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Monitoring Study:

News Coverage of

Positive Initiatives by

Lebanese Media

1. Study Objective

In the so-called country of contradictions, talks of the very negative and very positive pervade, often without any significant lapse of time between the two. In this country struggling with difficult times and not yet fully recovered from a war that ravaged it for many years, the present study aims at revealing the spots of positive initiatives covered by Lebanese news media, which had signed the media "Journalists' Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon" and that was officially launched on June 25, 2013 as part of UNDP's "Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon" project. The study also considers the composition of these initiatives that include all communities but where the proportion of representation of each community and each culture varies.

If given prominence, such initiatives may lay the groundwork for an advanced and flourishing society, restore hope and set in motion social mechanisms capable of piercing through the wall of despair created by the numerous and successive news stories about crises.

The commitment to disseminate news about positive initiatives, accord space to them in the media and work towards reinforcing this culture are actions taken in accordance with article 14 of the Pact that stipulates: **"With the aim of strengthening civil peace in Lebanon, the media and media professionals shall seek to highlight, promote and encourage initiatives, projects and activities undertaken by individuals or associations rejecting violence and discrimination and strengthening civil peace in Lebanon.**

This is achieved by the media seeking to accord large space to highlight what brings the Lebanese together and focus on what all confessions share such as values, morals and respect for the nation. Media should pay particular attention to the choice of guests and writers whom it hosts and

who should exhibit a certain intellectual level and a pronounced sense of citizenship."

This study contributes to shed light at the extent the media apply this article.

This study is the third of five studies launched by UNDP's "Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon" for 2015. The first study dealt with "Monitoring racism in Lebanese media" and the second with "Religious incitement to hatred, hate speech and its dangers for civil peace".

The subsequent two studies will deal with the following topics:

- "Violence portrayal in media" due to its repercussions on all levels including the social, political and educational;
- "Talk show programs" and the values and concepts they promote.

The above-mentioned topics cover all the articles of the Pact and deal with the major premises agreed by the media in an attempt to work towards strengthening civil peace and its consecration.

The topic of positive initiatives is of particular importance for the media and is in the interest of Lebanese society in general. On the one hand, its importance for Lebanese media stems from the fact that their stories are packed with news of tragedies and catastrophes and highlight such events more than they highlight positive topics (we will discuss the causes later), and on the other hand Lebanon has long been in the throes of much violence and instability as well as political, security, social, economic and cultural crises. As a result, topics deemed not positive are many and run deep. This does not imply that there are no positive topics, only that they are much fewer in comparison.

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The opinions and recommendations set out in this study do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the United Nations Development Program.

2. Research Question

The research question relates to the role of media in giving prominence to and encouraging initiatives, projects and activities undertaken by individuals or associations that aim at rejecting violence, discrimination and strengthening civil peace in Lebanon.

The media is tightly associated with coverage of catastrophes and negative events as these are news that "sell" or news that attract and interest the reader, and as such are interesting news. The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What is the share of positive initiatives covered by various Lebanese news media?
- To what extent may the Lebanese media approach to covering positive initiatives be considered effective in strengthening civil peace?
- Do the media play a role in widening the gap among the citizens of a single nation as a result of not highlighting or encouraging positive initiatives?

In light of the rapid developments occurring in the media as they adapt to the digital revolution and that have turned the use of traditional and modern means into a platform for expressing beliefs, anger, objections and engaging in arguments, how do the media lay the groundwork for the interaction of citi-

3. Methodology

Interest in the positive initiatives covered by the media is rare. Often the media is associated with the idea that they operate to the rhythm of catastrophes, thus limiting the space accorded to positive discourse, images, ideas and visions. Regarding this point, many questions arise:

- Do media stop at simply reflecting fears or do they create collective fears?
- Do we live in a "fear management" society as

zens of a single country, among one another, or between people and values? Is there a clear vision or a roadmap prepared by this body in the context of the circumstances that Lebanon had gone through and is still going through?

The growing importance of media derives from the fact that media is the vital space for motivating, knowledge and helping create new patterns of thought. Moreover, the media is the place where intellectual dynamics are at play impacting societal changes directly and rapidly. Thus, the interest arises in positive initiatives and what they entail:

- How do media deal with positive topics whether they are individual, governmental, or collective, local or foreign?
- What is the extent of the media's contribution to the production of positive discourse?
- What is extent of the media's associating positive discourse with putting in action accepting the other and difference as well as strengthening civil peace?
- What is the extent of the media's contribution to laying the groundwork for a peace culture based on a long-term vision whose impact does not diminish over time?

the philosopher Michel Seer claims?

- Is maintaining fear in the media a form of political control?
- If that is the case, does the viewer share some of the responsibility? How can the viewer respond or interact?

Form is content. When we examine how the positive is manifested in the media, we consider im-

ages, words, space, the place where the story was highlighted, the treatment method and writing style.

If we consider the media as a major factor in the process of building the society's reality, or man's reality or virtual reality, especially that the divide between reality and illusion is being reduced continually as a result of technological development:

- How can we in such a case study the relation of the media to positive initiatives, their role in creating and reinforcing a positive approach and putting this approach into action to build a better society?
- What were the topics on positive initiatives that the media covered?

4. Survey

In order to study the media's treatment from the perspective of encouragement positive initiatives and allowing their interaction with the aim of strengthening civil peace, the monitoring process looked at news coverage only in particular overlooking other social programs and magazines that are broadcast at various times and that highlight different initiatives in society.

The media monitored throughout June 2015 (between June 1 and 23) were the following:

- Daily newspapers: An-Nahar, As-Safir, Al-Akhabar, Almustaqbal, AlBalad, Al Joumhouria, Addiyar, Aliwaa, Al Sharq, L'Orient Le Jour, The Daily Star.

- How is the subject matter treated?
- What is the size of the space accorded to the topic (compared with negative topics)?
- Are they put into action within national dimensions?

The monitoring and analysis aim at:

- Measuring the size of the subject matter, writing style, distribution, the platform used to disseminate or broadcast it,
- Determining whether there is activation of positive initiatives in the media, examining its sources and areas of interest,
- Analyzing the media discourse used for positive initiatives if found.

- TV stations: LBCI, OTV, MTV, Future TV, Al Jadeed, AL Manar, and TéléLiban.
- Radio Stations: Radio LibanLibre, Al Nour, Radio Liban, Radio Orient, Sawt el Shaab, Sawt el Mada, Sawtlebnan Radio (100.5), Voice of Lebanon (93.3)
- News websites: www.nna-leb.gov.lb, www.almodon.com, www.elnashra.com, www.lebanonfiles.com, www.now.mmedia.me

In order to be able to study the positive initiatives in the media and the media's treatment of such initiatives in Lebanon and to answer the present study's research question, there are several assumptions that need to be considered and discussed in addition to considering the media and the positive and the relation of the positive to strengthening civil peace in Lebanon, a country that has not enjoyed a long enough stretch of peace or stability since 1975.

- Why talk about the negative? There is a broader problematic here:
- Is the media's work superficialized when dealing with media subject matter in a consumerist and commercial market?
- Are media practices linked to the concept of hegemony? And does fear lie at the heart of hegemony?
- How can, in light of the above questions, the media deal with positive initiatives in Lebanon?

We shall begin with defining the terms.

a. Defining "initiative"

The Almaany dictionary defines "initiative" as "the action of suggesting or achieving something first" or organizing it.

While the Larousse dictionary defines "initiative" as "the action of doing something without seeking the opinion or advice of someone else".

"A quality of someone who takes the necessary decision spontaneously".

"A right to propose certain things, and go ahead with them" (Legislative right of initiative)

According to the Almaany dictionary, "initiative" is "the ability or required tendency to start something such as a business, or work, etc., which a person decides". "He has the reins of the initiative, i.e. he is

in charge of the matter".

And the dictionary enumerates the types of initiatives: an initiative in war¹, in economics², in strategic defence, etc.

All these examples share two elements: the element of speed on the one hand and the element of success on the other in achieving something.

b. Defining "positive"

"Positives" are "anything to do with successful results" (Almaany dictionary)

"Positive" (adjective and noun) the opposite of "negative" and also means practical.

Based on the above, it emerges that positive thinking is a rational, optimistic and practical behaviour since "positive" is also associated with achieving work and success.

While negative thinking falls within the semantic field of pessimism, inactivity and failure.

Thus, a positive initiative is a voluntary act that does not involve dragging one's heels but rather entails proposing solutions. It may be undertaken by an individual, government or a civil society organization with the aim of benefit.

The aim of taking an initiative is change, be it small or big, limited or far-reaching, in any utilitarian sphere. Anyone who takes a certain initiative has noticed a shortcoming or wishes to develop something or a new idea of doing something has occurred to him/her to change something in a certain field.

¹ "An initiative in war: when a military commander beats the commander of the enemy forces to a military plan that would bring him victory."

² "Free enterprise: Economic system that is considered the essence of capitalism"

c. Defining "negative"

No negative position is purely negative. Negative-shavetheir dynamics and positives. Since we are using language to express something, negative is only half the language, its first half. It is at the basis of constructing meaning. In the structural theory, meaning arises through differentiation. In the political discourse, which dominates media coverage, a "no" requires explanation whereas a "yes" is beyond explanation.

It is hard to imagine a political act or discourse in modern times that is not in one way or another founded on the negative. From the time politics was deemed a philosophy and its practice subsequently became an act collective emancipatory will and an organized challenge to contradicting social interests, this approach has had to include the negative choice and to explain its through special uses. In its essence, the negative holds a positive, dynamic and constructive content and which was referred to by Gaston Bachelard in relation to science in his book "The Philosophy of No: A Philosophy of the New Scientific Mind"³.

How can rejection be linked to a dynamic of revival within a group or individual?

According to Bachelard, the "no" implies going beyond and completing previous knowledge. The philosophy of science has to include contradictions. The negative is not nihilism but is seen as an active dynamic.

Thus, any positive initiative can make use from the negative that precedes it to set in motion a productive development.

³ Bachelard Gaston, *La philosophie du non, Essai d'une philosophie du nouvel esprit scientifique*, Paris, PUF, 1949.

d. Fear Management

According to the philosopher Michel Serres, we live in a society of "fear marketing". He had said that in reference to a sample of viewers and raising viewership ratings with what he dubbed "viewership of death" during evening television news programs. It is enough to consider the frequency of the word death in the miscellaneous news stories, in the first few minutes those stories or in the main news stories to demonstrate that we are really experiencing fear marketing.

Corey Robin has demonstrated in his controversial book "Fear: The History of a Political Idea" that had received wide acclaim in the United States when it first appeared that fear is the main road to power even in liberal democracies. Thomas Hobbes was the first to say that fear helped create the state⁴ and that fear should be understood as "a form collective life nourished by the conscious participation of individual subjects"⁵.

The American theorist Robin looked backwards to Hobbes again⁶ on the issue of fear to refute the illusion that fear hampers movement and work. On the contrary, fear is "a perfect coincidence of thought and feeling"⁷ through which the individual is realiz-

⁴ Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, New York & London, Oxford University Press, 2004. Traduit de l'anglais par Christophe Jaquet et préfacé par Philippe Braud, *La Peur. Histoire d'une idée politique*, Armand Colin, 2006. p. 45.

⁵ Ibid. p. 54.

⁶ See Carlo Ginzburg's article on Hobbes: Ginzburg Carlo, «Peur, révérence, terreur. Lire Hobbes aujourd'hui», *MethIS [En ligne]*, Volume 2009 - 2 : *Pratiques du document*, 47-23 URL : <http://popups.ulg.ac.be/1456-2030/index.php?id=277>.

⁷ Corey R. p 51.

es his good or the importance of self-preservation to defend what one believes in. Fear is a self-preservation and continuity foundation. And indeed if rulers have an interest in generating fear for better rule, that does not mean that citizens are not complicit in collaborating by submitting to such rule.⁸ Robin writes in his book "the sovereign has great power to define its [of fear] objects"⁹.

Do media make a living from "selling fear"?

Sustaining constant fear is a form of controlling society used in politics, media and law (see Michael Crichton's book "State of Fear"¹⁰).

"Disaster capitalism relies on exploiting crises, such as revolutions, terror attacks, market crashes, wars, tsunamis, hurricanes, etc. to pass economic

8 Ibid. p 54.

9 Ibid. p 59.

10 You can find such passages in his book: "I am leading to the notion of social control, Peter. To the requirement of every sovereign state to exert control over the behavior of its citizens, to keep them orderly and reasonably docile. To keep them driving on the right side of the road—or the left, as the case may be. To keep them paying taxes. And of course we know that social control is best managed through fear."

