

Media has been one of the very important tools that Women's Voices Programme has been relying on to get its message circulated and conveyed to the largest proportion of the Egyptian public. With this regard, the Programme has been very keen on using both classical and social media to both raise the awareness of the general public about the importance of female political participation and guide women who are willing to be engaged politically, but they lack the skills and tools.

Given that, Radio is one tools utilized by the Programme. The radio was chosen due to the crucial role it plays, especially in rural and less developed parts of Egypt where the social media has not yet fully penetrated. Egypt has around 75 radio stations, most of which are state-owned. In spite of the lack of official data, it was estimated that radio penetration rate is **between 17% and 19%**, amounting to around **17 million persons** listen to radio on **daily basis**.

The radio show launched help spread the Programme's message across Egypt reaching out to women and men beyond the direct beneficiaries that . To insure the maximum outreach for this show, ECWR has considered to main aspects; the **radio channel** through which the show is aired and the **timing and duration** of the show.

Regarding the radio channel, ECWR has chosen Sawt El-Arab to be its access point to the radio audience. Sawt El-Arab (Voice of the Arabs) is one of the first and most prominent Egyptian radio channels that is based in Cairo but reaches out to most of the other Arab countries. Cooperating with Swt El-Arab was perceived by Women's Voices Programme crew as a way **to sell the Programme's vision** to the public through a

medium that they trust, to increase the credibility of both the Programme and the message conveyed. As ECWR was keen on maximizing on the number of show audience, Swt El-Arab proposed to air the show in Ramadan to capitalize on the momentum of such a season.

Hia w Akhawatha (She & Her Sisters) was chosen to be the name of the show as it resembles the Snowball Effect approach that the Programme is adopting. Hia w Akhawatha is a **one-season** radio show that is composed of **30 episodes**, each episode lasts for **5 minutes** episodes and aired on daily basis. Through her interesting and engaging style of narrating, Ms. Nehad AbolKomsan was conveying **empowering and motivating messages** primarily for women, but also for men. Each of the episodes was trying to correct a certain misconception or providing a specific tip to help women overcome the obstacles they face on daily basis that can hinder their engagement in the public sphere.

Through these episodes, Ms. Nehad was trying to offer simple, yet new perceptions to a wide range of relevant social, economic, political and religious issues.

To balance the equation of the quality of the content provided with the simplicity and attractiveness of the messages conveyed, the **language used in the show was both simple and interactive**. Nehad, the show Presenter, was keen on using the question-answer technique to simplify the message delivered and to better convince the audience with this message. In the 29th and 30th episodes of the show when both the designated role of Local Councils and the conditions of candidacy were discussed, Nehad was assuming the presence of the audience in the studio and she was trying to answer all the questions that they may raise.

A: Local Councils are extremely important and it can be even more important than the parliament, do you know why?

B: First from a number-perspective, Local Councils have around 60,000 seats in comparison to the Parliament that has only 600 seats. Second, with the new constitution, local councils more power than before such as “interrogation” which is the most important weapon for any council supervising the executive branch.

A: What does “interrogation” mean?

B: Interrogation means that the councilor has the right to request the Governor and interrogate him. If the interrogation process revealed the poor performance of the Governor, the councilor can recommend the dismissal of the Governor.

The episode was concluded with a very inspiring quote from Nehad saying **“The new local councils will have new blood with half of the seats are granted for the women and the youth”**

She has also stressed that **“The State is finally saying COME and HELP me to make things better, so what are you waiting for??**

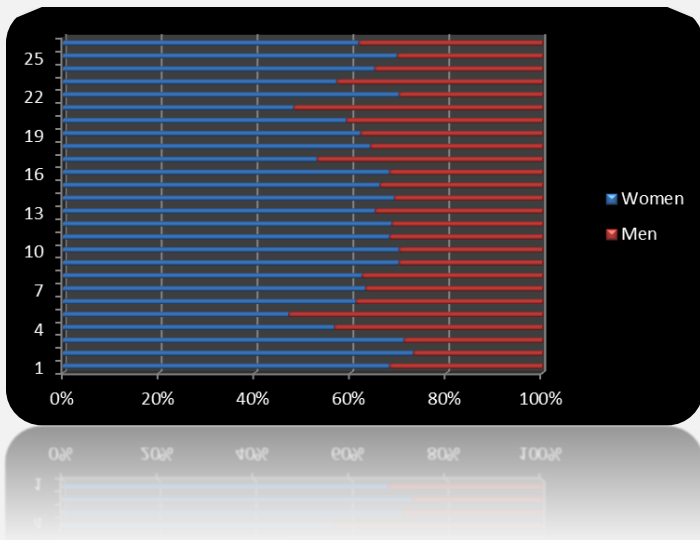
If you are 21, prepare your ID for the ELECTIONS!”

