most highly placed, indicating that Egyptian families do not place great importance on volunteering if it will not yield a personal benefit on their families. The finds are also matching with the

claim that the community, including family and friends, perspectives on whether to encourage family members, especially the youth, to volunteer or seek paid work possibilities in order to realize their needs and goals may also be influenced by the socioeconomic status of the community. CIVICUS (2005).

A CRS volunteer clarified a widespread misperception regarding the way the families of volunteers see the financial aspects involved. She explained how her decision to volunteer was well thought out in terms of the financial ramifications and limits, as well as how this was reflected in her real job experience.

“Because of the financial and economic circumstances, I’ve seen that volunteering is not well-known or normalized in Egyptian society. Volunteering is not usually the first choice of a recent graduate over a paid position. My family knew that I wanted to learn more about this sector to see whether I would be interested in working in it, so they were very supportive of my decision to volunteer. I was able to convince my family by explaining to them that these organizations function according to a hierarchical system and that I would have to start as a volunteer in order to eventually join as a staff member. (...) It’s crucial to remember that volunteering is not a reliable source of work or revenue on its own. While it’s a worthwhile experience, it’s not a long-term, viable fix.” (Interviewee 4, Volunteer, April 2024)

Another volunteer who participated in Care Egypt for a while offered an illustration of the viewpoint of the community on the connection between volunteering and financial circumstances. She clarified that her friends had been quite critical of her volunteering, claiming it was basically worthless. They implied that volunteering was a waste of time and put pressure on her to shift her attention to a paid job instead.

“My family didn’t discourage me from volunteering opportunities, but they did tell me that I have a lot of choices to consider and I need to carefully decide which field I want to pursue. Regarding society at large, my friends and relatives have made several disparaging remarks to me. Some of their statements have included things like “Join the rest of us and get a stable job so you can make more money.” How can volunteering help one? It really wears me out.” (Interviewee 5, Volunteer, April 2024)

According to the volunteers’ responses as per their family and community perspectives, several key factors seem to influence the community's willingness to encourage or discourage volunteerism, such as, economic situation, trust in organizations, willingness to help others, and volunteering time and effort. Ultimately, the participants encountered a mixture of skepticism and encouragement from their social networks. Some of their relatives and friends saw the potential benefits these volunteer experiences may have for the volunteers' professional and personal growth, even as

they voiced worries about the financial trade-offs. The way these different elements interacted greatly affected how the community as a whole felt about the volunteers' choices to perform voluntary work. To conclude, the presence and perception of volunteering journey in the Egyptian setting may be greatly impacted by the complex interaction of cultural, social, and economic elements.

While the existing literature, such as El Taraboulsi's (2013) optimistic expectations of Egyptian civil society's growth, suggests that the promotion of volunteering should be a priority, the findings of this study present a conflicting narrative. The research indicates that the Egyptian community's mentality is not yet fully prepared to embrace volunteering as a worthwhile endeavor, with the prevailing belief that it is less valuable than the prospect of consistent wage employment. This finding corresponds with Sika's (2018) observation that low engagement levels in Egypt are linked to a lack of confidence in civil society actors, resulting in youth participation remaining largely outside the traditional framework for civic engagement. Despite these obstacles, the researcher believes that youth development depends on volunteering and that it must be actively encouraged, in spite of the community's existing views and the constrictive rules governing civil society that have the power to influence the socioeconomic environment.

6.2 Volunteer-Staff Nexus

Following examining the various factors that affect volunteers' engagement in international humanitarian NGOs, it is crucial to understand the complexity of the interaction between staff and volunteers and how it might affect the volunteer experience. Volunteers and employees can disband the organization or take it to market to gain a variety of rewards, according to Macduff (2011). In this context. This section delves into the relationship between the NGOs' staff and volunteers, which are essential elements in the thesis conceptual framework. It explores the type of current interactions and their impact on the participants' experiences in international humanitarian NGOs. Several factors, such as the daily interactions, the type of tasks, and the supervision techniques, have shown an impact on the relationship between the staff and volunteers. The sections are divided into three categories, first comprehending the interaction dynamics that influence staff-volunteer relationships in the volunteering experience in NGOs. Second, acknowledging

the impact of task assignments on volunteer participation and engagement. Lastly, the interviewees' perspectives on successful supervision techniques will be analyzed, identifying which approaches enabled them to participate and become involved and which ones hindered them or had undesirable impacts.

6.2.1 The Influence of Staff-Volunteer Relationships on Volunteer Experience in NGOs

6.2.1.1 Effective Communication

Given the sensitivity of the work, it is crucial to comprehend the effects of internal relationships between staff and volunteers in the context of volunteering and in international humanitarian NGOs in particular. Volunteers and NGO representatives shared their experiences in this study and emphasized the importance of maintaining an adequate relationship and a respectful environment to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. It is undeniable that successful communication between volunteers and staff impacts the effectiveness of an NGO's program, fundraising effort, leadership alterations, and capacity to effect good organizational advancement (Macduff, 2011). Accordingly, interviewees were asked about their opinion of the coordination and communication between the staff and volunteers, precisely about their personal experiences during their volunteering participation.

A volunteer, who previously worked as a full-time staff and then shifted to a volunteer position in the ERC, has elaborated on his organization's efforts to maintain an adequate relationship with volunteers. He mentioned that he noticed that volunteers and staff are collaboratively working together to achieve the ERC's objectives. He stated that:

"The management is closely monitoring and controlling everything on the system to make sure the team is processing and inputs, and everybody is working together to get the desired results." (Interviewee 1, Volunteer, April 2024)"

This comment implies that management and employees inside the NGO collaborate to achieve the organization's aims and objectives. It reflects the active involvement of the management in overseeing and keeping an eye on the team's contributions and activities to make sure everything is going according to plan. This suggests a well-organized strategy in which management and employees work together to accomplish the organization's goals and anticipated values. As emphasized by Macduff (2011), effective collaboration between staff and volunteers ensures that

hierarchical communication barriers are overcome. It is also emphasized that effective communication is the greatest way to foster teamwork (Macduff, 2011).

Another example of effective communication between staff and volunteers was implemented in CRS, illustrated by a previous volunteer (interviewee 3) who spent six months at the organization working in an education program for refugees. She further elaborated that there was a harmonious relationship between the staff and volunteers. She described the staff in CRS as friendly staff, saying:

"The staff in CRS is very friendly, and they always offer help and training. They always asked me to join them to watch what they were doing and learn, even if they were not in the same unit. No one ever told me that I was asking too much or that I was bothering them; they also make sure that they know everyone by name, which makes you feel that you are not only a part-time volunteer and that it is not just a 6-month period before you leave...(…) The organization's system is exceptional as it does not operate according to the traditional hierarchy in which you're considered a volunteer whilst the employee is a manager. You actually witness your manager doing errands, photocopying documents, and handling difficult chores; this makes you feel equally capable to her and motivates you to complete all the jobs as well"(Interviewee 3, Volunteer, April 2024)

In the context of this thesis, the relationship between the volunteers and the NGOs staff is reset as a process that directs the extent of volunteer involvement in the international humanitarian NGOs. The participants' experiences demonstrate how the organization's initiatives to uphold productive and effective staff-volunteer collaboration have an impact on the volunteer's own life and level of engagement. The relationship between the staff and volunteers were also highlighted in Cho et al. (2020) study, emphasizing the discrepancies and hierarchical structure between volunteers and paid employees inside an organization. Cho et al. (2020) argues that these discrepancies require an adequate attentive volunteer management process. Thus, based on the positive attributions made by the interviewed volunteers regarding their favorable experiences with their organizations, the researcher recommends establishing a major focus on cooperation and creating a non-hierarchical work environment that fosters engagement and participation from all team members.

6.2.1.2 Antagonistic relationship

Contrary to the previous successful experiences of effective collaboration between staff and volunteers, incompetent relationships were noticed in volunteering in some of the international humanitarian NGOs. Bad management practices, unprofessional attitudes, and unsuitable individuals managing teams were some of the reasons that contributed to the failure of productive cooperation. Volunteers shared their unpleasant experiences with the researcher, explaining the reasons behind these opposing situations from their perspective.