"Fear," Evans said. "Exactly. For fifty years, Western nations had maintained their citizens in a state of perpetual fear. Fear of the other side. Fear of nuclear war. The Communist menace. The Iron Curtain. The Evil Empire. And within the Communist countries, the same in reverse. Fear of us. Then, suddenly, in the fall of 1989, it was all finished. Gone, vanished. Over. The fall of the Berlin Wall created a vacuum of fear. Nature abhors a vacuum. Something had to fill it." Crichton, Michael, *Etat d'urgence*, Traduit de l'anglais par Patrick Berthon Éditions françaises, Robert Laffont (2005), Édition originale : « State of Fear » (2004), page 492.

and social policies that populations would refuse in normal circumstances."¹¹

Natural disasters or extreme war situations enlists the majority of societies.

In 1982, Milton Friedman¹², the economist and author of "Freedom of Choice"¹³ wrote: "Only a crisis – actual or perceived – produces real change."¹⁴

Friedman a proponent of liberalism advises politicians to impose economic reforms following a painful crisis even before victims had time to pick recover their breath.

11 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mqIbweut98>

12 He received the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1976 for his research on consumption analysis and monetary history and theory.

13 The book "Free to Choose" that he published following the film. Milton Friedman, *Free to choose*, Harcourt, 1980. *La Liberté du choix*, Belfond, 1980. You can watch the film at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JujKgkA_XUQ

14 Only a crisis - actual or perceived - produces real change.

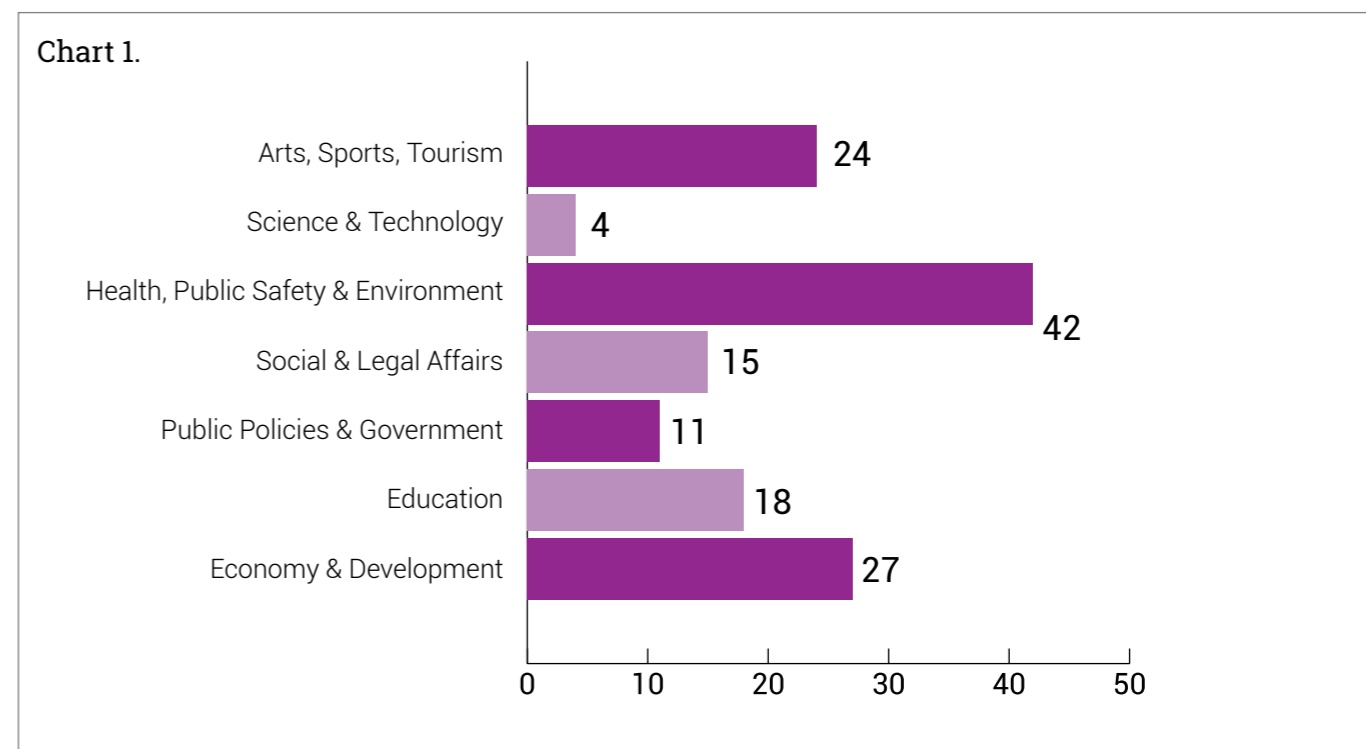
Section 2: Quantitative Analysis of the Coverage of Positive Initiatives

This section presents the quantitative analysis of the media covered by the study during June 2015 and provides charts that facilitate reading findings about the distribution of covered categories relating

to positive initiatives (subject matter), the distribution of covered topics among the different media, journalism genre (feature, investigation, interview, etc.) in written press, television, radio and websites.

1. Positive initiatives in newspapers

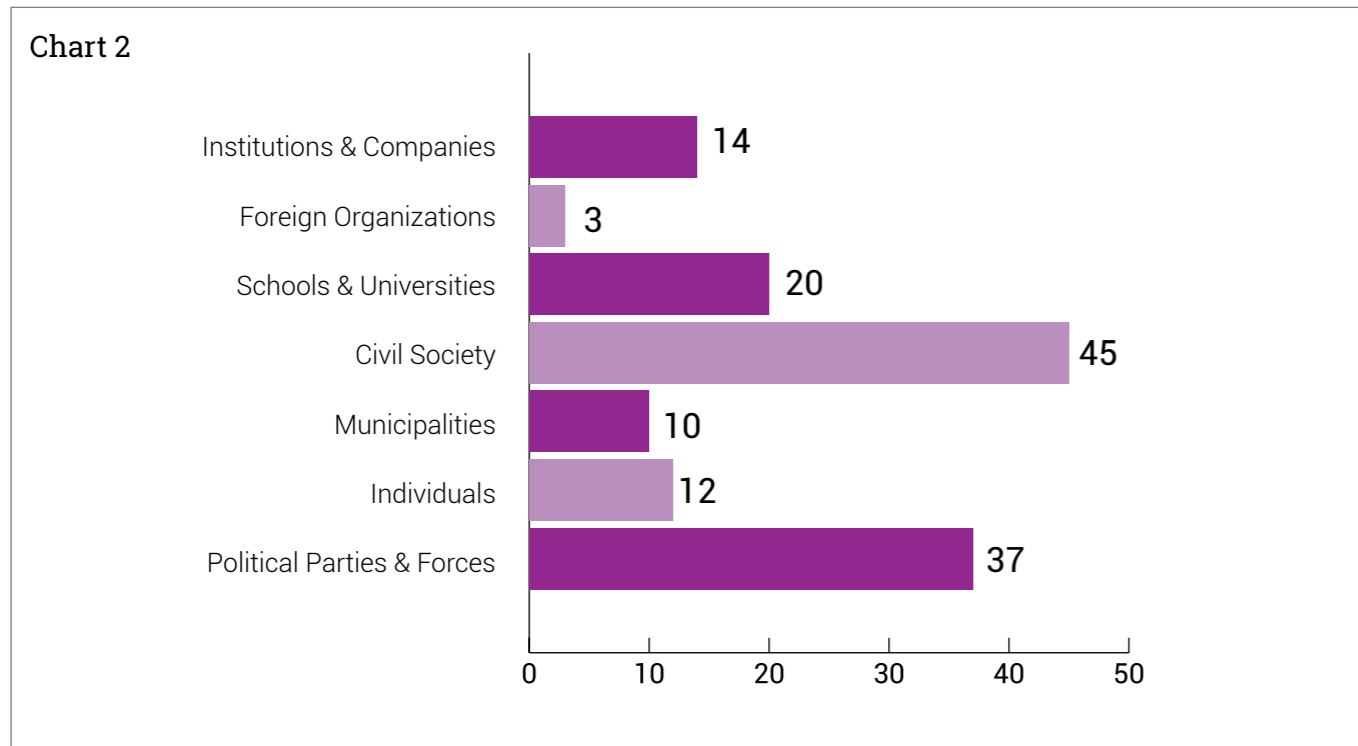
a. The categories of positive initiatives covered in newspapers



The covered categories in newspapers were distributed as follows:

Subject Matter	Percentage
Economy & Development	19.1%
Education	12.7%
Public Policies & Government	7.8%
Social & Legal Affairs	10.6%
Health, Public Safety & Environment	29.7%
Science & Technology	2.8%
Arts; Sports; Tourism	17%

b. Source of positive initiatives in the written press

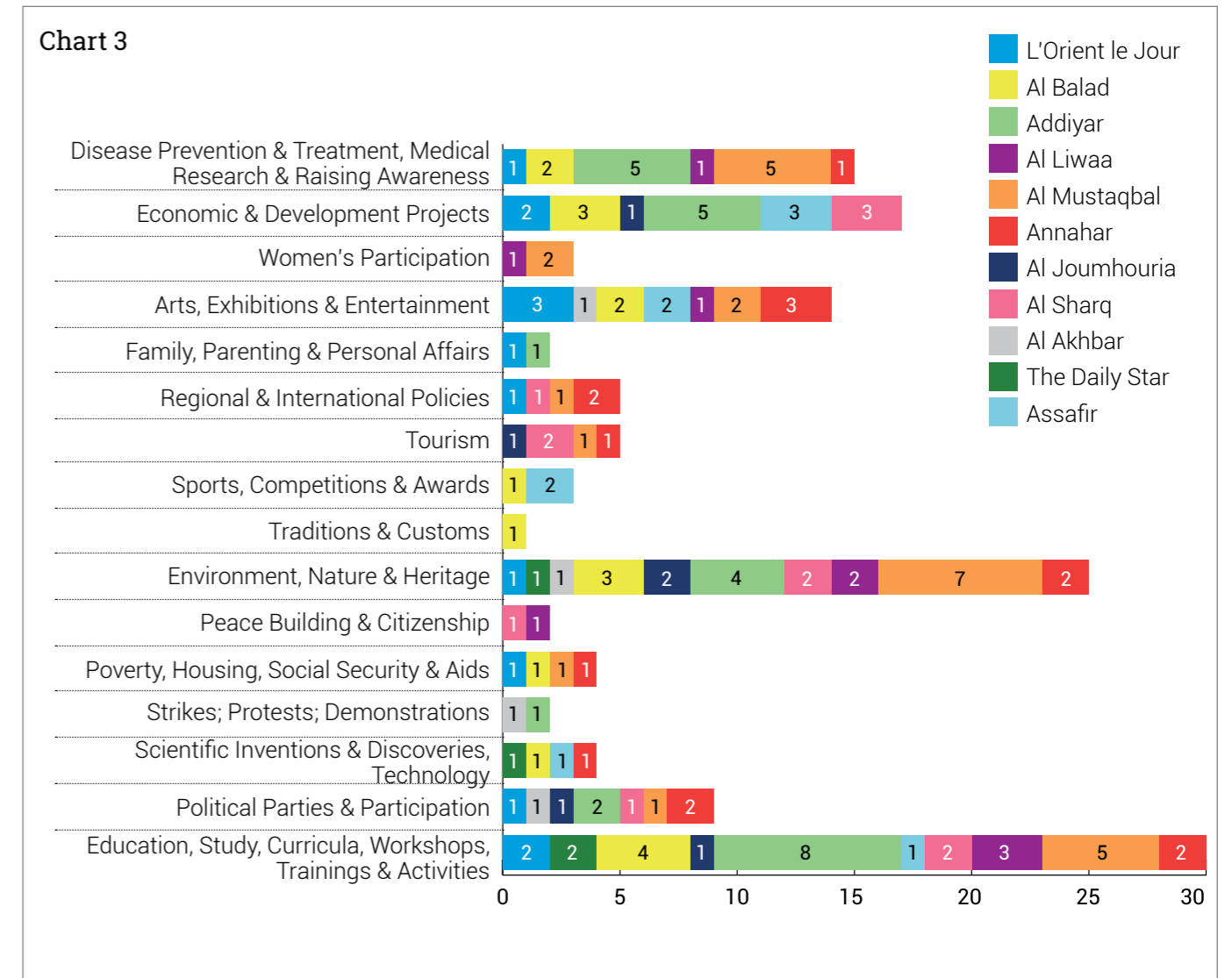


The sources of positive initiatives in newspapers were distributed among seven categories, the civil society receiving the biggest share while foreign organizations the smallest. The presence of political

parties and forces among the categories is worth noting especially in view of its very high percentage in comparison to other categories:

Subject Matter	Percentage
Civil society	31.9%
Political Parties & Forces	26.4%
Schools & Universities	14.1%
Institutions & Companies	9.9%
Individuals	8.5%
Municipalities	7%
Foreign Organizations	2.1%

c. The subject matter of positive initiatives in newspapers



d. Table of percentages for the distribution of subject matter

The number of subjects that dealt with positive initiatives was 16. They were distributed as follows:

Subject	Percentage
Education, Study, Curricula, Workshops, Trainings & Activities	21.2%
Environment, Nature & Heritage	17.7%
Economic & Development Projects	12%
Disease Prevention & Treatment, Medical Research & Raising Awareness	10.6%
Arts, Exhibitions & Entertainment	9.9%
Political Parties & Participation	6.3%
Regional & International Policies	3.5%
Tourism	3.5%
Poverty, Housing, Social Security & Aid	2.8%
Scientific Inventions & Discoveries, Technology	2.8%
Women's Participation	2.1%
Sports, Competitions & Awards	2.1%
Family, Parenting & Personal Affairs	1.4%
Strikes; Protests; Demonstrations	1.4%
Peace Building & Citizenship	1.4%
Traditions & Customs	0.7%

d. Table of percentages for the distribution of subject matter

Percentage	Addiyar	Al Mustaqbal	Al Balad	Annahar	L'Orient Le Jour	Al Sharq	Assafir	Al Liwaa	Al Joumhouria	Al Akhbar	The Daily Star	Toral
No.	26	25	18	15	13	12	9	9	6	4	4	141
%	18.4	17.7	12.7	10.6	9.2	8.5	6.3	6.3	4.2	2.8	2.8	100

f. Journalistic genres of news reports on positive initiatives

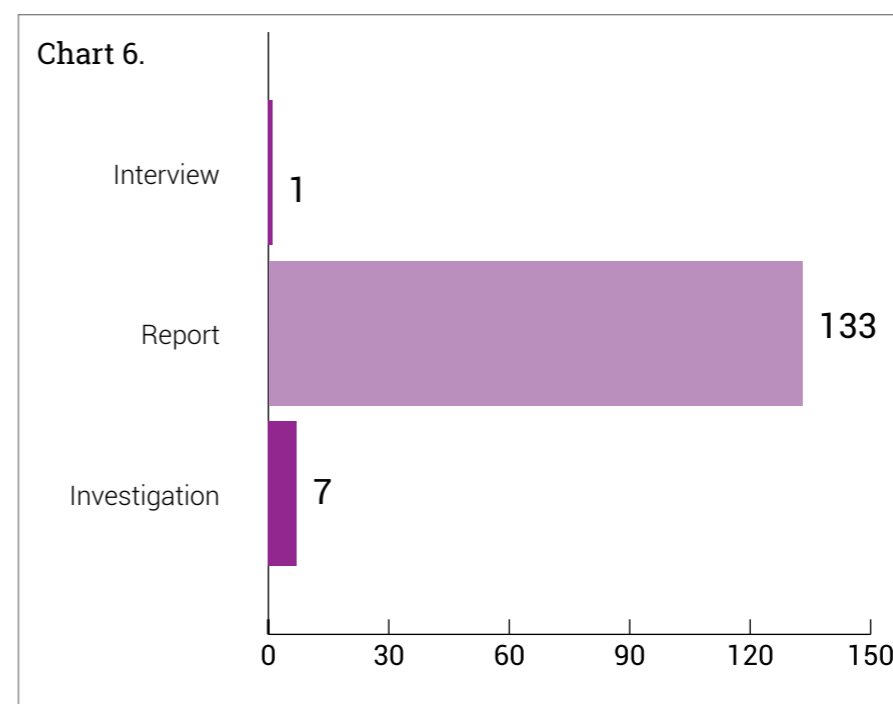


Chart 6 shows that the dominant journalistic genre is reports (94.3%), by far exceeding investigative writing (4.9%) and interviews (0.7%). The small percentage that investigative journalism obtained can be explained by the fact that they require meticulous gathering of information and entail close knowledge of the subject, whereas reports are quick.

2. Positive initiatives in TV reports

a. Distribution of the positive initiatives covered in TV news programs

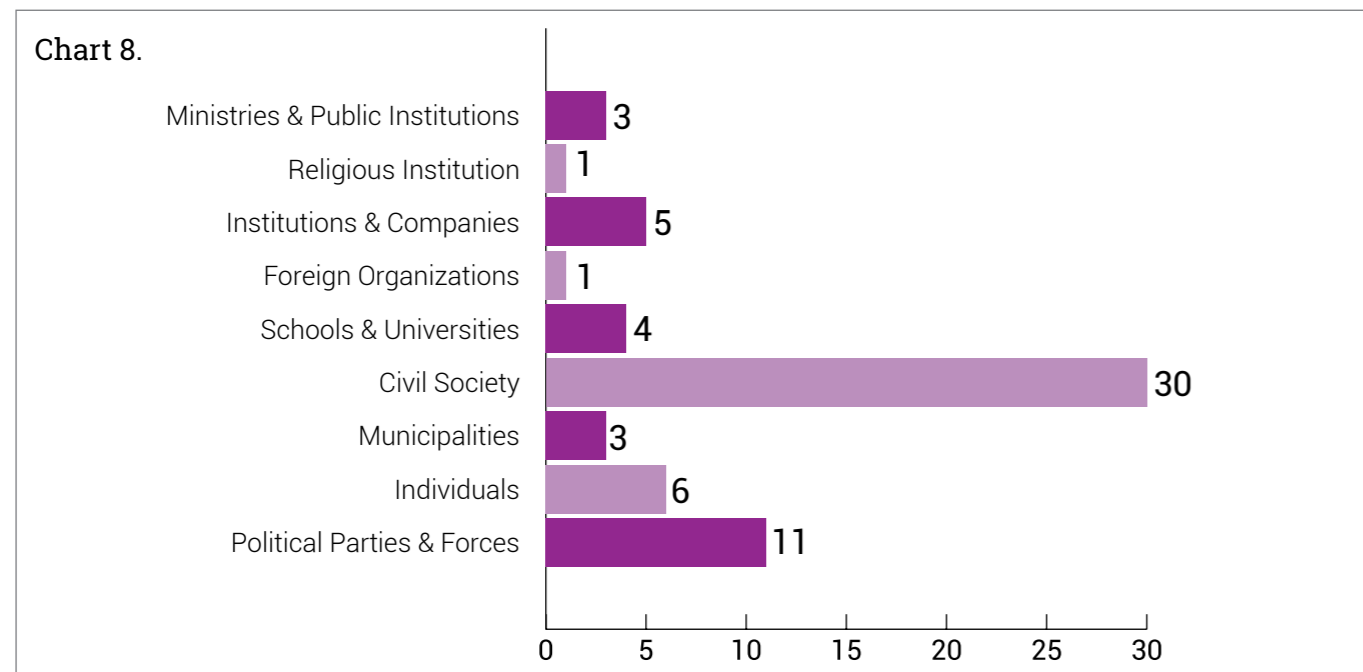


The covered categories were distributed among seven sections with "arts, sports, tourism and entertainment" being covered the most (34.3%).

Followed by the following categories:

Subject	Percentage
Health, Public Safety & Environment	25.3%
Social & Legal Affairs	14%
Economy & Development	12.5%
Education	9.3%
Public Policies & Government	1.5%
Science & Technology	1.5%

b. Sources of positive initiatives in TV reports



The "civil society" stands out as the first source of positive initiatives in TV news programs. The sources of these initiatives were distributed in TV news reports as follows:

The "civil society" was the most represented with 46.8% coming ahead of "political parties and forces" (17.1%) by a considerable margin. While percentages for the other categories were closer in range:

Source	Percentage
Individuals	9.3%
Institutions & companies	7.8%
Schools & universities	6.2%
Municipalities (Ministries and Public Institutions)	4.6%

The least represented source of positive initiatives in TV news reports was "foreign organizations" and "religious institution", each obtaining 1.5%.

c. Subject matter of positive initiatives in TV news programs



d. Distribution of subjects chart - Chart 10

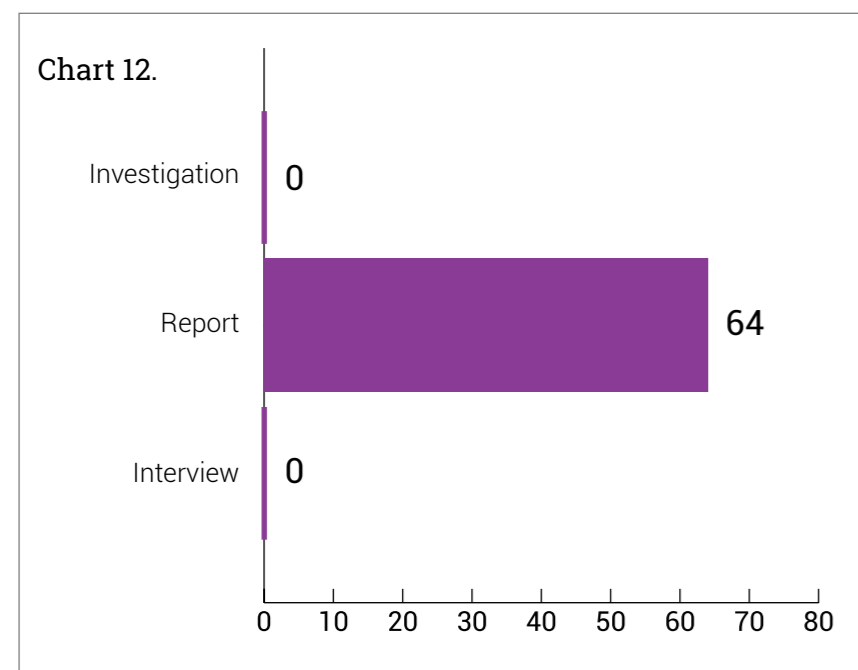
The number of subjects that dealt with positive initiatives in TV news programs was 3 and they were distributed as follows:

Subject of positive initiative	Environment, Nature & Heritage	Arts, Exhibitions & Entertainment	Education, Curricula, Workshops, Trainings & Activities	Sports, Competitions & Awards	Poverty, Housing, Social Security & Aid	Economic & Development Projects	Disease Prevention & Treatment, Medical Research & Raising Awareness	Political Parties & Participation	Unemployment & Labor	Traditions & Customs	Peace Building & Citizenship	Strikes; Protests; Demonstrations	Scientific Inventions & Discoveries, Technology
%	29.6	23.4	12.5	7.8	6.2	4.6	3.1	3.1	3.1	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5

e. Distribution of subjects dealing with positive initiatives according to TV stations - Chart 11

Station	LBCI	MTV	OTV	FUTRUE	Al Jadeed	TL	Al Manar	Total
No.	15	12	11	8	6	2	0	64
%	39	18.7	17.1	12.5	9.3	3.1	0	100

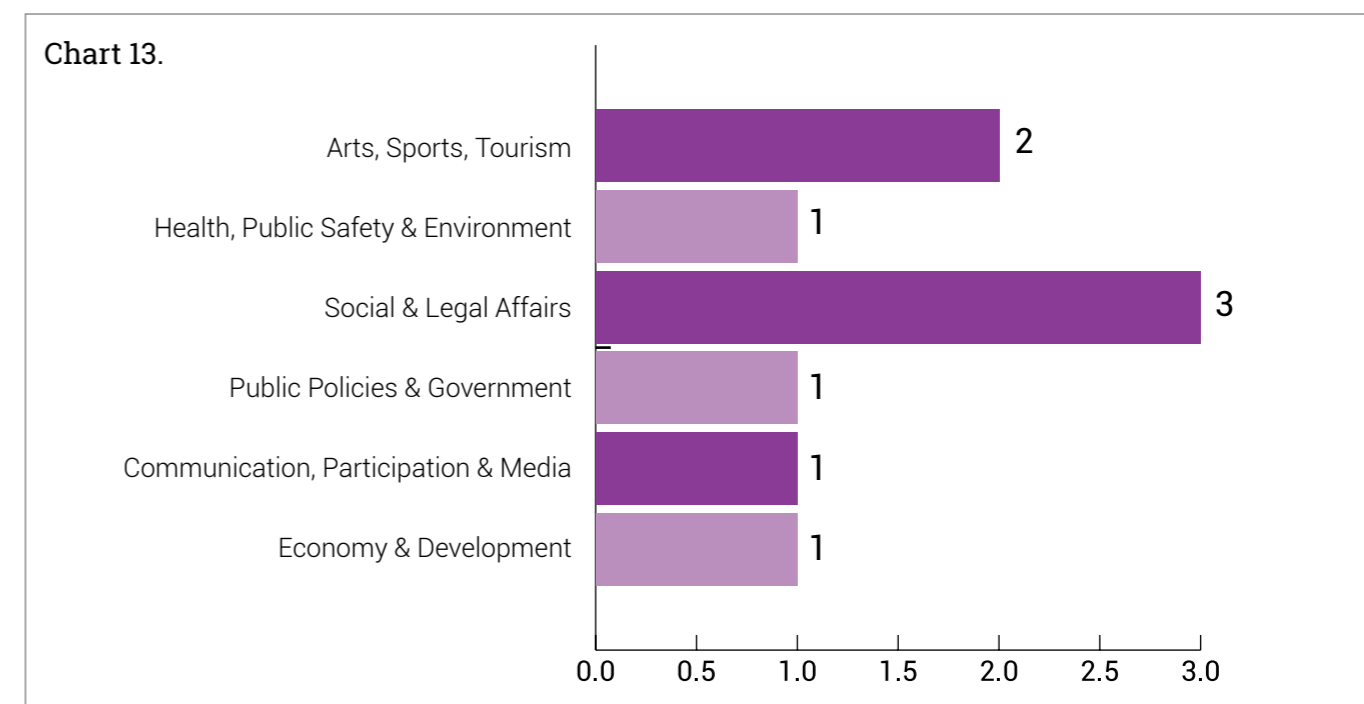
f. Distribution of journalistic genre of positive initiatives in TV news programs



The positive initiatives monitored in TV news programs did not include any genre other than reports (100%), neglecting investigations and interviews.

