Appendix M
Case description and implications

This case description and interpretations are additional to the already detailed theories, implications and results in the main paper of this research project. In the first sections the results of the qualitative interview are integrated in a social media strategy as proposed by the Guide of Thomas, applicable to NPOs (2018, p. xvi, p. 98ff., 148ff.), besides implications of additional literature are outlined. Finally further interpretations of the found research results are presented.

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1) Social media strategy: Engaging volunteers

From the nonprofit studies stream, this study is based on the relationship management theory, applying it to the framework of social media activity (Hovey, 2010). As already stated in the literature review, "a social media based personal connection" or "parasocial friendship" with the NPO, has a significant effect on the stakeholder's intentions for offline-support (Pressrove & Pardun, 2016, p. 137), due to the strength of word-of-mouth testimonials (Eimhjellen, 2014; Bauer and Lim, 2019; Thomas, 2018).

Kaun and Uldam's (2018, p. 2190) "analytical model of civic engagement and social media" offers an overall framework, with which the research question in this paper and its societal setting can be understood as outlined in the figure below:
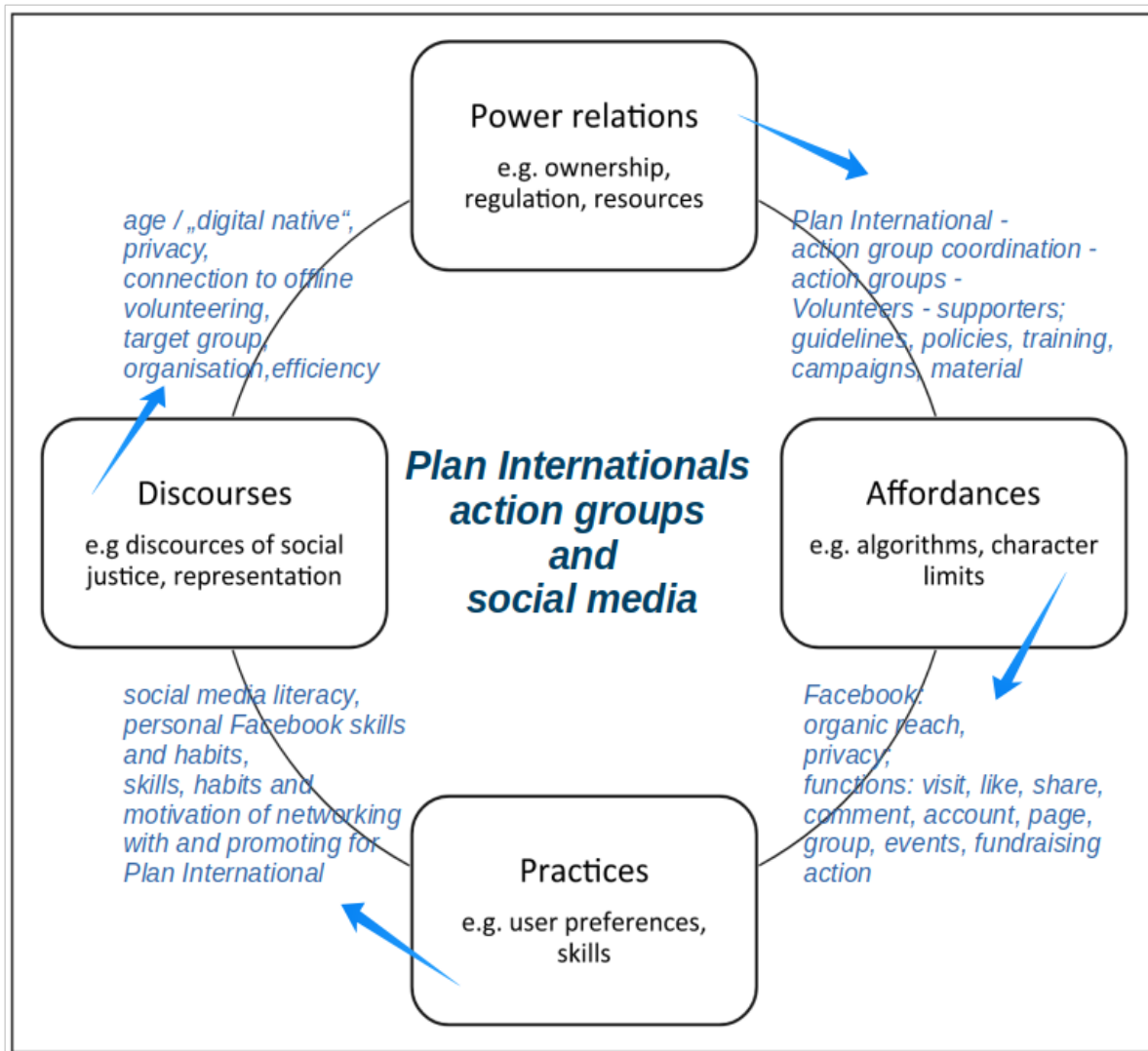
The "analytical model of civic engagement and social media" by Kaun and Uldam (2018, p. 2191), applied to this case study.