A volunteer who was joining a volunteer program in an international humanitarian NGO has illustrated her unfavorable experiences with one of her supervisors. She mentioned that this supervisor had impacted her experience negatively. She explained that:

“I had a boss in my first volunteering program who often shouted at us (volunteers) for any error even if it wasn't our responsibility or if it was a human error. He had joined the organization at the same time that I did, and I believe he was attempting to fabricate showing his management authority. One time, he was yelling about a problem that occurred in the office; he looked at us, pointing at his head and telling us that this error would not have occurred if our brains were functioning properly. He had an unfavorable attitude.” (Interviewee 5, Volunteer, April 2024)

This volunteer's opinion offers a narrative of unfavorable experiences with an unsatisfactory supervisor during volunteering. It draws attention to the manager's unprofessional actions, including shouting at the volunteers over a small error and trying to place the responsibility elsewhere on the team. Consequently, the impact of such undesirable actions from staff toward volunteers on the volunteering experience as a whole.

Inadequate staff-volunteer relationships can also be noticed by staff members holding higher positions in the organization. In our interview with one of the NGOs' staff members, she indicated that from her own perspective, the number of volunteers in the team being supervised and the age and qualification of individuals managing teams could possibly affect their supervision techniques and relationships with their teams. She commented:

“In order to effectively monitor and oversee volunteers, in my opinion, a supervisor should only be in charge of no more than three or four of them at a time. That being said, each supervisor frequently finds herself in charge of 12–13 volunteers. The job gets a little more rushed and less professional as the number of volunteers rises, especially since many of them are young people or recent graduates who occasionally find it difficult to maintain a professional

work attitude. There was a moment when we only had two employees and 53 volunteers, which greatly affected the volunteers' experience and kept them from enjoying the work to the fullest.” (Interviewee 9, NGO staff, May 2024)

The NGO staff representative has also added that the NGO’s understaffing and the balance between the number of volunteers and staff is the reason behind the staff-volunteer undesirable relationship, commenting:

“The problem of understaffing is due to budget and donor constraints. I always have limitations on what I can spend my budget on, so we don't spend all the budget on new hires. A better balance between the number of staff and volunteers is required, with more supervisors than volunteers.”

The NGO’s staff representative quotes have explained the external factors that impact the relationship between the staff and volunteers other than the staff’s attitude or behavior. The balancing between the staff and volunteers in an organization, the number of volunteers per team, the budget and donor constraints, and the limited staff capacity are all challenges that contribute to the overall volunteer experience.

Given the scope of this challenge and considering the participants’ interviews insights, it is essential to understand the “Volunteer-Staff Nexus” and the way it affects volunteering in general. The staff-volunteer relationship dynamics shown in the thesis reflect both scenarios, the effective collaboration and the incompetent relationship. These contrasting scenarios showcase an example of how an effective relationship between the NGOs’ staff and volunteers could yield a productive work environment, while on the contrary, failing to properly communicate with the volunteers could result in unfavorable volunteering experiences. Hager and Brudney (2004) studies on other NGOs volunteer management practices echo these views on staff- volunteer dynamics. According to the scholars, volunteers have to maintain a reasonably professional and well-managed work environment to retain volunteers. To conclude, in order to reach an effective volunteering model, it is necessary for NGOs to carefully manage and foster the numerous interactions that contribute to this dynamic in addition to confirming the validity of this connection. Organizations can aim to create a more encouraging and empowered atmosphere for their volunteer workforce by recognizing the factors that contribute to successful staff-volunteer collaboration.

6.2.2 Impact of Task Assignments on Volunteer Participation and Engagement

Subsequent to discussing the dynamic between volunteers and NGO employees, it was vital to understand whether the duties given to the volunteers were appropriate. The difficulty is finding the ideal balance between two critical factors, engaging volunteers as primary contributors and avoiding over-delegation and burnout. Assigning primary tasks to volunteers and giving them a sense of importance in the organization's operations are two ways to empower them as primary contributors. Additionally, it aims to boost the volunteers' sense of ownership and belonging, which will improve their participation and commitment.

6.2.2.1 Engaging Volunteers as Primary Contributors

The impact of assigning primary tasks to volunteers directly affects the volunteer experience. Considering volunteers as primary participants in an organization ensures the volunteers' productivity, commitment, and loyalty. Volunteers have to feel that their presence is essential for the operation, and their work and efforts will be reflected in the final services provided to the beneficiaries. Macduff (2011) asserts that when volunteering involves meaningful work and significant responsibility, the majority of volunteers are aware of this and gladly fold and stuff for hours on end. NGOs have to provide a clear description of how volunteers contribute to the organization's objective (Macduff, (2011).

A previous staff member working in the ERC, responsible for the volunteering department, assured that the operations in ERC are mainly dependent on volunteers with less than 10% of operations limited to staff for security reasons. The former NGO staff member elaborated on how ERC assigns primary and essential responsibilities to its volunteers, after providing the appropriate training and workshops. He stated that:

“volunteers perform almost all of our work, there are a few specialized administrative duties that call for staff workers instead of volunteers. These jobs entail maintaining our inventory and addressing financial concerns as the financial manager and inventory manager, respectively. About 10% of our total activities are made up of these administrative duties and the other 90% depend on volunteers. It is noteworthy that volunteers can advance throughout the organization and potentially hold senior leadership positions within the initiative. Individuals can volunteer as long as they are not in charge of managing cash or supplies.” (Interviewee 8, Former NGO Staff, May 2024)

The former staff's comments show how international humanitarian NGOs with all due respect to their sensitive and critical operations, still heavily rely on volunteers in their daily operations. The level of dependence of an NGO on volunteers in its primary tasks may vary from one organization to another, yet the interviewee emphasized the degree to which ERC depends on its volunteers.

CRS is another illustration of an organization that delegated major tasks to volunteers in international humanitarian non-governmental organizations. A current member of the CRS staff has attested to the fact that volunteers are essential to the organization and that they perform nearly all of the work in the organization, from answering phones and providing reception services to actually providing the services to the beneficiaries.

“We depend heavily on the volunteers in our organization, they are crucial factors to our operations.”

(Interviewee 9, NGO Staff, May 2024)

The interviewees' affirmation is consistent with Hager and Brudney (2004) study's conclusion that “No matter how well intentioned volunteers are, unless there is an infrastructure in place to support and direct their efforts, they will remain ineffective at best or, worse, become disenchanted and withdraw, potentially damaging recipients of services in the process.” (p.3). The accumulating evidence suggest that acknowledging the importance of volunteers and building trust and responsibility in the volunteers designated tasks is crucial by the NGOs staff. A report titled “What Makes Your Employees Tick? Understanding your Workforce and Engaging your Employees in Service”, issued by Points of Light (2015), further matches with the findings, emphasizing the need to recognize the range of motivations for volunteerism. Moreover, it is also crucial to make sure that volunteers believe their work has an impact and is valuable; otherwise, they can get dissatisfied and stop volunteering. Finally, the responses demonstrate a connection between the volunteering management main pillar, people, and the staff and volunteers nexus—in order to advance towards an efficient volunteering model.

6.2.2.2 Avoiding Over-delegation and Volunteer Burnout

While it is vital to give the volunteers reliable and meaningful tasks, it is crucial to avoid over-delegating and relying too much on volunteers in order to prevent volunteering burnout. Organizations may find it challenging to maintain consistent coverage and support if they rely too much on volunteers, which might lead to uncertainty in their delivery of services (Hager and Brudney, 2004). Therefore, it is critical to find a balance and avoid becoming overly dependent on volunteers, even as you recognize their value in improving the effectiveness of capital budgets and the operations of NGOs. Developing a well-managed volunteer plan is essential to maximizing advantages and minimizing difficulties related to managing volunteers.

An example of maintaining this balance was captured in CRS. A volunteer who participated in CRS for their six-month volunteering program stated that her supervisor always pushed her to take breaks when she felt overworked. Furthermore, her manager politely denied her request to continue working from home, stating that it would be too much to handle, and reminded her that they were volunteers and were not required to stay past regular business hours without being paid.