3. Positive initiatives in Radio

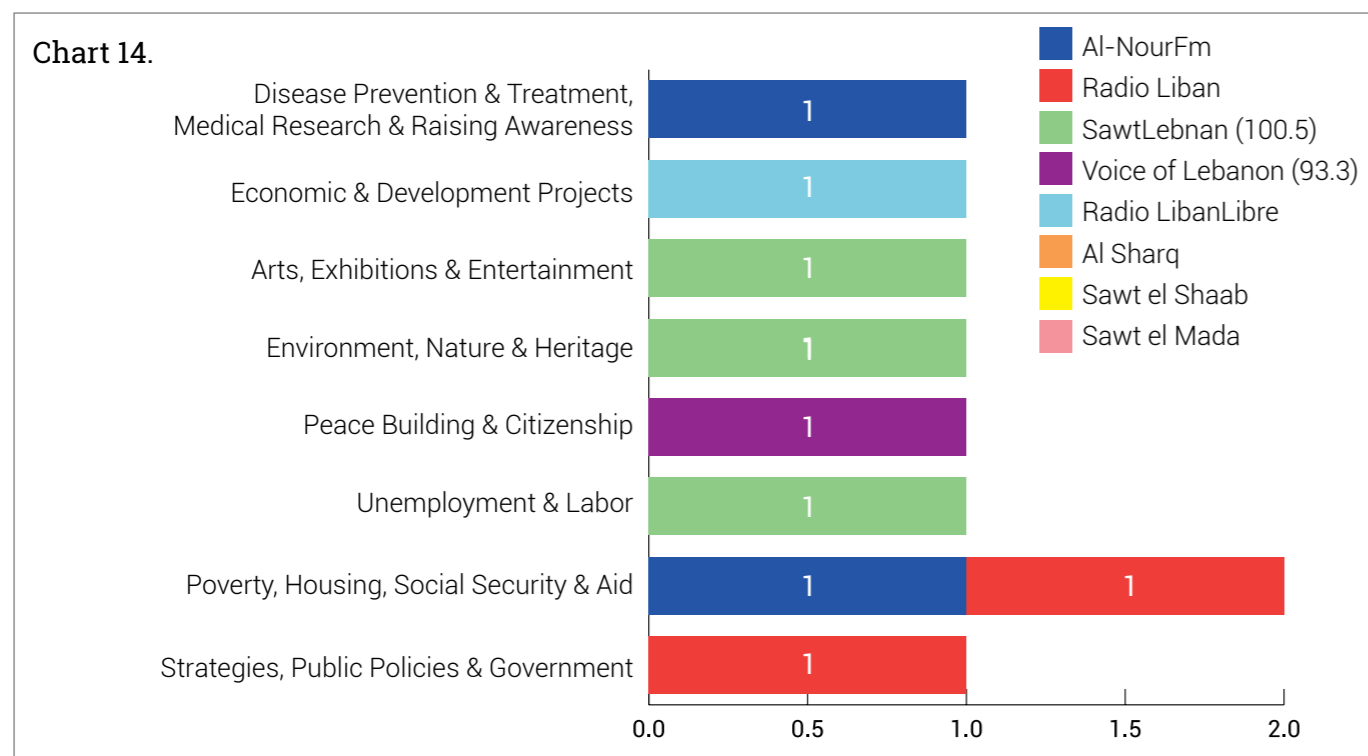
a. Distribution of categories of positive initiatives on radio



The categories of positive initiatives on radio were distributed as follows:

Subject Matter	Percentage
Social & Legal Affairs	33.3%
Arts, Sports, Tourism	22.2%
Health, Public Safety & Environment	11.1%
Public Policies & Government	11.1%
Communication, Participation & Media	11.1%
Economy & Development	11.1%

b. Distribution of subjects of positive initiatives in radio news programs



c. Distribution of initiatives on the radio - Chart 15

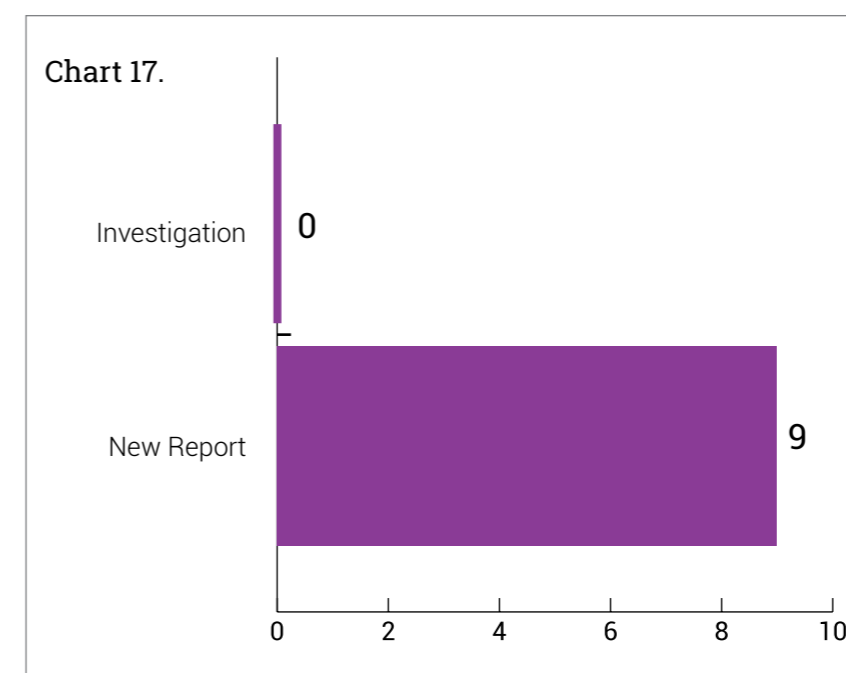
The positive initiatives in radio news programs over 8 subjects as follows:

Subject Matter	Percentage
Poverty, Housing, Social Security & Aid	22.2%
Disease Prevention & Treatment, Medical Research & Raising Awareness	11.1%
Economic & Development Projects	11.1%
Arts, Exhibitions & Entertainment	11.1%
Environment, Nature & Heritage	11.1%
Peace Building & Citizenship	11.1%
Unemployment & Labor	11.1%
Strategies & General Governmental Policies	11.1%

d. Percentages of positive initiatives according to radio station - Chart 16

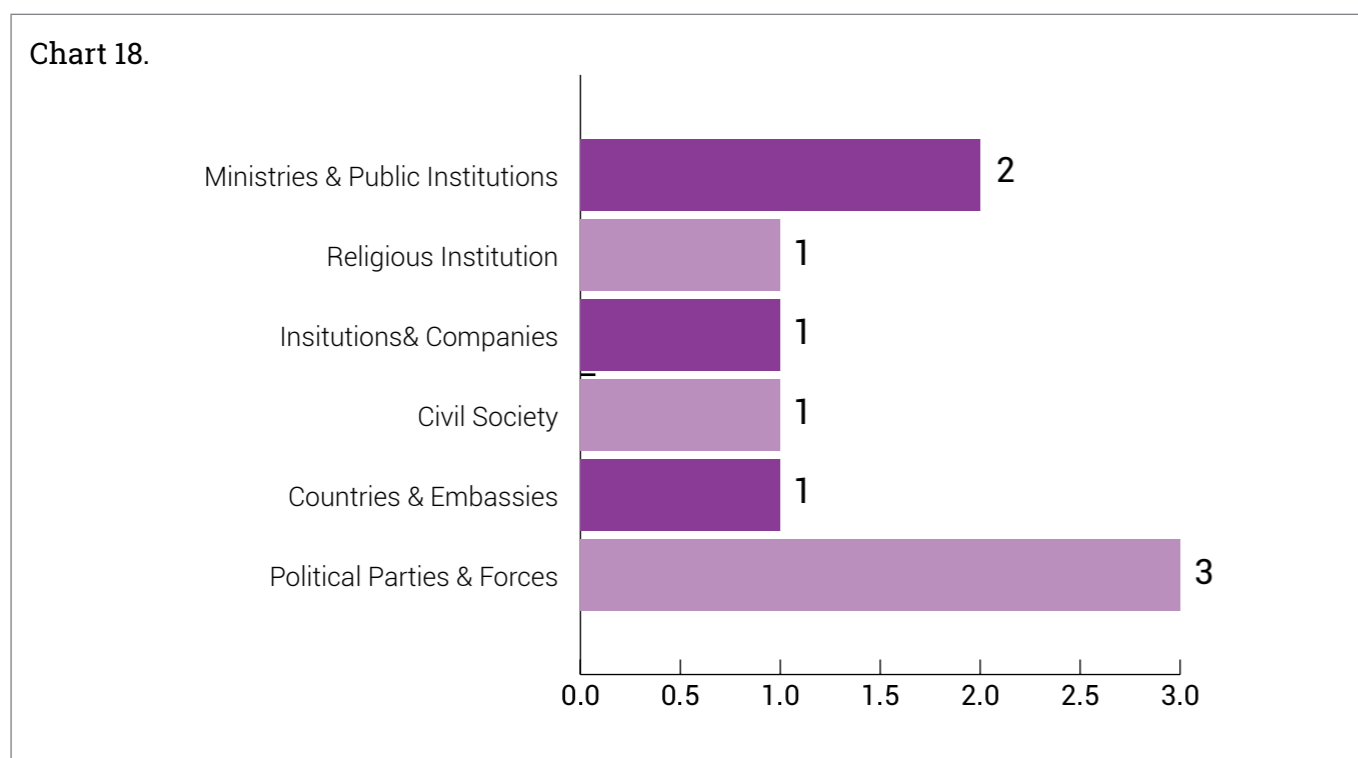
Station	Percentage
SawtLebnan (100.5 FM0)	33.3%
Al-NourFm	22.2%
Radio Liban	22.2%
Radio LibanLibre	11.1%
SawtLebnan (93.3 FM)	11.1%
Al Sharq	-
Sawt el Shaab	-
Sawt el Mada	-

e. Distribution of genre in radio news programs



All the coverage was in the form of reports (100%), with no investigations or interviews.

f. Sources of positive initiatives in radio news programs



The source of positive initiatives in radio news reports was "political parties and forces" at 33.3% and "ministries and public institutions" at 22.2%. Whereas the other sources all received 11.1%.

4. Positive initiatives in Websites

The study monitoring positive initiatives included five websites that had signed the Pact and in particular the special coverage section on these websites. The monitoring revealed only three stories about positive initiatives: two on www.almodon.com and one on www.nna-leb.gov.lb.