Figure 1: Applied "analytical model of civic engagement and social media" by Kaun and Uldam (2018, p. 2190).

Figure 1 demonstrates the interconnectivity between affordance (the algorithm), power relations (the business model) and practices/social media literacy (skills) (Kaun & Uldam, 2018, p. 2192) in this case study.

Besides, the "social media operating system" and the "social media ecosystem" by Thomas (2018, p. 26f.) are applicable analytical models, which are situated at the level of individual organisations:
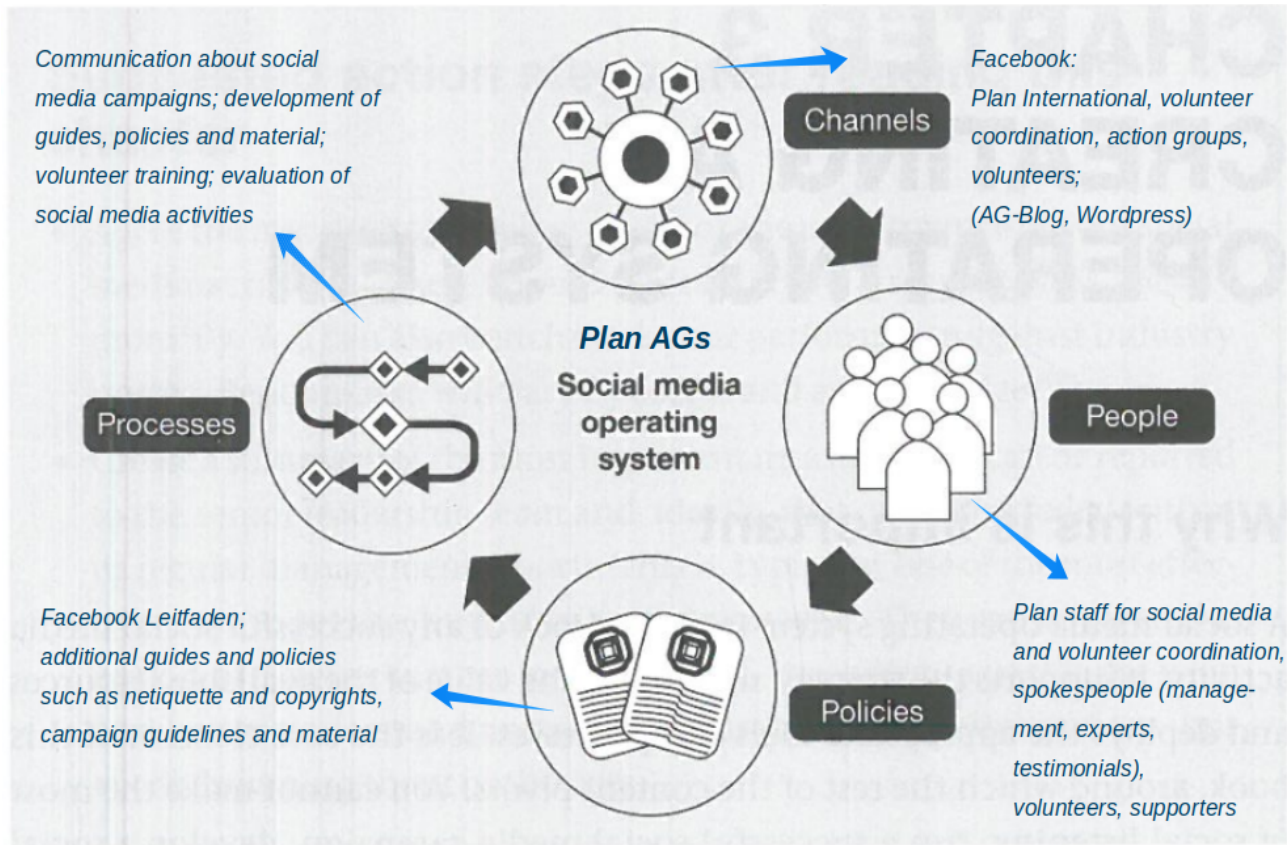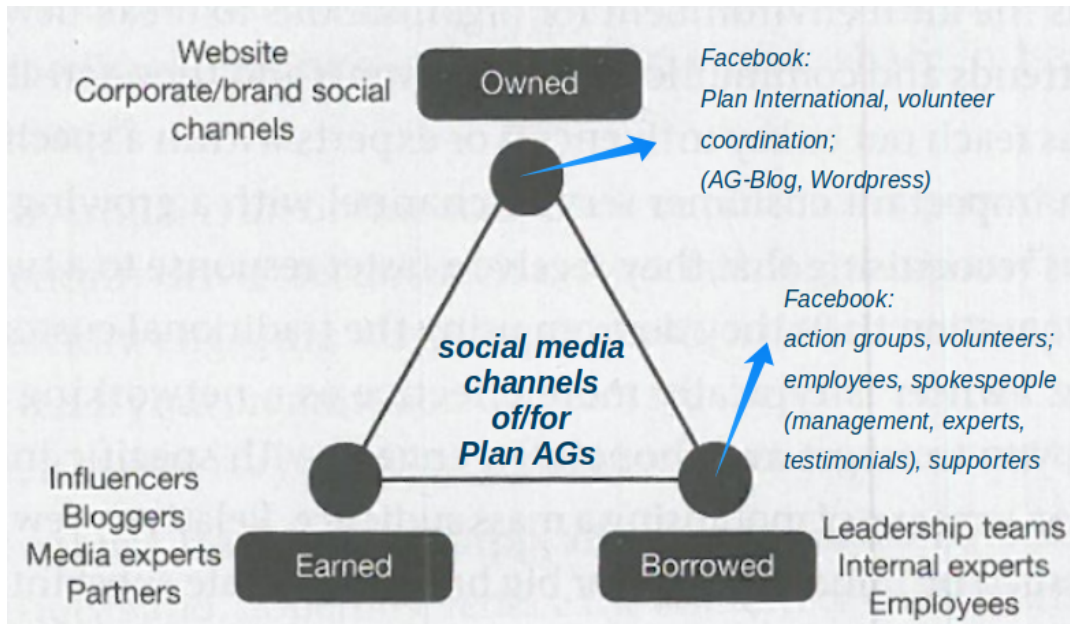
The "social media operating system" by Thomas (2018, p. 26), *applied to this case study.*

Figure 2: Applied "social media operating system" by Thomas (2018, p. 26).

Regarding the specific research subject, the four core components of the social media operating system of Plan Internationals' Volunteer Coordination are the following:

- Channels: Facebook (+ Wordpress Blog)
- People: Volunteers (+ Volunteer Coordination, staff, spokespeople, donors and other stakeholders)
- Policies: Facebook Guide (+ "Netiquette", "Datenschutzhinweise", "SprachGuide")
- Processes: Training (+ evaluation)

The "social media ecosystem" by Thomas (2018, p. 27), *applied to this case study.*

Figure 3: Applied "social media ecosystem" by Thomas (2018, p. 27).