“I am so lucky to have my supervisor, he was so understanding. Whenever I told him that I would take my laptop and work after working hours at home, he refused and told me you are here as a volunteer to learn and work during working hours only. You are not even getting paid as full-time employees to continue working additional hours” (Interviewee 3, Volunteer, April 2024)

The volunteers' quotes provide insights into the successful implementation of a balance between treating volunteers as essential players in an organization and avoiding overwhelming them. The amount of time consumed by the volunteer after working hours significantly impacts their volunteering experience. A UPS Foundation study (1998) revealed that two-fifths of volunteers have at some point stopped volunteering for an organization due to one or more inadequate volunteer management practices. This study significantly condemned the practice of over-delegating to volunteers (Hager and Brudney, 2004). In the same vein, the organization's poor utilization of volunteers' time and abilities, as well as the lack of a clear definition of volunteer roles, could lead to the discontinuity of volunteering. Therefore, organizational efforts are required to sustain volunteerism in the voluntary aid industry (Cho et al., 2020). Staff

members of NGOs need to focus more on enhancing the host organizations' ability to accept volunteers and recognize their requests to balance their professional and personal lives. Nevertheless, the volunteers' own time constraints may always be a major factor in determining whether or not they decide to continue their volunteer work, even in situations where the organization is truly showing appreciation for their contributions and offering them workshops and training.

Incorporating these insights into the volunteer engagement process may be represented in an improved method of assigning tasks and involving the volunteers as primary stakeholders while avoiding over-delegation and volunteer burnout. It also emphasizes how important it is to consider the staff-volunteer interaction, which may either support or hinder the volunteer's journey inside the framework of an international humanitarian NGO.

6.2.3 Supervision Strategies in International Humanitarian NGOs

Acknowledging the dynamics of the relationship between the staff and volunteers and the importance of balancing the tasks assigned to volunteers, it is essential to delve deeper into the supervision techniques and strategies implemented by the staff in humanitarian NGOs. The supervisor technique is the most crucial element in the staff-volunteer relationship since it involves the rules and procedures established by the organization and entrusted to the supervisors for implementation. Lough and Turner (2017) contends that the policies and strategies implemented in a volunteering management context has to be empirically tailored to match the volunteers' sensitive characteristics. The sensitivity of the volunteering field arises from the the distinction between volunteer work and paid employment. Volunteers are always required to remain motivated since they are not paid for the job, while salaried staff members are more obligated to follow a structure's policies and procedures, which limits their autonomy and independence inside it, as demonstrated by Cho et al. (2020) research. Examples of current practices employed by international humanitarian NGOs include

code of conduct, open door policy, one-to-one meetings, and evaluation process. In their study investigating various organization practices and polices associated with high rate of volunteering, Lough and Turner (2017) highlighted the

importance of policies such as performance overview, recognition, and evaluation for both the overall objectives of the NGO and for the staff-volunteer relationship.

6.2.3.1 One to One Engagement and Feedback strategies

It is possible to state that one-on-one interactions with the volunteers is one of the highly recommended techniques in order to get their input on how they run their daily operations and to address any obstacles. The same was echoed by Eisner et al. (2009) recommendation that staff members in non-governmental organizations should keep in regular contact with volunteers in order to guarantee efficient operations. This allows staff to communicate with volunteers a clear understanding of what is required of them on both ends.

The majority of volunteers who participated in interviews stated that they were regularly contacted by their supervisors via one-on-one check-in sessions. It was asserted that meetings were held at least once a month, during which their supervisors may interact with them and seek their input on the duties that have been allocated to them. A volunteer in CRS has expressed her delight in her experience with her supervisor in the organization, through which he managed to arrange one-to-one check-ins with her throughout her volunteering program. He also ensured having regular meetings whenever possible to ensure smooth operations. She stated that:

“There is always a regular check-in with my supervisor, discussing what I need to learn and what I need to develop. It is not like he sees that I am working on a task that I already fit in, rather, they believe it is an open learning environment and they encourage you to ask for what you want. For example, in my first check-in meeting, I spoke with my supervisor that I would like to deal more with the refugees or to be involved in the interviews of refugees or the data verification activities. I eventually engaged in on-field activities because he genuinely listened to my feedback.” (Interviewee 3, Volunteer, April 2024)

The volunteer’s comment shows the impact that regular check-in and attention to the individuals’ feedback can have on the volunteer's overall experience and ensure effective communication. Supervisors in this organization have demonstrated an adequate understanding of the volunteers’ needs and succeeded in implementing the changes based on the feedback received.

Another example of an effective engagement and feedback mechanism was also shown in the case of the volunteer in CRS. The volunteers have highlighted the NGO's personalized guidance on her area of improvement. The volunteers joined the six-month program in different projects in the organization. She had a particular area of improvement in her English writing skills, which was worked on by her supervisors. She stated that:

“During my volunteering experience, I informed my supervisors of my weakness in English writing, and they have worked with me to improve this weakness. My supervisor has requested that I keep sending him emails on a regular basis, with the aim of improving my English skills. They were very considerate and helpful. My English skills were relatively improved not to a great extent though due to time constraints (...) The staff at this organization were really helpful and nice that I really want to go back again either as a staff or a volunteer.” (Interviewee 5, Volunteer, April 2024)

The interviewee demonstrated the effectiveness of her supervisor's communication techniques and their efficiency in understanding her needs and developing her area of weakness within their daily operations. Her experience proves how crucial it is to focus on the direct communication between the staff and volunteers, precisely the volunteer's direct supervisors. Accordingly, in this study one to one engagement concept as part of the supervision technique is crucial to implementing an effective and efficient volunteering model. The findings also emphasize Boezeman and Ellemers's (2014) assertion that volunteers feel valued and respected by their leaders within the non-profit organization when they show encouragement and support, voicing their ideas. Hence, Boezeman and Ellemers (2014) recommended in their study that NGOs encourage respectful leadership behavior, supporting volunteers and assisting them in their daily tasks, communicating the effectiveness of the voluntary work, and encouraging volunteers to voice their opinions within the organizations.

6.2.3.2 Organizational Policies and Codes of Conduct

Clearly defined policies and rules help volunteers in an organization to understand what is expected from the volunteers and what is expected of them. A well-structured, balanced code of conduct that includes all the ethical standards and behavioral expectations, precisely within the international humanitarian NGOs, is crucial. The international humanitarian NGOs involve a large number of activities that are very sensitive to the organization and the country. With data on refugees, details on national crises, and other sensitive information that are highly needed by unauthorized

parties like gray journals or social media content makers, it is mandatory to set specific rules and procedures to ensure accountability and confidentiality. Nevertheless, the policies and regulations have to regulate the NGO's staff and supervisors' authority and actions. A former staff in ERC has elaborated a well-managed code of conduct currently implemented in the organization. He emphasized the role of having a clear policy that all participants of the organization are aware of and follow its clauses. Precisely, when volunteering doesn't allow an official contract between the volunteer and the organization for legal reasons. He elaborated :

“Without putting too much pressure on them, we at the ERC are acutely aware of what it means to be a volunteer and what our organization may fairly expect from them. We must guarantee information confidentiality, quality, dedication, and other crucial elements precisely because the ERC operates in a sensitive environment and needs skilled volunteers. To bridge the gap between the volunteers and the ERC, we have created a "code of conduct" that describes the rights and obligations of volunteers. Both sides have signed this code, establishing a framework that is acceptable to both of them. These guidelines could be anything from following the scheduled times for activities to reporting to the team leader any instances of non-participation in advance, being on time, protecting the privacy of data, and avoiding conflicts when performing tasks and maintaining equipment. Our dedicated volunteers and I can work together harmoniously and effectively thanks to this methodical approach.” (Interviewee 8, Volunteer, May 2024)

It is expected that a written document that clarifies all party's duties, obligations, and rights, precisely to ensure an effective, transparent environment for volunteers, is crucial. The ERC code of conduct shows an effective example of a framework for communication between staff and volunteers. It manages supervision techniques and ensures equal treatment for all volunteers throughout the organization. Through clear rules and policies on what was expected from the volunteers, volunteers can ensure systematic operation and avoid any unfavorable type of supervision.

The Former staff member has also added how they have initiated this code of conduct through workshops, case studies, and customized questionnaires to both volunteers and staff.