Chart 19 below shows the major details related to those stories:

Positive initiatives in the special coverage section on websites - Chart 19

Website	Subject	Source of Initiative	Concept of Positive Initiative
www.almodon.com	Arts, Tourism, Exhibitions, Entertainment	Municipalities	Sour theatre festival to stimulate theatre in Lebanon
www.almodon.com	Health, Public Safety, Prevention, Awareness	Civil Society	Raise awareness among parents and youths in Minyeh about the dangers of drugs and renounce "persuasive addiction"
www.nna-leb.gov.lb	Scientific Inventions & Discoveries, Technology	Institutions & Companies	A Lebanese invention revolutionized means of transport and made the lives of clients easier

5. Details on the concepts of positive initiatives in newspapers, television and radio:

As expected the subjects of initiatives in the written press were more varied and over twice as many as the subjects of television news programs and 15 times as many as the reports in radio news programs, while initiatives on websites are quite rare

(Chart 19 above). This situation is due to the fact that newspapers have more space to devote to detailed and varied subjects, more so than other media as well as its journalistic heritage in covering various issues and the diversity of its pages and sections.

Positive initiatives in newspaper coverage - Chart 20

Concept of initiative	Stakeholders	Source of initiative
Break the rule of political inheritance of power in Lebanese political parties	Pierre Atallah	Individuals
Cabriolet Film Festival for short films on St. Nicolas Stairs: 3 evenings dedicated to women	Ibrahim Samaha	Individuals
Educational program on the environment and heritage to educate students about good citizenship	Ecole des Saints Coeurs	Schools & Universities
Funding research on communications development in smartphones to encourage personal initiatives and innovation	Arab Open University	Schools & Universities
Levels exams for refugee students to integrate them into Lebanese schools	Ministry of Education and Higher Education	Political parties & forces
An initiative to involve students in technology and design programs for touchscreens	Iman High School in Saida	Schools & Universities
Arab Marshall Plan, partnership and cooperation for a better future for the Middle East	Amine Gemayel	Political parties & forces
Ecotourism project to make use of natural sites	Rmeileh municipality	Municipalities
Inauguration of a store to support rural and refugee women of entering the labour market	Amel International Association	Civil society

A competition to develop students skills in building an egalitarian society	KidProof association	Civil society
A workshop for women's participation in elections	pioneer women	Civil society
Launching of the International Cedars Festival for the revival of culture, art and tourism	Cedars International Festival committee	Civil society
A project to reinforce dialogue and communication between the Lebanese and refugees	"Permanent Peace Movement"	Civil society
Gathering to get to know the identity of the different other, accept him and work with him	Collège de la Sainte Famille Française in Jounieh	Schools & Universities
Launch the J.A.D. Club to explain the importance of sports in fighting drug addiction	Youth against Drugs	Civil society
Rebuilding of two churches in Brih, Chouf district so as the residents of Brih can return to their normal lives	Minister of the Displaced Alice Chabtini	Political parties & forces
Launch of the agenda to boost rural tourism for the development of all regions in Lebanon	Minister of Tourism Michel Pharaon	Ministries & Public Institutions
A training workshop for farmers in Nabatieh on the production of avocado fruit	Agriculture & Rural Development Programme (ARDP)	Civil society
Event in Beirut highlighting the importance of recycling	G NGO	Civil society
Rehabilitation environmental works on Saida beach and island	Mayor of Saida	Municipalities
A training program aiming to develop skills and capabilities of financial civil servants and local workers	Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan	Institutions & Companies
Conclusion of a training program aiming to develop skills and capabilities of financial civil servants and local workers	Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan	Ministries & Public Institutions
A campaign to clean the Tripoli's coast	Al Manar University	Schools & Universities

Awareness campaign on road safety in Bikfaya	Cnam Bikfaya University	Schools & Universities
A day for nature and heritage photography in Akkar	Akkarouna Association	Civil Society
A cleaning campaign of Saida's island due to its touristic and ecological importance	Friends of Zira and Sidon's Beach organization	Civil Society
A campaign to raise awareness on non-contagious diseases (diabetes, blood)	Lebanese University's University Medical Center	Schools & Universities
An environmental initiative to turn transform into electricity	Phoenix Energy	Institutions & Companies
Awareness campaign on road safety in Bikfaya	CNAM Institute Bikfaya	Schools & Universities
An environmental campaign to raise awareness on the proper use of natural resources	Italian UNIFIL	Foreign organizations
A workshop to raise awareness on the roles of municipalities in Akkar	Akkar governor Imad Labaki	Municipalities
A campaign to fight drug addiction and hallucinogens		Civil Society
Inauguration of drinking water purifying units in 11 official schools in the Beqaa	Rotary Club of Beirut	Civil Society
An afforestation and improvement project of the areas of conflict between Bab el Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen	Environmental Scout Organization in Lebanon	Civil Society
Artistic and environmental activities to revive Mar Elias area	Minister of Tourism Michel Pharaon	Political parties & forces
To draw attention to concern over the city's shrinking public spaces	A group of activists	Individuals
A seminar to raise awareness among youth on the importance of their role in society	Lebanese University Students' Union	Schools & Universities
Launching of an initiative seeking to revive trust in Lebanon's future and economy and create an optimistic and positive movement	The Real Estate Developers Association (REDAL) and the Real Estate Brokers and Consultants Syndicate (REAL)	Institutions & Companies

Launching of a joint paper and action plan aiming to reinforce women's access to decision-making positions on the party and national levels	"Loubnaniyoun" association	Civil Society
Start a hotline for domestic workers to protect them and renounce their trafficking	Minister of Labour Sejaan Azzi	Ministries & Public Institutions
Launch of the campaign "Feel the Beat" to raise awareness about cardiovascular diseases among women	"City Center Beirut"	Institutions & Companies
Launch of the "Roses of Matn" competition to recall "Green Lebanon" that has always been known for its green spaces	Mirna el Murr Abou Charaf, head of the Federation of Municipalities of the Metn	Municipalities
Launch of the "Roses of Matn" competition to recall "Green Lebanon" that has always been known for its green spaces	Mirna el Murr Abou Charaf, head of the Federation of Municipalities of the Metn	Municipalities
An initiative with the Notre Dame University seeking to stimulate cultural tourism and encourage local film productions	Minister of Tourism Michel Pharaon	Schools & Universities
A demonstration demanding rapid trials for murderers of women	KAFA organization	Civil Society
A special application for children suffering from cancer to participate and play on phones	Lebanese Ziad Feghali And Reine Abbas	Individuals
An application that provides the necessary documents to obtain official papers for smartphones	The students Ali Darwish and Ghida Ismail	Individuals
A protest for granting people with disabilities their natural and human rights	A group of students from the Faculty of Nursing Care	Schools & Universities
A campaign to preserve on sites, cities and archaeological sites	UNESCO	Civil Society
A play at the Arab University to raise awareness about driving safety	Fairouz Sarkis - Director of the Arab University	Schools & Universities

A working paper to improve women's livelihoods in Tripoli and end gender discrimination	Civil Commission for Women's Matters	Civil Society
A training session to reinforce badminton in educational institutions	Lebanese Badminton Federation	Civil Society
A race to challenge the painful human condition and defend women's rights	Beirut Marathon Association	Civil Society
An awareness campaign for the reforestation of Lebanon	"Jouzour Loubnan" organization and the EU	Civil Society
An early detection campaign for non-contagious diseases	Lebanese University's Medical Center – Fatina Alayli	Schools & Universities
The importance of sports in fighting drug addiction	"Youth Against Drugs" organization	Civil Society
Cascade Village: an investment project in the Beqaa costing 120\$ million and creating 3 thousand jobs	The business man Maurice Torbay	Individuals
"Our environment unites us" A project for the improvement and afforestation of squares and public spaces in Bab el Tabanneh and Jabal Mohsen	Environmental Scout in Lebanon	Civil Society
Rehabilitation of the train station in Saadnayel to preserve memory and heritage	Saadnayel Municipality	Municipalities
The first stage of the campaign of planting a million trees in the South	Minister of Environment Mohamad Machnouk	Institutions & Companies
Twinning of Amchit with Saint-Max in France to create opportunities for cooperation and expertise and knowledge exchange between the two regions	Amchit Municipality - Antoine Issa	Municipalities
A water skiing festival on Tyr's beach to stimulate the area and attract tourists	Soula Municipality Ayman Ibrahim	Municipalities
An activity to fight drug addiction: "Run against Drugs"	Lebanese Forces Sport Bureau	Political parties & forces

Positive Initiatives in TV News Coverage - Chart 21

Concept of initiative	Stakeholders	Source of initiative
Launch of the "Your home is my home" campaign to rehabilitate poor home	Alwaleed Philanthropies	Political parties & forces
An initiative to contribute to the application of the new traffic law	Arab Open University	Schools & Universities
A commemorative plaque to Sabah in Hamra	"Ahla Fawda" organization and Yazan Halwani	Civil Society
A women's race in Jbeil to get her voice heard on women's issues	May El Khalil - Beirut Marathon Association	Civil Society
Launch of the project of rebuilding the two churches in Brih	Minister for Displaced Persons Alice Chabtini	Political parties & forces
Mia's dream comes true with the "Tamanna" initiative	Persil	Institutions & Companies
Planting trees on the mortmain property	Monsignor Sharbel Maroun	Religious Institution
Inauguration of Achrafieh Youth Club	Futsal	Institutions & Companies
A fair for students, children and residents to help schools fight violence	Kfarchima Official Mixed School	Schools & Universities
Raise awareness about the traffic law in Bikfaya	Kunhadi organization	Civil Society
An educational environmental activity	El Youssef Hospital Center	Institutions & Companies
Memories of Achrafieh exhibition in Mar Nicolas garden	Former Minister Nicolas Sehnaoui	Political parties & forces
An awareness campaign in Jbeil on the use of plastic bags	Zero Waste Coalition	Civil Society
Zein draws Sabah on Hamra Street in her memory	"AhlaFawda" organization	Civil Society
Start a hotline for domestic workers to protect them from exploitation	Minister of Labour Sejaan Azzi	Political parties & forces

Launch of an environment application for nature photography and participation	Minister of Environment Mohamad Machnouk	Political parties & forces
Blood donation campaign	Donner Sang Compter	Civil Society
Launch of the "Lebanon's Looking Good" initiative to create a positive movement	The Real Estate Developers Association (REDAL)	Civil Society
Choose future projects for Dalieh that would preserve its identity, features as public space	The Civil Campaign for the Protection of Dalieh el Raouche	Civil Society
Launch of a project to build affordable housing	CR Group	Civil Society
Give youth capabilities an opportunity by photographing Lebanese villages	Sateh Nouredine - www.almodon.com	Institutions & Companies
Apply the law on people with disabilities	A group of activists	Civil Society
Opening of the Elias Rahbani Academy in Dbayeh	Ghassan Rahbani	Individuals
The Marj forest, the highest pine woods in the Middle East	Ministry of Environment	Political parties & forces
A rural development fair	Fair Trade Lebanon organization	Civil Society
Qab Elias Temple to encourage rural tourism	Qab Elias Municipality - DerghamTouma	Municipalities
Restoration of Saadnayel station as heritage	Saadnayel resident Nadim Choubassi	Municipalities
Sesobel children presented artistic works for environmental protection	Sesobel	Civil Society
Runners participate to raise money for the St. Jude's Children's Cancer Center, raising 70\$ thousand	8 runners participated	Individuals
An exhibition to shed light on part of Lebanon's history	Holy Spirit University of Kaslik – Jad Kossaify	Schools & Universities
Live Achrafieh festival to bring life and joy	Minister of Tourism Michel Pharaon	Political parties & forces
Launch rural tourism in Tripoli	Minister of Tourism Michel Pharaon	Political parties & forces

A festival to preserve Rawche and Ramlet el Baida	Associations	Civil Society
A campaign to raise awareness about the health effects of plastic	Zero Waste Coalition	Civil Society
Runners participate to raise money for the St. Jude's Children's Cancer Center, raising 70\$ thousand	8 runners participated	Individuals
"Machi ta dallik" campaign to preserve Saida's beach and its landmarks	Dictaphone Group, Green Line and Saida Youth	Civil Society
A project to establish peace in Tripoli with drawing and painting	One Voice Team	Civil Society
A celebration for Syrian refugees to bring joy at the end of the school year	Offrejoie	Civil Society
A play renouncing child labour on the streets	Maya Assi - Beyond Association	Civil Society
Sabah's picture brought back the cultural image of Hamra	Yazan Halwani	Individuals
Encourage Lebanon to become the country of flowers with a most beautiful flower competition	Federation of Municipalities of the Metn	Municipalities
Launch an entertainment day for donating blood	Donner Sang Compter	Civil Society
Opening of two new tracks for hikers in JabalMoussa preserve	Association for the Protection of JabalMoussa	Civil Society
Changing the stereotypical image of Irsal by showing films	Civil Society organizations	Civil Society
Inauguration of Abdul Wahab island in Tripoli	Minister of Social Affairs Rashid Derbas	Ministries & Public Institutions
An educational and fun activity to raise awareness about child labor	Dar Al Amal Association	Civil Society
A British project to support the knowledge economy in Lebanon	British Ambassador to Lebanon Tom Fletcher	Foreign Organizations