Measuring Success

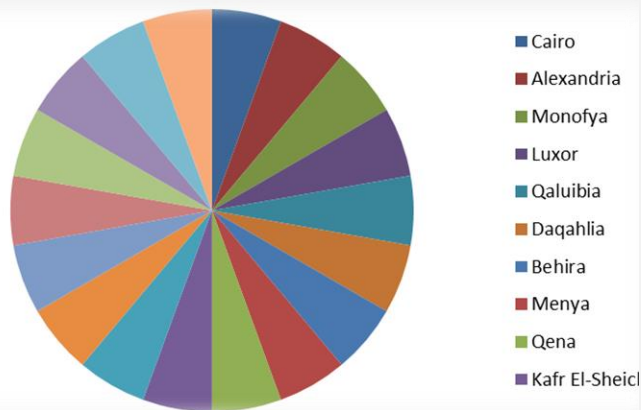
Hia w Akhawatha was an important step not just as being part of Women’s Voices Programme, but also as it came as the first engagement of ECWR with the radio in the form of a launching a show. For this reason, it was quite important for Women’s Voices team to monitor closely this experience evaluating its impact and to decide on whether to further invest in radio as a tool for outreach. To insure the validity of the monitoring and evaluation process, each episode was concluded with a riddle and the audience was asked to call if they want to answer the riddle and be part of the competition to win the award. With this regard, the competition was used as a tool to assess the level of engagement of the audience to the content that the show provides. A team was assigned the task of receiving the phone calls, documenting the information of the participant (sex, age, exact location) and providing an analysis on a daily basis. What was observed through the data collected on the participants along with the consultations with Sawt El-Arab radio station has revealed the following;

- **The show had around 10,000 audience on daily basis**
- **The show participants increased from 47 to more than 60 by the last episode¹.**
- **The average percentage of male participation was increased from 23% to even more than 50% in some episodes.**

¹Bear in mind that the calls were received only during only one after the show and through only one phone line



➤ The show audience covered 19 Egyptian governorates, as shown below, out of 27 (70%)



Media Coverage

It is important to note that the number of participants was constrained by the constrained HR resources of ECWR as the phone calls were received for one hour after each episode, which prevented other potential participants to call.

Therefore, Women’s Voices team has relied on other tools to assess the success of the Hia W Akhawtha show. The most important of these tools is the media coverage.

On a daily basis, and over the whole month of the show, all the online and offline newspapers were screened to document any media coverage or reference to Hia w Akhawtha. The show was announced for and covered extensively by the different online newspapers. Below are some of examples of what was written about Hia w Akhawtha.

يومياً في رمضان.. «نهاد أبو القمصان» تناقش قضايا النساء على إذاعة صوت العرب

08/06/2016 | القناة الأولى | أضف تعليق | درة محمد

أطلق المركز المصري لحقوق المرأة بالتعاون مع إذاعة صوت العرب، برنامج «هي وأخواتها» يهدف دعم المرأة ومساندتها ومناقشة القضايا التي تمس المجتمع بشكل عام والمرأة بشكل خاص.

المصري اليوم

أخبار مصر | رياضة | اقتصاد | رأي | حوادث | سيارات | محافظات

أهم الأخبار

«أبو القمصان» توصي الفتيات بالترشح لـ«المحليات»: «ربيع المحليات محجوز ليكنم»

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National Council for Women (NCW)

Another important indicator that has also showed the success of Hia w Akhawtha was the support received from the leadership of the National Council for Women (NCW). This support was expressed directly by Dr. Maya Morsy, the Head of the NCW, covered by media as shown below



Believing in both the importance of the message conveyed and the issues addressed, NCW has used his official Facebook page to post and share some of Hia w Akahwtha episodes.



All these indicators were perceived as signs of success of Hia w Akhawtha hinting to the potential for media as a tool for outreach and raising awareness of Women's Voices Programme.

What is after?? Sustainability....

A decision was made by Women's Voices Programme crew to launch a second session of Hia w Akhawtha the year after. After proceeding with the preparation for the second season of Hia w Akhawtha, the fourth and most unexpected indicator for the success of the first season of Hia w Akhawtha materialized. ECWR was contacted by Mr. Tarek Nour, a prominent media and communication figure not just in Egypt, but in the Middle East. Nour has expressed his strong interest in capitalizing on the success of the radio show through being a partner in the production of a televised version of the show. Nour has explained that through airing such episodes **“the well-informative and precious content of these episodes will reach thousands and millions of viewers across Egypt and in the Middle East”**. With the continuous support of the FGE, ECWR has established cooperation with Tarek Nour Communications Company to produce a set of 13 TV episodes that would help convey the message of the Programme to larger groups of both women and men across Egypt. This show is also expected to support the communication strategy of the Programme as it will help reach out to thousands of women, that otherwise would have been quite impossible to reach out to.