“Through workshops with participants from several governorates, a collaborative approach resulted in the creation of the code of conduct form. We assembled two or three staff people who work closely with the volunteers, as well as volunteers from each governorate. These individuals were split up into two groups, and the first group was given the assignment of deciding what moral obligations and voluntary activities they would follow in the ERC. The other group was asked to list the rights they believed to be legitimate for themselves as well as the ideal organization for which they already work or hope to work. Following the group discussions, we carefully considered which rights would be practicable to execute as we collated all of the comments. After that, we made final revisions to the text in order to

prioritize the most important components that would help the volunteers and the organization develop a positive and mutually beneficial relationship.” (Interviewee 8, Volunteer, May 2024)

The methods used by the organization to create a link between the staff and volunteers' ideas and opinions in the initiation phase are tremendous. The rules were not just imposed; rather, they were created in a cooperative process that included input from both sides. The final outcome was a set of guidelines that the volunteers and employees who would be working for the organization had generally agreed upon. The staff would be expected to oversee and ensure that the rules are effectively implemented and adhered to, and the volunteers would be required to obey them. Through establishing this collaboration and support from all parties involved, the organization has proven that it is really dedicated to establishing a peaceful and efficient volunteer program.

The experiences presented in this part align with the expectations set by Boezeman & Ellemers (2014) regarding NGOs as highly sensitive entities with non-material goals that enhance society and improve people's lives by having leaders who uphold the organization's moral principles. The former employees of ERC highlighted how the organization upheld strong moral and ethical standards, which were then shared with the volunteers and encouraged them to adopt an efficient volunteer model. The one-to-one engagement, and the organization system and code of conduct as essential factors of this study's framework. The analysis also sheds light on prospective areas for development as well as any discrepancies or gaps in the suggested practices put out by Lough and Turner (2012), and Cho et al. (2020).

6.3 Volunteer Lifecycle Management

Having demonstrated the factors that motivate or hinder the volunteers, their family and friends perspectives, and the relationship between them and their superiors in the organization, it is crucial to understand how the volunteering management system employed by the NGO influences volunteering engagement. An adequate volunteer management model should provide a work environment that promotes a relationship of mutual benefit between volunteers and staff in an organization and seek improved operations (Falasca and Zobel, 2012). This section mainly examines the current HR

techniques that international humanitarian NGOs employ to recruit, engage, train, recognize, and retain volunteers. According to Hager and Brudney (2004), NGOs have to follow appropriate management techniques that match the organization's vision and objective, following an adequate HR management system that supports the facilities, culture, and volunteer experiences. Analyzing the HR management's current practices provides insights into how effective or defective the system could be and how it eventually impacts the volunteers. The volunteer lifecycle management part is divided into three subdivisions: first, the recruitment strategies and techniques and their influence in attracting new, adequate volunteers. Second, uncovering the NGOs' engagement, training, and recognition strategies and techniques and measuring their effectiveness. Last but not least, the NGOs' programs and techniques for volunteer retention.

6.3.1 Recruitment Strategies and Techniques

Unleashing the current strategies and processes occurring in international humanitarian NGOs, an initial analysis of the recruitment policies and methods currently employed is needed. Attracting, selecting, and onboarding volunteers in the Egyptian community is not the easiest, considering the Egyptian culture and ecosystem's special characteristics (CIVICUS, 2005). Nevertheless, an effective recruitment approach may lead to effectively attracting volunteers, capturing various benefits that volunteers provide to NGOs while avoiding sacrificing NGOs' administrative burdens (Hernandez et al., 2021). This section analyzes the current practices of attracting, selecting, and onboarding volunteers currently employed by international humanitarian NGOs, setting the research context in understanding how these techniques influence the volunteer-life cycle management and the volunteering model.

6.3.1.1 Attracting Volunteers

Attracting volunteers' methods varies from one NGO to another. Volunteers interviewed in this study advised that they have been attracted to join the voluntary programs through social media posts, NGOs' websites, recommendations by their friends or a surrounding community, or from booths for the NGOs available on their campuses. The availability of the NGOs' volunteering demands on the organization's platforms, such as its Facebook page or the official website, helps in attracting volunteers. The utilization of information technology, according to Arnon et al. (2023), can contribute

to volunteer recruitment and retention by using a variety of websites and applications to make volunteering possibilities easily publicized. An interviewee who had volunteered for an international humanitarian NGO disclosed that she was familiar with the organization and its activities via social media, namely its Facebook page. In response to the researcher's inquiries on how she found out about the volunteer opportunity and why she chose to join this particular organization, she replied as follows:

“Since I was interested in volunteering in the field of humanitarian aid, I looked it up online and posted queries in the volunteering Hub Facebook group. There, I discovered that CRS's 6-month volunteering program had a lot of positive feedback. I applied through their website because I was excited about the prospect, and they phoned me for an interview.” (Interviewee 3, Volunteer, April 2024)

The interviewee's comment emphasizes the role of social media in attracting volunteers, it shows how the volunteers have been attracted to the NGO through reviews from other volunteers on the Facebook pages. Her experience, shed light on the importance of NGOs' publicizing and advertising of their volunteering opportunities on social media as well as maintaining a positive reputation among other volunteers. Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter have been demonstrated by Kim et al. (2014) as important instruments for technological improvement in disseminating information about volunteer requests from NGOs and other goals.

Another experience with one of the volunteers in ERC on how she was acquainted with the organization's volunteering opportunities, she elaborated that it was her professor in her college, who himself was a volunteer, promoting different volunteering opportunities in this organization. She commented that:

“A professor at my university invited me to attend an orientation day for volunteers at the ERC in 2016, during my first year of college. The professor, who had previously volunteered at the Red Crescent, urged us to visit the organization in order to find out more about their volunteer possibilities and to acquire a free first aid lesson.” (Interviewee 2, Volunteer, April 2024)

In the interviewee's case, word-of-mouth—especially from university professors—was the attraction factor. The volunteer's attraction to this specific organization's volunteering program resulted from the advice of her professor. Another advantage that had been offered to the volunteers was the first aid training that the Red Crescent provided for newcomers.

Promoting the volunteering opportunities of an organization and attracting volunteers were further outlined by the respondent who is a former NGO staff member. He emphasized that volunteers might also be established through the physical existence of the NGO on university campuses, sports clubs, or malls. Advertising volunteering possibilities among the youth through college groups, professors, and booths was a key approach by the organization he worked in. He clarified as follows:

“A specific team of our organization visits universities to promote the volunteering activities at ERC. Similar to the "Osar" [family] at the universities, we just founded the ERC club, which is presently active at Galala University, 6th October University, and Delta University. We have a permanent office at these universities that conducts certain operations and activities as well as attracts new volunteers. In addition, we are currently collaborating with MOSS units in the majority of the public universities to prompt our volunteering opportunities.” (Interviewee 8, Former NGO staff, May 2024)

The organization's approaches to attracting encouraged volunteers vary from one organization to another. According to the above-mentioned quote from the former staff, the organization chose to exist physically in the youth's education settings, rather than prompting the opportunities just through its online platform or through social media. Collaborating with the MOSS offices is also one of the initiatives of the organization to build a communication channel with the youth at public universities.

In conclusion, the study findings contribute to understanding the current organizational practices that show various recruiting strategies and methods. The interviewee's responses reveal the current attracting techniques employed by international humanitarian NGOs, including posting information about available opportunities for volunteering on social media, the organization's official website, or online. Advertising volunteering opportunities through social media platforms and online was critically analyzed and studied by Arnon et al. (2023). According to Arnon et al. (2023), social media is a perfect tool for attracting and engaging volunteers because of the social nature of the work of NGOs and the need to communicate with a wide range of individuals. By utilizing the thesis conceptual framework and the literature recommendations as a road map, international humanitarian NGOs may evaluate their procedures to enhance volunteers' attraction techniques by posting information about available opportunities for volunteering on social media, the organization's official website, or online. "Information technologies can also contribute to volunteer recruitment and

retention. Various technologies support recruitment, including applications or sites matching volunteers with positions, enabling easy publicity for volunteering opportunities" (Arnon et al., 2023, p. 12). Furthermore, attracting employees can be accomplished by word-of-mouth recommendations and evaluations from colleagues or people with similar volunteer experiences. Lastly, it may be conveyed to young people through physical NGO booths, permanent offices, or partnerships with existing MOSS offices.