The Badaro festival includes an open exhibition and artistic and entertainment activities	Badaro Traders	Institutions & Companies
Inauguration of Abdul Wahab island in Tripoli	Minister of Social Affairs Rashid Derbas	Ministries & Public Institutions
A campaign to preserve Saida's island known as Zira	Friends of Zira and Sidon's Beach organization	Civil Society
Launch of a project to build affordable housing	CR Group	Civil Society
A medical cooperation agreement between the Knights of Malta and Dar el Fatwa	The Mufti Derian	Political Parties & Forces
Opening of two new tracks for hikers in Jabal Moussa preserve	Association for the Protection of Jabal Moussa	Civil Society
Protection of domestic workers by launching a hotline	Ministry of Labour – Sejaan Azzi	Political Parties & Forces
Provide free medicines to patients	Darbessama Organization	Civil Society
Encourage Lebanon to become the country of flowers with a most beautiful flower competition	Federation of Municipalities of the Metn	Civil Society
Changing the stereotypical image of Irsal by showing films	Civil Society organizations	Civil Society
Inauguration of Abdul Wahab island in Tripoli	Minister of Social Affairs Rashid Derbas	Political Parties & Forces
Change the stereotypical image of Bab el Tabanneh and Tripoli	Tripoli residents	Individuals
A workshop to rehabilitate Abdul Wahab island in Tripoli	Ministry of Social Affairs	Ministries & Public Institutions
Fight corruption by introducing a subject at schools	Sakker El Dekkene organization	Civil Society
A fair to encourage students to carry out volunteering work	Notre Dame University - Louaize	Schools & Universities
E-government application ease of government procedures	Youth	Individuals
Launch of a project to provide affordable housing to youth	The Support of Lebanese Youth	Civil Society

Figure Positive Initiatives in Radio News Programs - Chart 22

Concept of initiative	Stakeholders	Source of initiative
The international forum for Maronite youth to return to their roots and strengthen belonging	Office of parochial Youth in the Maronite Patriarchate Eparchy	Religious Institution
Launch of rural tourism in the Arz and WadiQadisha	Minister of Tourism Michel Pharaon	Political Parties & Forces
Launch of an initiative to provide affordable housing for youth	CR Group	Civil Society
Establish a coordination office for aid for the Lebanese targeting poor areas	UAE Ambassador to Lebanon	Civil Society
Activate the hotline to follow up on complaints from domestic workers	Minister of Labour Sejaan Azzi	Ministries & Public Institutions
Launch of the Lebanon 2020 Digital Telecom Vision	Minister of Telecommunications Boutros Harb	Ministries & Public Institutions
Neighbour kafala project to help the poor during Ramadan	Hezbollah	Political Parties & Forces
Music festival to bring life to Achrafieh and joy	Minister of Tourism Michel Pharaon	Political Parties & Forces
Health day and free medical exams and reductions on laboratory and radiology testing	Al Rasul Al Azam Hospital	Institutions & Companies

Section 3: Lebanese Media and Positive Initiatives (Content Analysis)

In the previous sections, we have defined the concept of positive initiative and examined the volume of the subject matter, journalistic genre, distribution, the platform used to publish or broadcast it; determined whether positive initiatives are activated in the media; and examined their sources and subject matter. Based on the quantitative results from section two, this section analyzes these findings and examines their content.

The survey shows that there are varying degrees of coverage of positive initiatives among the different media platforms and the different media within each group. We will examine the framework that presents the positive initiative in the media in Lebanon to determine whether the said framework serves the desired objective.

1. Positive in relation to the negative

We will begin with binary opposites: there is a negative reality and the positive initiative is its antonym. A problem exists and the positive initiative is part of the solution.

The majority of headlines and expressions in the media mention the solutions resulting from the initiatives, for example:

"Technology was created to solve problems and a Lebanese invention revolutionizes the world of modes of transport": Charlie Taxi has created an application aiming at "making the life of clients, drivers and the company easier" (National News Agency, June 9, 2015)

Innovation "Because progress is not simply owning tools and devices, but it is finding ideas to derive solutions" (National News Agency, June 9, 2015)

Campaign "Say No to Drugs" in Miniyeh-Danniyeh "Raise awareness about the plague of drugs", "To guarantee protection of youth from slipping into addiction", "To help them (addicts) recover", "Raising awareness with youth and their parents on the dangers of addiction", "As a result of the prevalence of what is known as "persuasive addiction", the most popular drugs among youth of the same neighbourhood is smoking cannabis or taking pills which makes it difficult for their parents to out them", "Towards bringing to light the drug dealer networks as this is the primary way to reduce the number of drug users"... "As a result of lack of awareness on the part of youth to their [drugs] real dangers in addition to its availability (especially cannabis) during youth hanging out in popular cafes, they are associated with their daily gatherings until they become more ingrained and accepted" (Al Modon, June 8, 2015)

... it provides 5 thousand job opportunities (Assafir, June 11, 2015)

"A chance to make recommendations" (Al Mustaqbal, June 5, 2015)

In addition, they talk of initiatives with the use of the word "objective" that leads to a better future (as part of the solution):

"A project to install drinking water filters in four new schools in Zgharta and the district... with the aim of providing clean water free of microorganisms and pollutants to students by installing new filters and tanks" (Addiyar, June 21, 2015)

The conference ["Activate the role of expatriates in global integration on investment and knowledge sharing"] aims to "develop a better vision on expatriate contributions in the Middle East and North Africa region to globalize the region through investment,

trade, knowledge and expertise sharing"... (Addiyar, June 3, 2015)

"Social Work [“AhlaFawda” festival] aiming at beautifying Beirut and its buildings". (Assafir, June 1, 2015)

"Out of the siege" a project implemented by the "Permanent Peace Movement" in Lebanon over six months "targeting Lebanese and Syrian journalists and several Syrian activists seeking to reinforce dialogue and communication between the Lebanese and the refugees; understanding the depth of the problem; establishing rules for peace; accepting the other; and supporting marginalized groups" (Al Mustaqbal, June 5, 2015)

"Encourage youth to be more present"... "to stimulate cultural tourism in Lebanon" "Reflects a cultural image of Lebanon" (The International Short Film Festival) (Al Sharq, June 23, 2015)

"Multiply efforts to limit health dangers by launching educational programs" (Al Liwaa, June 17, 2015)

And with headlines employing "positive" terms:

"The real estate sector launches an optimistic campaign and an incentive round for expatriates" (Al Joumhouria, June 17, 2015)

They also present the negative situation or reality:

"Challenging the prevailing stagnation" (AL Joumhouria, June 17, 2015)

"We accompany the civil movement that refuses to yield to injustice, obscurity, despair or any form of depression" (Al Balad, June 15, 2015)

"So that it dominates these days filled with dark colors" (Annahar, June 18, 2015)

"We are living in a time of obscurity" (Al Mustaqbal, June 5, 2015)

"The goal of the competition is to reinforce

environmental and national civic activity despite all the circumstances that the country is going through" (Annahar, June 18, 2015)

"Because we see a picture covered in black, we wanted to add other colors to overcome pain and invent our joys. We need joy and happiness, especially in light of popularizing the culture of festivals across Lebanon, to boost trust in our traders and for the inhabitants of Beirut that had known nothing but culture, art and joy" (Al Mustaqbal, June 15, 2015)

To be more specific then, it is the positive in relation to a negative reality. But is the reality truly this negative or does it just appear to be that way? Or is it negative in relation to what has become known as the "catastrophe media"?

2. When the media name the initiative

All media consider initiatives positively. Thus they call it initiative at times and at others project, action or invention, but always within a positive framework. We will set out the terms used to refer to it:

"The initiative" (Annahar, June 18, 2015), (LBC, June 16, 2015), (Al Sharq, June 23, 2015), "Initiative" (Al Musaqbal, June 22, 2015), (LBC, June 16, 2015)

"National initiative" (Al Joumhouria, June 17, 2015)

"Sunni national initiative" (Al Balad, June 13, 2015)

The "Lebanon's Looking Good" initiative ("... faith in Lebanon's future... founded on facts, and based on solid grounds, and backed by the opinions of several international economy experts enjoying considerable credibility, and whose opinions are heeded around the world") (Al Joumhouria, June 17, 2015)

"environmental initiative" ("registered under the name (an advanced national formula to turn waste into

environment-friendly electricity) so as to propose it as a solution to treat waste and turn it into an opportunity to produce environmental-friendly electricity locally. The initiative is an advanced process..." (Al Joumhouria, June 9, 2015)

"The initiative is an advanced process" (AL Joumhouria, June 9, 2015)

Laws can also represent a means of developing society and can be the initiators of this development, and this is what is required today from the justice system, to lead the development of society by renouncing violence not as an immoral act but as violence that impacts the society as a whole" (Al Akhbar, June 1, 2015)

The medical initiative at schools (Addiyar, June 21, 2015)

While the semantic field of the term "initiative" refers back to the definition in section one as we find terms that reaffirm the positive that is associated with it, for example:

"stimulate", "encourage", "a cooperation agreement", "support creativity", "support", "convey a positive image" (Al Sharq, June 23, 2015)

"inauguration" (of the Wadi Al Ghsail stream that was swept away by floods last winter and benefited many villages in Akkar). (Al Mustaqbal, June 22, 2015)

"we seek", "to paint a beautiful picture of Lebanon", "full of colorful flowers" (Annahar, June 18, 2015)

"good", "revive", "improve conditions" (Addiyar, June 21, 2015)

"uniting, national, comprehensive", "in order to prevent risks and face challenges", "laudable and commendable initiatives" (Al Balad, June 13, 2015)

"development", "laws" (Al Akhbar, June 1, 2015)

"an innovative tool" (Al Liwaa, June 17, 2015)

And terms that warn against the negative:

"be aware and alert [from launching any initiative] that is sectarian or regionally limited", "it can be exploited by confessional figures" (Al Balad, June 13, 2015)

"renounce violence" (Al Akhbar, June 1, 2015)

Initiatives are positive and thus have definite benefits. Benefits and those who benefit are many as the party who undertakes the initiative is not the only beneficiary. The nation, entire society or humanity around the world may benefit.

"It will contribute to instating the desired balanced development, and stimulate economic activity in the north in general, underlining that its role will not be limited to developing Tripoli and the North but will be in the interest of all of Lebanon" (Assafir, June 11, 2015).

3. The initiative as benefit

The media shows the benefits of initiatives to the group and society. One of the benefits is to alert the state, society, the other or the group to things that they were not aware of or where not part of their priorities, or to push the group to take the right stance on some matter, etc.:

"Meeting of 'the National Association for the Rights of Disabled People': to demand the application of law 220/2000

"to express disappointment as a result of the authorities disregarding "over the past years their duties to apply the law" (Addiyar, June 5, 2015)

"the necessity of putting an end to all forms of discrimination against women, despite Lebanese legislation's shortcomings and prejudice on this matter, be it the nationality law (with many comments), the penal code, the personal status law, laws relating to work, social security, laws on women's protection and the rest of family members from domestic violence (quite frequent these days)" (The René Moawad Foundation launches "The third Lebanese paper to eradicate all forms of violence against women" as part of the project "Improving women's livelihoods") (Addiyar, June 5, 2015)

"Set up a websites committee...the committee has been charged with formulating a draft working paper or a protocol for websites that would be a form of an honour pact for these websites that continue to operate outside any legal framework" (Addiyar, June 4, 2015)

"The activists here see magnificent views and a forgotten long history, they take beautiful photos, we consider them ambassadors who have come to help us, to demand that Akkar obtain its rights relating to infrastructure, development and especially environmental tourism that we are working on today as well as heritage tourism. El-Morobi demanded that the ministries of Environment, Tourism and Culture do their duties to protect Akkar's diversity" (Al Mustaqbal, June 8, 2015)

Life has joyous moments, too, and reports try to show these as well. (Offre Joiebrings joy to Syrians (Assafir, June 19, 2015) (Beirut masters joy) (Al Mustaqbal, June 15, 2015).

Does the treatment of these reports leave the audience with an impression that the media are less professional with these than with hot topics? Is the small number or rarity of investigations a reflection of that? There

is a feeling that reports on positive initiatives for the sake of entertainment and for a short period of time strip the initiatives of most of their benefits.