6.3.1.2 Selecting Volunteers

Selecting the most suitable candidates from the pool of applications is essential once the NGO's volunteering opportunities are successfully promoted and volunteers are successfully recruited. In terms of abilities, expertise, and interests, the most suitable candidates are those who most closely align with the objectives and vision of the organization. Nevertheless, selecting volunteers to appropriately match the organization's objectives remains challenging. According to Cho. Et al. (2020), most of the volunteers may have to interact with people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds; they may also operate under pressure and in intense environments. Thus, it is significant to comprehend and deeply analyze the applicant's profiles before hiring or recruiting the individuals to the organization, aiming to avoid any unfavorable situations afterward or having individuals discontinue their participation in the organization. An interviewee who has participated in a volunteering program in CRS has elaborated on the importance of the selection process, precisely when it comes to matching the individuals' skills or previous knowledge to the volunteering opportunities. Answering the question of what changes or recommendations would make to raise volunteerism in the organization, she demonstrated the following:

"When I joined CRS, they asked me about my education studies, and they allocated me to a program accordingly. I am an English literature graduate who previously worked as an English teacher, and they have chosen me to join an Educational program specialized in teaching unaccompanied children from refugees. If I recommend something to the organization to follow in regard to its volunteering management, it would be to publicize more about the volunteering opportunities, so they can have the opportunity to better select the volunteers to match the program requirements and avoid individuals who do not believe in the cause of the organization or vulnerable to deal in sensitive situations."
(Interviewee 3, Volunteer, April 2024)

The participant has also included an example of how important it is to define the volunteers' beliefs and attitudes in the selection process.

"I have heard from a colleague inside the organization about a volunteer applicant who, during the interview, addressed the management, expressing her lack of belief in the organization's objective and her belief that the children of refugees shouldn't be allowed to attend school in Egypt." (*Interviewee 3, Volunteer, April 2024*)

The interviewee's comments provide strong justification for why NGOs have to be very critical and selective when recruiting volunteers. International humanitarian NGOs provide sensitive and critical services to a very vulnerable population. It is essential to focus on its selection and recruitment process.

Another illustration of the selection process employed by an international humanitarian NGO, showing the criticality and sensitivity of the process, is provided by former staff in the NGO. He elaborated on the organization application form, emphasizing the details and questions stated in the form and how the organization uses this information internally to match the activities with the volunteers' demographics, skills, knowledge, and other qualifications.

"We have two membership application forms in the organization - one for new volunteers and one for renewals - for both Egyptian and non-Egyptian individuals. The volunteer fills out this form with their existing skills, interests, and knowledge to indicate what they would like to join and where they see themselves fitting in. To learn more about the offered services, there is an orientation day offered to interested volunteers attend. This allows them to know all the details about these services. Afterwards, we review this information and match it with the department's requirements such as a specific number of hours or specific gender. We then start announcing this activity with the requirements like the educational background or skills. In case we didn't find matching skills within our current applicant's volunteers, we start going to universities to advertise for volunteers and ask for the qualifications we need." (Interviewee 8, Former NGO Staff, May 2024)

The interviewee has also emphasized the values of the organization, impartiality, and inclusion, in the organization selection process. Participants who are differently abled are welcome to volunteer in the organization by matching their abilities with the organization's programs and needs. He commented:

"All types of volunteers are welcome to apply, including those who have unique conditions. Instead, in order to offer first aid instruction in sign language, we have offered staff members with specialized training in first aid as well as sign language instructors to provide this service. We adhere to the seven International Red Cross and Red Crescent

Movement principles, including impartiality and humanity. (...) To be impartial is to treat everyone equally, without regard to their gender, color, religion, or philosophy, and this is what we follow in ERC." (Interviewee 8, Former Staff, May 2024)

The narrative explains how the ERC organization has followed a structured selection process that includes a membership form that requires detailed information from the applicants, pre-joining orientation sessions to introduce the organization's activities, and skills matching process to match the volunteer's interests, skills, demographic information to the organization's activities. The organization has also followed a welcoming and inclusive selection process, through which all individuals are welcome to join the organization as volunteers. The accumulating results from the participants' responses emphasizes the study conducted by Pointes of light (2014), highlighting the urgent need of the NGOs to identify social goals and objectives, so it can further select and recruit volunteers accordingly. Hager and Brudney (2004) has also supported to the suggested practices of involving volunteers in recruiting other volunteers. According to the scholars, this approach will improve volunteer involvement and satisfaction while also improving the recruitment process.

6.3.1.3 Hiring and Onboarding Volunteers

The organization often moves on to the recruiting and onboarding step of the recruitment process after properly publicizing the NGO's activities and selecting volunteers. After hiring the adequate chosen volunteers, the organization must ensure that the volunteers are properly onboarded. In this phase, an organized introduction and orientation procedure needs to be fulfilled. Introducing recently recruited volunteers to the organization through an orientation program helps ensure their smooth integration (Eisner et al., 2009). Volunteers have described their personal onboarding actual experiences in the organizations, through which one of the volunteers elaborated that she had five days of orientation sessions, through which the organization introduced its vision, current activities, and other general knowledge on what to consider when dealing with the organization's beneficiaries. She stated:

"Over the course of the six-month program, we attended almost monthly orientation meetings. The sessions include a variety of topics, such as who you should report to, psychological aspects to take into account while interacting with beneficiaries, how to handle furious beneficiaries, whom to contact for assistance in the event of an emergency, when to be firm and when to be compassionate, and more. These details have made it easier for us to operate efficiently as they

help us know what to do when performing tasks in an environment other than the office or alone without the guidance of a supervisor.” (Interviewee 10, Volunteer, May 2024)

The volunteer’s comment shows the significance of the orientation sessions provided to the volunteers, as part of the recruitment process. Not only limited to the introductory period during the first weeks of joining the organization but also it is extended to the rest of the period of participation. The more detailed the information that the organization provides during its onboarding process, the more efficient and effective the volunteers will perform.

A current staff in an international NGO has added to the orientation and onboarding process a suggestion for her organization to unify the dates of recruitment, in order to allow a systemic, structured orientation day to all new volunteers at once. She referred back her suggestion to the lack of a unified system across the organization, and that most of the onboarding activities are done separately by each department. She commented:

“Focusing on orientation needs to be more systematic. We also need to specify the time of year that we can recruit and orient volunteers. Talent management needs to be given more attention in order to better allocate the volunteers.” (Interviewee 9, NGO Staff, May 2024)

The staff comment emphasizes the necessity of more organized and methodical volunteer orientation procedures. She highly recommended defining an appropriate time to unify volunteer recruiting and orientation. The respondent also underlines the significance of enhanced talent management in order to more effectively assign volunteers according to their interests and skill sets.

The volunteer and NGO staff narratives demonstrate that these international humanitarian organizations have a recruiting procedure in place, even though there seems to be variation in how it is executed across organizations. This findings is in line with the thesis conceptual framework’s emphasis on the " recruitment process" as an essential component of volunteer management, which highlights the necessity of a deliberate and structured recruitment approach. Beginning with getting to know the organization, comprehending its mission and various initiatives, and learning how to interact with beneficiaries and who to report to, the process is crucial for ensuring effective volunteering model.

Furthermore, the findings align with the literature concepts of recruitment for effective participation in voluntary activities conducted by Hager and Brudney (2004). According to Hager and Brudney (2004), organizations may encounter difficulties in successfully retaining the volunteer workforce required to meet their goals of offering aid and support to their intended beneficiaries if they do not have a sufficient and well-structured recruitment process.

6.3.2 Uncovering the NGO's Engagement, Training, and Recognition Strategies

Keeping volunteers and NGO staff in productive cooperation after competent volunteers have been recruited becomes the major task (Hager and Brudney, 2004). Based on the literature, and after discussing the selection and recruitment process, the thesis framework includes delving deeper into examining the current strategies and processes employed by the international humanitarian NGOs and assess their influence on the volunteers' experience. Engagement and motivation, training, and recognition techniques are considered as main strategies in NGOs. In this context and reflecting to the NGOs' fundamental dependence on volunteers to make sure their operations function properly, and the criticality of volunteers as a crucial element for the successful delivery of services (Flood et al., 2005), it is essential to focus on volunteers' development and training. Consequently, the researcher aims to comprehensively examine the engagement and motivation strategies, training, and recognition, and their influence on volunteering satisfaction levels.