"A commemorative plaque to the legend Sabah on Hamra Street" (OTV, June 16, 2015): a report that comes as a break in the tension of narrated events during the news program.

"Badaro Street was today a point of gathering for all the inhabitants of the area and tourists for a festival" (Al Mustaqbal, June 17, 2015)

4. Positive news... but related to a critical reality

Positive news come daily, are real, backed by facts and truths, and forecast a bright future.

The national initiative "Look Forward – Lebanon is looking good" aims to rekindle faith in Lebanon's future and its economy, and to create "a movement of optimism and a wave of positivity"... "this faith does not come from nothing, it is based on facts, and founded on solid realistic grounds, and backed by several international economic expert opinions, who enjoy great credibility, and their opinions are heeded around the world"... "Lebanon is on the threshold of a bright future, much more than we think, and to show that the world is optimistic about Lebanon's future and sees it as the economic, cultural and natural centre of its region" (AL Joumhouria, June 17, 2015)

"The Lebanese have had enough of news of problems, killings and politics, and want to see positive and good news"... "Highlighting positive and useful news about Lebanon and they are daily news in all local and international media" (Al Joumhouria, June 17, 2015)

With the word optimism, we are not referring to naive optimism so to speak. But rather to the optimism that is associated with a way of thinking and based on behavior, performance, procedures, laws, plans and a context.

Subjects such as offering housing at affordable prices for youth who receive modest salaries, a competition of the best photograph of Lebanese villages, and the demands of persons with special needs to obtain the rights that have been ratified more than 15 years ago, are all subjects that are rational and that would lead, if fulfilled, to tangible results:

"Do you want a house for 40 thousand dollars?" go: The "Support Lebanese Youth" association launched the first of a series of complexes as part of the project "Do you want a house for 40 thousand dollars?" in Baabdat in the Matn District, and the association invited all those wishing to acquire an apartment to submit an application starting next week and until the end of August on their website or at the association's office in Dawra". (LBC, June 1, 2015)

"when nature and man are captured in photographs": "When nature and man are captured in photographs... "our villages", a competition that breathes life..." (LBC, June 2, 2015)

"They show solidarity with their right to lead a normal life in defence of the rights granted to them by Parliament 15 years ago and that have not been applied following the protests of persons with special needs in Nejme Square in solidarity with themselves" (Al Jadeed)

These are examples of positivity but most of the examples link initiative to the critical situation and

points to problematic issues even if broadly. The tension involved in mentioning them does not require explanation as with the phrase "fights on a sectarian basis" or "confessional exploitation":

"There is exceptional movement in all regions and in Beirut, which shows that the more problems grow in size and extent, the more the movement grows in Beirut, a symbol of co-existence and we say yes the Lebanese model is the model we aspire to and everybody aspires to and not the Syrian, Iraqi or Yemeni models or what is happening in the region, and this role goes beyond Lebanon as Pope Jean Paul II had said Lebanon is a message to the world beginning with Mar Elias and covering the whole of Lebanon" (Al Balad, June 15, 2015)

Establishing "The Sunni National Initiative" based on moderation (Al Balad, June 13, 2015)

Launch of the "National Sunni Initiative": Reinforce stability and safeguard moderation (Annahar, June 13, 2015)

Launch of the "National Sunni Initiative"... "Al Mustaqbal" boycotts (Assafir, June 13, 2015)

This initiative... is uniting, comprehensive, national because all the initiatives launched by all sides in order to prevent the dangers and face challenges are laudable and commendable initiatives and we have to be alert and aware of launching any initiative that is sectarian or regional because such initiatives can be exploited by confessional figures" (Al Balad, June 13, 2015).

"Launch of the project "Our environment unites us" in Bab al-Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen... especially following the restoration of security and end of battles that had broken out in the region over a sectarian background". (Addiyar, June 8, 2015)

"... draft working paper (website committee) includes the following:

1. Shall not publish any material that provokes sectarian strife especially in the context of the difficult times that the nation and the region are going through and particularly because this matter has serious repercussions on civil peace.

2. Shall not publish any material that would pose a danger to state institutions, especially the military and security institutions, seeing the dangers that can result and serve the interest of enemies..." (Addiyar, June 4, 2015)

Inauguration of "Beit al Mustaqbal" "in its headquarters in Bikfaya's serail during a conference held under the title: "The Arab Marshall Plan, partnership and cooperation for a better future for the Middle East"... The conference concluded with a series of recommendations, including: "Work first and urgently on ending bloodshed and rescuing civilians; end the phenomena of takfir and fundamentalism; work towards purifying rule governance systems of impurities and secure their transition from an expiring model of governance to good governance; ensure freedoms and respect for pluralism. Such an climate can constitute a factor of attraction for expats and prompt them to return to their nations and contribute in political and economic building ". (Annahar, June 1, 2015)

Establish "The Sunni National Initiative" with an approach based on moderation. (Al Balad 13/6/2015)
Launch "The Sunni National Initiative": "Fortify/ Strengthen stability and protect moderation" (Annahar 13/6/2015 headline).

The president of the "Civil Moderation Gathering" Misbah Ahdab read the text of the initiative which included the following: "Whereas the danger on

Lebanon has increased as a result of the continuing crisis in the region and particularly after some Lebanese have enlisted in the wars going on across the Arab world; Whereas the sectarian tension has reached a very high level, and has become a true threat to civil peace, and it is not an exaggeration to say, for national unity too; Whereas fear for the nation and its stability and various components has become a real concern for all the Lebanese denominations without exception... we, Sunni figures of Lebanon, have gathered to reaffirm the constants that contribute to putting out fires and dousing conflicts and turn the compass in the direction that unites and not divides in a way that contributes to reinforcing stability on the one hand and protecting Lebanon and its borders and components...

The gathered announced their adherence to the Taif Agreement... The differences in political analysis among the Sunni parties should not be in any case a tool for conflict or an indication of division and weakness; rather it should be seen as pluralism in unity and a necessary vitality to reinforce their presence...

...they called on "working towards preventing for Lebanon and the Lebanese conflicts and regional wars... and adopt dialogue as a course for resolving internal disputes and activate the democratic process to revive political life... (AL Balad, June 13, 2015)

"The colleague Pierre Atallah continues his candidacy campaign for the presidency of the Kataeb Party under the title "Renouncing acclamation in party elections, and the right of Kataeb and other Christians to participation in national decision-making" wishing "that this positivity will be contagious to Christian parties instead of acclamation and hereditary appointment" (Annahar, June 1, 2015)

Among the initiatives, there are initiatives that target journalists as contributors to the resolution of a problem that the country faces as a result of events in the region:

"Out of a siege" is a project implemented by the "Permanent Peace Movement" in Lebanon over six months that targets Lebanese and Syrian journalists and a number of Syrian activists seeking to reinforce dialogue and communication between the Lebanese and refugees, understand the depths of the problem, consolidate rules of peace, accept the other and support marginalized categories" (Al Mustaqbal, June 5, 2015)

So, there is always a link with the critical reality:

"By bringing a smile and joy to the heart of Syrian children and offering education and knowledge to them" (Those children who have fled war and destruction and killing in their country and found refuge in the "Offre Joie" association) (Assafir, June 19, 2015)

"The Qatari Red Crescent mission initiated the construction of infrastructure for displaced in Irsal... and the mission's spokesperson for rescue said: "The project is in the interest of the locals and displaced since the current situation is a health threat to all"... (Al Mustaqbal, June 5, 2015)

But are all these headlines enough to inspire an optimistic spirit in the near future?

For instance, this small piece of news that appeared at the bottom of page 12 in the "Al Joumhouria" daily that had on its front-page lede "The government in the resuscitation room", how is it to be interpreted by the Lebanese reader? And should he/she link the initiative to the government's performance?

"The company "Phoenix Energy" part of the INDEVCO group has launched an array of products and solutions for sustainable energy... an environmental initiative registered under the name (an advanced national formula to turn waste into environment-friendly electricity) so as to propose it as a solution to the problem of waste and turn it into an opportunity to produce environment-friendly electricity locally. The initiative is an advanced process"... (Al Joumhouria June 9, 2015).

How does the reader interpret the news of the economic zone in Tripoli:

"But for this zone to see the light..., a series of factors have to be present set by the board of directors as priorities, mainly:

1. A stable political and security situation in Tripoli;
2. The government's commitment to provide the ingredients of success for the zone;
3. The availability of modern and advanced infrastructure according to the most recent international standards within the boundaries of the zone;
4. Link infrastructure for water, sanitation and communication with the national network and provide the necessary credit;
5. Formulate a strategy for the zone that would be part of a national development vision that would take into account the differential features of the national economy
6. Adopt the most transparent standards for licensing and operating;
7. Formulate a unified vision for the duties of other economic or industrial zones when established;
8. Implement a process of backfill and provide the necessary credit." (Assafir, June 11, 2015).

5. Fight media pessimism

Websites spread a piece of news or comments about a negative piece of news and it records high readability without checking its veracity. For example, on March 14, 2014 websites spread a piece of news about NASA predicting the end of the industrial society. When Ahmed Nafeez wrote his article it was reposted 130,000 times quickly on Facebook with more than 16,000 comments.¹

The semiotics researcher Mariette Darrigrand² highlights what she dubs “doxa blues” or the way through which “doxa” (empty discourse) overtakes “logos” (full discourse) in a pessimistic and unproductive vicious circle.

On March 6, 2014, Ernst & Young published a study that involved more than 30,000 people from all around the world (43 countries) on the relationship between consumers and banks. The study revealed that 44% of people trust their primary bank completely and that 49% have moderate trust and 7% (only) have little or no trust. Besides, the report insisted that trust grew between 2012 and 2013. While all international media had reported on this study from the perspective of a cup half full, the French media stood out with its cup half empty approach. For example, the AFP headlined “More than one in two people do not trust

their primary bank” without specifying in the title that the percentage refers to full trust as the report suggested.³

In the study subject matter, a witness frequently points out to the necessity to look at the cup half full. But the media when mentioning a positive initiative accompanies it with other negative news. So how can the receiver grasp the positive aspect of positive news? And does the negative take over the positive?

For instance, in the headline “Environment, displacement, humanitarian aid and violation of traffic laws with the naked eye on this page of miscellaneous news” OTV TV station presented a report on an initiative relating to afforestation of St. Taqla mortmain property (waqf) by “the residents of Kfarselwan in the mountains of Southern Matn that is still deserted by its original residents. The idea comes from Monsignor Charbel Maroun who travelled from the United States especially to implement the project and confirm the presence (of the region’s residents) and their steadfastness in Lebanon as the residents of a single region”... (OTV, June 3, 2015)

In a report on the “revival of the Baqar and Abdul Wahab island” (MTV, June 7, 2015), “a rehabilitation campaign launched by the Ministry of Social Affairs in Tripoli”. One of the present there said: “We always encourage the state to undertake such projects to distract the people and we’ve had enough of politics and enough of wars and sectarian problems...”

¹ « La catastrophe, les médias et la science » (Catastrophe, media and science), April 2014, 28, at the following website: <https://jardinons.wordpress.com/28/04/2014/la-catastrophe-les-medias-et-la-science/>

² Darrigrand Mariette, Comment les médias nous parlent (mal). Contre le pessimisme médiatique et ses effets politiques, Editions François Bourin, January 2014.

³ Bordas Nicolas, « Et si on luttait contre le pessimisme médiatique ? » On the website: http://www.nicolasbordas.fr/archives_posts/et-si-on-luttait-contre-le-pessimisme-mediatique

In another report: “Love and War on the Rooftop: a play that unites the residents of Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tabbaneh in the same trench” (MTV, June 13, 2015).

The first images in the report where war scenes from Tripoli.

The play “Love and War on the Rooftop” (written and directed by Lucien Bourjeily) unites youth from Jabal Mohsen and Bab el Tabanneh. It is enough to watch the report and listen to what the guys say. The play to forget, the terms and images used in the report bring back what is meant to be forgotten.

6. Reality is not only what is mediatised

In the report on “The personal belongings of four presidents of the republic in the University of Kaslik’s custody and at the citizen’s disposal” (Fouad Chehab, Elias Sarkis, Bachir Gemayel, Camille Chamoun) says Father Jad Kossaifi, deputy library and archives custodian at the University of Kaslik: “...not to weep over the past but to remember that we have a glorious past and to remember at the same time that we have a duty to elect a president...” (LBC, June 10, 2015).

This grounding in reality is a reminder that there is something missing and the initiative comes in the report to point to it.

In this reality, Tripoli gets its share several times. Tripoli is today outside the circle of war but the return to this memory is quick and within the reach of the initiative too.