6.3.2.1 Engagement and Motivation Strategies

In order to guarantee long-term volunteer encouragement, NGOs must maintain a sufficient degree of volunteer involvement and motivation. The type of activities offered to volunteers to encourage them and keep them motivated during their participation period varies from one NGO to another. Some organizations follow a structured entertainment program for their volunteers, and others depend solely on the supervisors' ideas and efforts. During the interviews, the researcher explored various engagement and motivation practices from different individuals who have formerly worked or are currently working in an international humanitarian organization. Interviewees illustrated how their organization has participated with resources or assistance to increase the volunteer's motivation and level of engagement. A current employee clarified that rather than the organization, it is her personal responsibility to maintain the volunteers'

involvement, motivation, and feeling of belongingness. In order to affect the team's entire experience, she was trying to keep them motivated and improving. She said:

“When I have the capacity and time, I assign readings, learning points, training links, speeches, and training by other colleagues to the volunteers, which we then discuss as a team every Thursday. However, when we have a heavy workload, we are unable to provide all of these resources. (...) From my point of view, the most important factor that boosts the volunteers' sense of belonging is their perception that their voice matters and that they receive the same treatment as the NGO's staff do. However, when a volunteer feels excluded from their supervisor or the staff as a whole, get overburdened with tasks, and believe they are the only ones handling the work, they become traumatized, depressed, and disengaged, which negatively affects their sense of belonging.”(Interviewee 9, NGO Staff, May 2024)

In order to guarantee that volunteers have a pleasant experience, the interviewee emphasizes the significance of regular and organized volunteer engagement strategies, which include training and resource access as well as the requirement for efficient administration and oversight. The interviewee also highlights the importance of inclusiveness, and making sure that volunteers feel that their voices are heard. She does also, however, demonstrate that excessive workloads and uneven volunteer treatment can present difficulties and even create a vicious circle of stress and discontent.

Another former staff in an international humanitarian NGO has expanded on his background in the field. He agreed that it is significant for volunteers to feel devoted and loyal to the organization by participating in various events that the organization sponsors. Through his experience with ERC, he illustrated that the organization provides its volunteers with a wide range of activities tailored to suit their interests. ERC, according to the interviewee, has 28 youth clubs in 27 different governorates. Each youth club is considered a safe, entertaining place created for the volunteers to practice different activities. He further elaborated:

“Youth clubs are created for volunteers; they may access the premises 24/7. The club offers several activities such as studios, an activity hall, a conference space, and even a gym. A football field is also available for those who are interested in football playing. There is a café where you may sit and mingle with other volunteers. The club is mostly beneficial for the organization's volunteers because most of them are not members of external clubs in Egypt. We provide a safe environment for the volunteers to engage with other individuals with the same interests. The organization does have an specialized public relations and HR team that is responsible for events, and trips, and sometimes they offer training programs. The HR department is in charge of providing capacity-building programs like language or Excel courses. This makes the person feel more like they belong in the organization. The Red Cross and Red Crescent International Movement, which has volunteer opportunities in 192 countries, is regarded as the safest

place for young people to be. This space is available for volunteers on every campus” (Interviewee 8, Former NGO Staff, May 2024)

A safe environment with a physical location and several activities was the ERC approach to engage, involve, and motivate its volunteers. The interviewee's response explains how the organization established a systematic framework of providing diverse events in various venues to attract volunteers in fields beyond the organization's basic humanitarian aid operations. The responses are consistent with the "engageability" theory developed by Arnon et al. (2013), which describes nonprofit organizations' capacity to manage, inspire, and engage volunteers in order to optimize their potential and maintain their volunteer workforce. Lough and Turner (2017) also further agreed that in order to foster a culture of service in organizations through the implementation of practices and policies that encourage and reward workplace volunteering, it's critical to focus on the unique needs of volunteers, such as a sense of social belonging and self-defense.

6.3.2.2 Training Strategies

Continuing to advocate for adequate strategies that affect the volunteers' engagement and performance in the organization, it is crucial to understand what training strategies are currently being employed by the NGOs and how it is affecting the volunteers. According to the literature, providing effective training to volunteers is essential to improve their abilities and productivity at work (Cho et al., 2020). In response to the researcher's question, "Has the organization provided you with any training or assistance to improve your abilities and effectiveness as a volunteer?" volunteers have discussed their training experiences inside international humanitarian NGOs. One of the volunteers working in the information technology services department at ERC has described in detail the non-technical training options the organization provides, highlighting how unique they are. He stated that:

“Although I was not provided with technical training due to being considered an expert IT participant, I derived other valuable benefits from my involvement. Attending conferences and engaging in personal branding initiatives have allowed me to establish a strong presence within the IFRC community and gain recognition as a dedicated consultant in the field. Being associated with such a prestigious international organization has significantly enhanced my personal reputation and involvement in meaningful acts of giving, particularly through my participation in operational tasks.”(Interviewee 1, Volunteer, April 2024)

This quotation emphasizes how crucial professional development as well as training are, even for experienced IT professionals. Even though the person did not receive official technical training, they were still able to gain a great deal of value from other activities like going to conferences and developing their own identity. Through these actions, the person was able to build a strong reputation and presence within the IFRC community, which improved their status as a committed consultant in the humanitarian sector.

NGOs' representatives have also been asked how their organization supports the volunteers through technical or nontechnical training during their volunteering period. An NGO representative has elaborated on the ERC exceptional training, stating that:

“The training that ERC offers exceeds those provided by any other organization, particularly considering the sensitive nature of the work. Red Crescent is not a charitable organization that arranges for clothes distribution or, as everyone else does, packs and distributes Ramadan boxes. There are two types of training that we offer: general training like psychological assistance and first aid, and specialized training like gender violence.”
(Interviewee 8t, NGO Staff, May 2024)

The narratives show how training programs vary according to the organization's type of operations. The interviewee emphasizes the criticality and sensitivity of the ERC operation, and how they provide training programs that are customized to fit these operations. The organization offers different types of training that are crucially needed in dealing with the vulnerable beneficiaries of the NGO, precisely during crisis situations. The participants' narratives corresponds to Arnon et al. (2023) assertion that training is a significant HRM practice and need to be advocated in the organizations. Eisner et al. (2002) also highlighted the need for training, stressing that volunteers must receive training in order to comprehend the organizations they participate in.

6.3.2.3 Approaches to Volunteer Recognition and Development

Organizations may provide rewarding or recognition methods in addition to engagement and training measures to improve the volunteer experience. To recognize volunteers' contributions, encourage them to continue working with the organization, and help those in need in the community, NGOs may implement a well-established rewards scheme

(Peterson, 2004). According to Peterson (2004), rewards, recognition, and commendations that highlight a participant's voluntary work may be the most effective way to attract status-driven volunteers to participate. Interviewees were asked if they had experienced a special recognition program during their volunteering experience. The question was also directed to the NGOs' representatives to examine the current practices of reward and recognition. A volunteer who joined the CRS six-month program shared her experience with recognition with the organization. She said:

"After the program, we were shown appreciation via letters of reference or recognition. The letter might help you apply to other organizations. One more rewarding idea is that volunteers who have excelled at the organization are given priority when it comes to full-staff recruiting. (Volunteer Interviewee 4, April 2024)

The volunteer's experience demonstrates the rewarding strategy employed by CRS to help volunteers prosper in the future after joining the organization. Recognition letters, which offer verifiable proof of the applicant's efforts and accomplishments, may be quite helpful as strong recommendations when applying for jobs at other companies. The volunteer has also added to the organization's reward mechanism the opportunity to recruit excellent employees. As mentioned, the organization places a high priority on hiring full-time volunteers who have shown remarkable performance during their engagement. This shows that the program not only gives participants valuable job experience but also paves the way for committed and successful participants to eventually move into permanent positions within the company.

Sharing the experience from an NGO perspective, an NGO representative elaborated on the recognition mechanism of his organization. The staff member has explained how the organization rewards those who demonstrate an effective and efficient model of volunteering. He stated that

"We have extended our gratitude beyond the conventional certificate of appreciation. We are now showing our appreciation for the exceptional volunteers by giving them priority on the waiting list for specialized training courses, encouraging them to lead a team, and arranging for them to travel for conferences or seminars." (Interviewee 8, Former NGO staff, May 2024)

The interviewee's quote demonstrates an effective method for the organization to identify and appreciate outstanding volunteers. The organization is practicing a rewarding technique that goes beyond the traditional certificates of appreciation. Through the provision of extra and meaningful forms of acknowledgment, they exhibit a sincere dedication to appreciating the skills and efforts of their volunteer by allowing them to travel and attend conferences and seminars. Which boosts the volunteer's motivation to work more effectively. Additionally, the organization encourages high-performing volunteers to continue their growth through specialized training courses. Finally, the organization offers possibilities for leadership and representation, which develops the volunteers' leadership abilities by giving them the opportunity to assume more significant positions and responsibilities.

In conclusion, this section aimed to review the current practices of the engagement, training, and recognition techniques employed by international humanitarian NGOs and assess their impact on the level of engagement in volunteering. The findings present the organizations efforts to engage, train, and recognize its current volunteers. It provides insight into the approaches used, the effectiveness or lack thereof of the existing procedures, and the ways in which these approaches either benefit or hinder the volunteers. The processes vary from structured and systematic practices done by the organization to the volunteers on a regular basis and in a fixed environment to personal initiatives done when needed. Previous literature has supported the same context, encouraging management and staff of non-governmental organizations to think diversely about volunteering, include volunteers in their strategic planning, and reconsider how their organization should develop, train, and value volunteer talent in order to take full advantage of the opportunities that volunteering presents (Eisner et al. 2009). Cho et al. (2020) has also asserts that rewards and recognition were attributed with the highest degree of positive management practices, trailed by schedule flexibility, empowerment, social contact, orientation, and training. To conclude, based on the comprehensive literature review and the findings from participant interviews, this study highlights the significance of engagement, training, and recognition methods as substantial components of volunteer life cycle management and effective volunteering model concepts.

6.3.3 Current Retention Strategies Employed by NGOs

The role of HR policies and strategies has been outlined throughout the study, focusing on the volunteers' encouragement and motivation. The process starts with adequately publicizing the volunteering opportunities, encouraging and motivating volunteers, and retaining effective calibers. According to Abushadi et al. (2012) volunteering management model, volunteering management initially starts at the selecting and recruiting phase, moves toward training, and engaging, and finally ends with retaining volunteers. Retention is one of the significant phases in the volunteering management cycle. Volunteer retention is essential because it lowers hiring and training expenses and promotes organizational reputation and effectiveness. Volunteers discontinue their participation in an NGO for different reasons, and some of these reasons refer back to personal justifications. Other justifications are related to the NGO policies, staff, or type of operations. In both cases how the NGO reacts after receiving the volunteer notification varies. Thus, it is essential to comprehend the HR strategies implemented by international humanitarian NGOs in terms of retention and link it to the roadmap to an effective volunteerism module represented in the conceptual framework.

A current staff member in an international humanitarian NGO has explained how the organization functions when receiving a notification that a volunteer would like to leave the organization. Elaborating on how the organization failed to retain the volunteers, she said:

“Nothing can be done if a volunteer decides they no longer want to work with CRS. We let him proceed with quitting the company. This year is the first year we have included the need that volunteers notify the supervisor before departing—not only as a legal term—to the scope of work. As this is not an employment contract he is not legally required to do so. The only thing I can do to volunteer to keep him on board if he is leaving but has shown himself to be a capable worker is to transfer him to another department if availability allows.” (Interviewee Nine, NGO Staff, May 2024)

The staff's quotation illustrates the difficulties and limitations NGOs encounter when volunteers decide to leave the organization. The interviewer explained that the volunteers' decision to leave the organization, they, unfortunately, did nothing about it and accepted his resignation. A condition of an early notification was only made this year to oblige the volunteers to notify their supervisor prior to leaving. The only possible alternative the organization offers to retain volunteers is the possibility of moving a skilled volunteer to another department in the event that a suitable position

becomes available. These policies employed by the organization are the available ones offered to keep the volunteers' knowledge and experience within the organization. Ultimately, this comment emphasizes how fragile volunteer relationships may be and how little power NGOs have over volunteers who decide to quit, even after they have made significant contributions. The organization must strike a balance between striving to retain talent when it can and honoring the autonomy of the volunteers.

Another experience was shared by another international humanitarian NGO on how they retain volunteers, He further elaborated that.

“If an individual decides to leave the organization, they must complete an exit form and provide a reason to explain their departure. We provide the volunteers the autonomy to choose which activities they want to join and how long they choose to volunteer. We don't require volunteers to be physically present all the time; instead, we only require four hours per month or four hours per year. This means that volunteers are not required to leave completely; instead, they can postpone their participation in voluntary activities until a time that is convenient for them. Our organization offers a variety of flexible alternatives that we begin discussing with the volunteers before they leave.” (Interviewee 8, Former NGO Staff, May 2024)

The interviewee narratives show the approaches this particular organization follows in implementing retention and exit procedures. The organization follows an existing form that allows the volunteers to justify why they are leaving, aiming at learning the reason behind voluntary resignation and working accordingly in the future. Additionally, the organization offers flexible alternatives for the volunteers to choose from and indicates the time and duration of their wish they want to dedicate to volunteering. The organization's adaptable strategies offer the volunteers the chance to return back to volunteering whenever it is convenient.

The results of this section, which were based on observations of the different retention strategies employed by several international humanitarian NGOs, are considerably distinct from the strategies that scholars in the field recommend. The recent study's findings contradict to the argument made by Cho et al. (2020), who highlighted the necessity of enhancing volunteer experiences to guarantee their continued involvement with the organization. Similarly, the study's findings contradict the suggestions made by Hager and Burdney (2004), who argued that

professional standards for volunteer management should be implemented in order to ensure volunteer retention. The empirical findings and the scholarly literature reflected in the body of this thesis contrast, indicating the need for a critical reconsideration of the volunteer management techniques used by humanitarian NGOs. Nevertheless, this contradiction highlight the significance to combine the best practices suggested by the existing literature review into an comprehensive conceptual framework. The paradigm used in this study acts as a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical observations to determine the best volunteer management strategies.

To summarize, the volunteer life cycle management section aimed to understand the current processes and strategies employed by the international humanitarian NGOs, aiming at comprehending the facilitators and challenges encountered while implementing these techniques and its impact on the volunteering level of engagement. The findings demonstrate that the recruitment techniques employed by international humanitarian NGOs include different types of attracting volunteers and publicizing the organization's volunteering program that corresponds with the scholarly recommendations on effective recruitment and selection processes (Abushadi et al., 2012, Arnon et al. 2022, Hernandez et al., 2021, Lough and Truner, 2017, and Peterson, 2004). Following the recruitment process, the engagement, training, and recognition techniques employed by the organizations show that organizations are using different methods to engage and motivate their volunteers, through which some of them have succeeded in achieving their objectives of increasing the volunteers' sense of belongingness and motivation. The current practices align considerably with the scholars' suggested models, precisely Eisner et al. (2009) suggestion to focus on advocating for the volunteering programs through social media platforms. Finally, the findings in the retention methods section show various organizational implementations employed by the international humanitarian NGOs that include challenging methods for retaining volunteers. Common approaches included offering alternative tasks, flexible hours, and minimum participation periods. In order to guarantee a good match between the objectives of the organization and the volunteers' talents and motivations, the framework emphasizes the necessity for NGOs to precisely define their volunteer attraction, selecting processes using membership applications or matching skills and interests' methods, and hiring and onboarding techniques. Conclusively, the study enhances the conceptual framework's capacity to precisely represent the complicated dynamics and experiences of volunteer lifecycle management in international humanitarian

NGOs by integrating the research findings with its essential elements. The conceptual framework may be further developed and refined with the incorporation of experience-based insights, guaranteeing its applicability and relevance in directing these organizations' volunteer management practices.

Chapter Seven. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the volunteering barriers and facilitators that affect volunteering engagement in international humanitarian NGOs, considering the impact of the Egyptian ecosystem. The thesis mainly aimed at answering the research question, how do the volunteering challenges and facilitators influence volunteer engagement, with a specific focus on the international humanitarian NGOs operating in Egypt? The findings show that various interrelated factors influence volunteering engagement levels. Cultural, educational, and economic characteristics have concluded to have a major influence on volunteer participation, precisely within the Egyptian context. The international humanitarian NGOs' sensitive and critical operations and characteristics also played a crucial role in shaping volunteerism participation. The findings also show that the volunteering management processes and strategies are broad and different. Thus, it has to be adequately implemented to ensure effective implementation.