“In Tripoli the stairs between al Quba, Bab el Tabbaneh

and Jabal Mohsen turn into a museum of drawings. Drawings and colours have turned them into peace stairs” (at the initiative of the “one voice” team) (LBC, June 16, 2015).

7. “Optimism is a civic duty”

Optimism or pessimism in a result of a reality or a perceived reality but it is also a result of a stance. “Defeatism paralyzes action. Hope begets motivation and efficiency. Complacent optimism is undoubtedly futile, while “willed” optimism is the surest companion of action.”⁴

We are witnessing online media, even if it is in modest numbers, that refers to itself as “constructive journalism”, that only publishes positive news and in an optimistic way in an attempt to find a kind of balance with media in general that publishes or broadcasts, first and foremost and excessively, catastrophic or negative news and does not accord sufficient space to the positive events taking place around the world. They publish news and reports that cover positive events and highlight initiatives, whatever their source, that seek to find solutions for man and the society he lives in.

Denmark was the first country to launch this form of journalism in 2013⁵. “Solutions journalism”, “optimistic journalism”, “journalism that only publishes positive news”... are titles of training sessions carried out by

⁴ Bordas N., « L’optimisme ? Un devoir civique », Le Monde daily, February 2006, 02.

⁵ The first signs of this kind of media emerged in Scandinavian countries in 2007.

those behind the project to hone professional skills and offer a culture that reinforces data treatment in a way it calls realistic, meaning that the positive is also part of reality so why disregard reporting it.

The organization "Reporters d'Espoirs" is also trying on its part to defend the position that states that journalists can encourage positive action and these are modest attempts to point to the satiety experienced with a type of journalism that looks at the world with pessimism.

While in Lebanon, the positive receives relatively very little space, but it is present, and it is present in specific locations pointing to its efficiency. The urgent need for positive thinking and starting action leads us to reconsider our media and pose a few questions: Are the media and by consequence the audience in a state of insatiable desire for catastrophes?

Why do we particularly love bad news?

Where does this fascination with catastrophes come from?

Do the media work on providing the audience with exciting news?

Whatever the answers may be, there is a determining factor: all this is happening at record speed. And with speed comes a risk of giving in to stereotypes that we think to be a pattern and get comfortable in applying them and herein lies the danger.

Eco asks: "How does speed impact how we take in a piece of information? Does the excessive writing (publications of all kinds, the crazy excess in copying

documents, the absolute attack by these self-published documents that see the light from the fax machine) does it create new diseases as when one overeats after centuries of famine?

... Trying to understand what is happening is the only way... out of this anxiety".⁶

⁶ Umberto Eco, "People are hungry for the narrative form... and man's self-destruction changes through the centuries: there is a conflict in writing between the wild and civil thought" Al Balad May 2011 ,15

Conclusions

1. Quantitative monitoring

- Does the higher percentage of newspaper coverage of positive initiative compared to television result from the fact that bad news gets the biggest space in television news programs, and is thus more space is accorded to that which brings a bigger audience?
- The study surveyed 141 reports in newspapers, 64 in television news programs, 9 in radio news programs and 3 on websites.
- The dominant journalistic genre was almost exclusively reports: on television and radio it was 100% reports, zero investigations, whereas in newspapers, reports accounted for 94.3%, far ahead of investigations (4.9%) and interviews (0.7%). The subject matter was presented in the easiest possible way. Investigative journalism is a journalistic art that studies the subject matter in depth and points to its importance and danger, while the report does not focus on all aspects of a piece of news.
- The subject of peace building, citizenry, as a direct subject matter accounted for a small percentage: 1.4% in newspapers, 1.5% in television news programs and 1.1% in radio news programs. This does not mean that the other subjects do not touch on co-existence, civil peace and taking a distance from the war climate, but they do so indirectly and loosely.
- The monitoring revealed that the number one covered category on television is "arts, sports, tourism and entertainment" with 34.3% of the total coverage of positive initiatives; social and legal affairs 33.3% of the total coverage of positive initiatives on the radio; "health, public safety and environment" obtained 29.7% of the total coverage

of positive initiatives in newspapers. The "environment" section has become a familiar page in newspapers that give it prominence whereas television gives more space to "arts and entertainment". It is worth noting that the radio allocates time for "legal affairs".

- The "civil society" obtained the highest percentage as the source of positive initiatives covered by the media with 46.8% in televisions reports and 31.9% in newspapers.
- It worth noting that "political parties and forces" that citizens complain most about constitutes the highest percentage on radio with 33.3%.
- The findings also showed that the number one subject of positive initiatives covered in newspapers is "education, curricula, workshops, trainings and activities" with a total of 21.2%, with the Addiyar and Al Mustaqbal dailies having the biggest share.
- On television, the main subjects covered were "environment, nature and heritage" with 29.6% and LBC leading.
- "Poverty, housing, social security and aid" came first in radio reports with 22.2% and Sawt Lebanon (100.5 FM) leading. According to the audience, every form of media served a different category of initiatives.
- Monitoring revealed how the positive is manifested in images, words, space, place accorded to it, treatment or journalistic genre.

2. Regarding the Content

- The focus on positive news and linking them to a happier present and a better future as well as a political and national objectives appears to be clear. However, it is noteworthy that the majority of coverage in all the media brought up a difficult reality, a painful past, and worrying geographical environment.
 - Lebanon and citizens gather the benefits of initiatives whether they are political, environmental, educational, entertainment or health. The move from individual to public is noteworthy.
 - The framing of the initiative should be noted: based on the quantitative analysis, the percentage of coverage was low; but it is also noteworthy that content-wise, there was a framing of the initiative in many places. In newspapers, for example, the framing was achieved by publishing the article on the initiative inside and sometimes at the bottom of the page with a negative headline on the front page that reflects the critical reality. Similarly in television reports, the title of the initiative was mentioned accompanied by negative headlines in the miscellaneous news.
 - Understanding all the dimensions of what is called a positive initiative cannot be achieved without mentioning the negative critical reality that constitutes a justification scale for the positive. The latter does not achieve its full meaning without what has triggered it and constitutes an incentive for its existence. The theatre activities in Tripoli have no meaning except the context of the conflict between the different components of society in Tripoli. Thus, it is impossible to discuss positive initiatives without talking of their purpose, or real value in changing the course of the crisis that called for the initiative.
- Thus we can attribute the following dichotomies to initiatives, any initiative:
 - o Exchange value/functional or real value
 - o Good but is it effective in changing the existing reality?
 - o Beautiful but not beneficial
 - o Temporary/sustainable
 - o Foundational/expositional (Does it lay the groundwork for a new reality or is it simply a superficial account that contributes to justifying a critical reality).
 - o The theatrical functionality, in the sense of an exposition framed in time and space disconnected from the general context. A moment for quiet and relaxing that creates a space for dreaming, illusions, which makes it possible to continue on the main course under the pretext of a "clear conscience" that has done its duty.
- This reality poses a question relating to the media. Do the media contribute by highlighting these initiatives to changing the course of the crisis that has triggered this positive initiative?
- The study and the sample that was used in monitoring the quantity, space and process revealed that positive initiatives are stifled by the negative profusion that occupies the largest space. It is noteworthy that the negative occupies the number one spot in most newspaper headlines and radio and television news programs, the spot that is most seen and most consumed. It is also noteworthy that the negative is more read and the media delve into the details of the negative to increase readership. It is also noteworthy that the skills involved in writing seems to have been honed more in exposing this subject matter (the negative) so that linguistic structures and expositional formulas have become familiar to the author and the receiver, and the receiver has become used to this rhythm that is despite its tension easy to grasp (as

in "no introduction necessary"). Speed also applies to the state of tension that peaks with any problem because that state is familiar. Thus, with regard to civil peace, we observe how verbal, field, positional

and exclusionary escalation takes place quickly during a crisis and how the situation transforms in the end into a state of coexistence, acceptance verbally and in the field?

Recommendations

In order to end the pessimism in the media and reinforce highlighting positive initiatives and their proper use in the interest of civil peace, the media plays a role through:

- Instilling faith in a positive future;
- A voluntary decision to broadcast and publish positive information and reports (at the same time avoid superficial optimism that leads to opposite results);
- Present successful narratives about the future instead of traditional catastrophe discourse;
- Give positive news a prominent place when there is no crisis instead of searching for a negative topic that would increase readership or viewership;
- Address all categories in society positively when the subject matter is positive as well as give it its proper place to reinforce a recovering present and a better future;
- Involve the reader, listener and viewer actively and give him/her the role of a partner citizen and not that of a passive receiver; Encourage him/her to be responsible;
- Consider individuals, associations and the state as an innovator when it comes to initiatives;
- Avoid clichés that quickly takes us back to the negative past that Lebanon experienced and highlight as far as possible every attempt to overcome that;
- Not to be carried away with speed at the expense

- of depth of treatment of a subject;
- Place positive news in the context of main and valuable news and not in entertainment news;
- In the Pact agreed by the media, the article talks of "the media seeking to accord large space to highlight what brings the Lebanese together and focus on what all confessions share such as values, morals and respect for the nation. Media should pay particular attention to the choice of guests and writers whom it hosts and who should exhibit a certain intellectual level and a pronounced sense of citizenship." So, do media choose their guests by standards of importance and benefit or those of thrills and ratings, increasing their viewership with intense arguments or when the guest is alone with raising the level of fear and vigilance? We should be aware of these issues so as to avoid them and focus on moving forwards in encouraging beneficial steps for a better person and a better situation;
- Activate what is called "constructive news". It is an emerging field in journalism that is also beginning to be covered by academic writing (the first PhD thesis on constructive journalism is currently being prepared). Presenting positive reports includes an analysis of the problem and offering suggestions for solutions, not stopping at negative warnings but also presenting the results. Instead of just reporting about conflicts and problems, present a more comprehensive

picture, reveal the main reasons for the problems and offer ideas and thoughts for an impartial society. Constructive journalism aims to highlight the role of each individual and reinforce his/her participation;

- Professional news trends such as: positive journalism, constructive journalism, happy news... are trends that lay the groundwork for a positive course in media performance when it comes to broadcasting positive news and solutions... And this applies to journalistic genres such as "constructive interview" that seeks to find non-problematic solutions more than to highlight cooperation to resolve the situation. Avoid the widespread "victim interviews";
- Present successful narratives about the future instead of traditional catastrophe discourse;
- Use a methodology focusing on the solution within the context of the media or classical journalism, by presenting a more complete picture of the truth;
- Seek to reinforce the media's ethical standards by avoiding distorting information in order to provide a more realistic picture of the world. Narrate the facts without exaggerating figures or facts;
- Put (positive) ideas into action;
- The issue at stake has nothing to do with the opposition between "perpetual catastrophes" and a "naive utopia", but going beyond the futile dichotomy of a "pessimistic" or "optimistic" position about the future, and replace it with a realistic, clear, practical and constructive approach because there are positive facts widely available in everyday life such as cultural relations among citizens, hopes about the future, collective creativity, solidarity and generosity, voluntary work, etc. and these too should be taken forward.
- Memory is not only for a perseverance and survival memory but also a creation and creativity memory.

Positive facts are interrelated and stimulate the building of tomorrow. Similarly to what Michel Serres has proposed: we should overcome "the fear model" to move together to a new model for a group working on innovation for the future. It is encouraging to observe in this context that the "media" are in the front lines for solidarity actions that help take us confidently into this new model.

- Think of the following type of questions:
 - o Is daily life made up of these catastrophic events only? Pessimism? Are these the events of the world? The events that concern us?
 - o Is maintaining high ratings achieved through broadcasting such news?
 - o Do negative images keep the receiver glued to the media even when he is disgusted?
- It is also worth thinking of the slogan widely known among psychologists, media, advertising professionals and journalists: fear sells.
- Names and definitions are also steps toward positive thinking and serve civil peace. Place importance on how to name the other, the place, the subject, etc. because choosing a name is taking a stance.
- Fernando Pessoa said: "Everything that exists perhaps exists because something else exists." Negativity can help us understand that which is positive and present it in a beneficial manner.
- The majority of positive news topics covered in newspapers, radio, television and online were environment, drugs, theatre, tourism, innovations, etc. with education, study, curricula, workshops, trainings and activities garnering the highest percentage. Politics and laws are present albeit modestly. Thus it is important that positive initiatives tackle topics relating to existing problems. For resolving the Tripoli problem cannot be achieved with theatre even if theatre is a positive action with its positive and reassuring results. Persevering work is required with the

participation of all sectors including the government, economy and the media with the aim to find an overarching solution and not just a palliative one.

- The media can effectively contribute in a positive outlook and aspiring to a nation free from violence. As Gandhi said: "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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