Through a detailed examination of the volunteerism engagement landscape within international humanitarian NGOs, it was possible to identify several motivating factors among the volunteers that drive them to volunteer and contribute their time and energy to support vulnerable communities. These factors include psychological gain and self-altruism, the desire to develop knowledge and skills through professional experience, and social integration within the community. The volunteers also highlighted some other obstacles, including time limits in certain NGOs' restricted volunteer programs, financial considerations, and a mismatch between the activities allocated and the volunteers' capabilities. Interviews with the volunteers have also demonstrated a clear relationship between the opinions and perceptions of their family and friends on volunteering and their own experiences volunteering, as well as between promoting and discouraging volunteering.

Following considering the several aspects that affect volunteers' motivations and hindrances to join volunteering activities, it was crucial to comprehend the complexity of the interaction between staff and volunteers and how it influences the volunteer experience. In this context, the study explored the dynamics of current existing interactions between the staff and volunteers of the NGOs and how they affected the participant's experience working for

international humanitarian NGOs. The communications that occur regularly, the nature of the duties, and the methods of supervision have all been found to affect the staff-volunteer relationship. Multiple facets of good communication have been highlighted, including promoting non-hierarchical work settings, maintaining positive, fruitful collaboration between staff and volunteers, and staff readiness to accommodate volunteers' requests. The volunteers' experiences have also shown incompetent partnerships. The excessive number of volunteers on a team, financial constraints imposed by donors, inadequate staffing levels, and an organization's inability to strike a balance between staff and volunteers are all issues that have a negative impact on the relationship between staff and volunteers and the overall volunteer experience. The impact of assigning tasks to the volunteers was also emphasized, highlighting the necessity to follow both engaging volunteers in the NGOs' main tasks while avoiding delegation and volunteer burnout. Both methods were highly recommended to be practiced parallel to ensure effective communication. A structured code of conduct was also found to be utilized as an effective supervision technique by one of the international humanitarian NGOs, regulating the volunteers' working hours, and escalations hierarchy, and formulating a clear framework for the volunteers to work through a structured system in the organization. Additionally, a one-to-one engagement that staff followed with the volunteers, demonstrated the effectiveness of supervisor-volunteer communication techniques and the great influence it can have on understanding the needs and developing the area of volunteers' weakness.

Finally, the thesis has contributed to the understanding of the various methods currently employed by international humanitarian NGOs in terms of finding, engaging, training, identifying, and retaining volunteers. The HR processes and strategies the organizations are using have reflected the efforts made in managing the volunteers' lifecycle. It started by understanding how the international humanitarian NGOs are currently recruiting volunteers and identifying the various attraction techniques currently utilized. Social media, online platforms, word of mouth, and physical advertising such as NGOs' booths or permanent offices were all methods of advertising that the NGOs used to attract volunteers. The volunteers' narratives have explained various selection methods such as membership forms, pre-joining orientations, and others, through which some of the organizations have used these methods to match their requirements with the volunteers' skills and demographic information. The recruitment processes currently employed by the NGOs vary from one organization to another. Nevertheless, the process remains essential for both the volunteers and the NGOs to

understand the organization's vision, mission, and activities while having information on the volunteer's skills and capabilities. Failing to appropriately implement an adequate recruitment process may result in the lack of proper volunteers and failure to achieve the organization's objectives or efficiently support its beneficiaries. Other HR strategies have been also identified such as engagement, training, and recognition. It was concluded that NGOs can effectively apply engagement strategies by promoting several activities to involve volunteers such as internal activities assigned by the supervisor to the volunteers, or external activities created by the organization such as the youth clubs prompted by ERC. Training programs were also identified in different organizations, offering several opportunities for volunteers to learn and develop their knowledge and skills. Training may include training sessions on the organization's current activities and methods to deal with beneficiaries, or other general training that may benefit the volunteers in the future. Rewarding and recognition techniques significance were highlighted by both the volunteers and the NGOs' staff, providing examples of how the international humanitarian NGOs conducted these techniques. Internal recognition, prompting to staff vacancies, and granting the opportunity to travel and attend conferences and seminars outside the country were all examples of how the organizations rewarded their qualified volunteers. Finally, the retention techniques highlight the success of the organization as well as the challenges faced with retaining volunteers by providing them with flexible scheduling, alternate duties, or minimal participation durations. While some organizations were successful in developing an effective retention system to identify the reasons why volunteers discontinue their involvement while offering alternatives in response, other organizations were unsuccessful in implementing the same into execution. It was noted that volunteers discontinuing their participation were doing so for various economic or personal reasons. However, it's still critical to find a satisfactory balance between respecting the volunteers' liberty and trying to retain talent when it exists.

In conclusion, this study has shed light on the distinctive characteristics and obstacles of volunteers in international humanitarian NGOs operating in Egypt. The study's conclusion fully aligns with the conceptual framework developed to guide the investigation. The findings indicate that cultural, educational, and economic factors significantly impact the likelihood of volunteerism. These findings highlight the importance of the Egyptian ecosystems on the

volunteering journey and are consistent with the "Cultural, Education, and Economic aspects" section of the conceptual framework. The thesis findings also show that NGOs need to tackle important volunteer management issues, such as hiring, training, and staff-volunteer relationships. This is also in line with the framework's "Volunteer life cycle management" component. Ultimately, the thesis study has shown the conceptual framework's relevance and application in directing the comprehension and analysis of volunteer management within the particular context of international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt by lining up the study's final conclusion with the framework's main ideas. The study highlights the importance of a professional and strategic approach to volunteer management in order to promote effective and long-lasting volunteer engagement. Lastly, by implementing the appropriate policies, processes, and best practices, international humanitarian NGOs in Egypt may more successfully use the potential of volunteers and overcome the barriers that hinder volunteer involvement. When developing a model to encourage volunteering, cultural, educational, and economic issues may be taken into account. Governments may also encourage volunteerism, using the volunteering models of Kenya, the United States of America, and Sri Lanka as examples. Governments should definitely move on with their national volunteering plan, which encourages involving young people in community service projects. Eventually, this work contributes to the relatively limited amount of information available on volunteering issues in the Egyptian context and establishes a foundation for further study in this field. The information gained can assist NGOs in creating targeted interventions and focusing their efforts on encouraging volunteers in Egypt, which would increase the nation's ability to provide humanitarian aid.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Interviews Questions to NGOs representatives:

- 1-How would you describe your organization's volunteer engagement level, and what procedures and tactics do your organization now use to handle volunteerism?
- 2- To what extent you depend on volunteers in your organization's main tasks?
- 3- What are the main obstacles to recruiting and overseeing volunteers that your organization must overcome?
- 4- How does your organization handle the difficulties in finding, preparing, and retaining volunteers?
- 5- How do you ensure volunteers' interests and abilities match the organization's aims and purposes?
- 6-What resources and assistance do your organization provide volunteers to increase their motivation and level of engagement?
- 7-How can you help volunteers in your organization feel like they belong and form a sense of community?
- 8-How do you evaluate the results and potency of your volunteer management techniques?
- 9-How your organization work on resolving and overcoming challenges associated with volunteering management within NGOs?
- 10- What prospects do you see for raising volunteerism levels in your company?

Appendix Two: Interviews Questions to Volunteers:

- 1- Could you elaborate on your volunteer experience with this humanitarian organization, including the tasks and positions you were given?
- 2-Why did you decide to volunteer for this particular organization?
- 3- What difficulties did you run into while volunteering, and how was the organization able to resolve them?
- 4-Has the organization provided you with any training or assistance to improve your abilities and effectiveness as a volunteer?

5- What is your opinion of the coordination and communication between the organization's staff and volunteers?

Please elaborate more on your relationship with your direct supervisor?

6-What type of recognition or incentives have you gotten for your voluntary work?

7-How do you think the company makes use of your interests and talents?

8-What changes or recommendations would you make to raise volunteerism in the organization?

9-What is your opinion of the organization's volunteer management techniques in terms of their overall impact and effectiveness?

10- How do you think "volunteerism" is considered among your community of family and friends? How many friends do you have that are currently volunteering?