This specific social media strategy of the NPO aims at the "borrowed channels", of volunteers and it's interconnection with the "owned channels", mainly the Facebook page of Plan International Deutschland and the separate page of the Action Group Coordination, see Figure 3. Also Thomas explicitly lists the "borrowed channels" of volunteers (Thomas, 2018, p. 35).

Most importantly for this research project: "The reputation of an organization is shaped more by this 'borrowed' media than it is by its corporate channels. This is partly about reach [...] but also about the impact - we are far more likely to engage with social media content shared by a person than by a faceless organization" (Thomas, 2018, p. 35). This integrates the above named literature regarding a "social media based personal connection" or "parasocial friendship" with the NPO (Pressrove & Pardun, 2016, p. 137; Eimhjellen, 2014; Bauer and Lim, 2019).

The objectives for involving volunteers in social media activities for Plan International are: "Promotion", "Mobilization", "Prospecting ['social selling']", "Recruitment" and "Internal communication" (Thomas, 2018, p. 5ff.) While the priority seems to be:

Mobilization = "encouraging some form of positive stakeholder action, such as visiting a website, registering to access further information or joining a campaign" and fostering "collaborative behaviors" as a "new way to mobilize activists, supporters and other like-minded people behind a shared purpose or common goal" (Thomas, 2018, p. 5f.).

The already taken advice on "how to increase your follower numbers for your own channels", is to "mobilize your existing friends and supporters, especially your employees" (Thomas, 2018, p. 34), which, for an NPO, also includes volunteers.

The further described psychological advantage of this social approach in media is, that people are influenced especially by "content that is shared by friends and associates or people they consider to be influential. If we observe people with whom we can relate [...] behaving in a particular way, we are much more likely to be persuaded to copy them [...]. It makes it relatively easy to recruit and mobilize groups of like-minded individuals" (Thomas, 2018, p. 97f.).

Congruently "the best social media campaigns create the sense of a movement – mobilizing supporters and activists behind a shared purpose or common goal, without the need for formal structures" (Thomas, 2018, p. 108). For the NPO this means to "recognize that the 'ownership' of a campaign is shared between its originators and its supporters." (Thomas, 2018, p. 110). Volunteers are now actively trained to take over "ownership" of a social media campaign, at least to some extent.

Furthermore, it is advisable to "integrate on and offline activity. The most effective social media campaigns include a 'real life' or tangible element for supporters or participants, for example the possibility to meet up or attend an event" (Thomas, 2018, p. 109). This is another good reason for increasing the authentic social media activity of "real life" volunteers.

The main theoretical consequence of these models is that, by increasing the social media skills and literacy of its volunteers, Plan International can increase its organic reach on Facebook. Thus, in addition to the cost-savings and potential organic reach, another important factor for involving volunteers in a nonprofit organization's social media strategy is to increase the personal and parasocial relationship to potential supporters.

From a positive perspective social media ameliorated campaigning, because "the simple act of 'liking' a campaign or signing an online petition provided people with an easy way to demonstrate publicly their support for a particular cause or issue." But from a negative perspective these developments are only a "watered-down version of popular activism", called "slacktivism" or "hacktivism" (Thomas, 2018, p. 5f.).

On the other side, some NPOs not only mobilize via social media, but function mainly through social media ("primarily online-based organisational environment"). Apart from the main advantages – transparency and efficiency (Vikky, 2013, p. 119), online volunteering here also includes the feature of "Micro-Volunteering" (Vikky, 2013, p. 120).

2) Social media platforms

"It pays to focus your attention on those social media channels where your stakeholders are spending the majority of their time or the channels that have the greatest influence on their behavior and attitudes. This is why, understandably, most organizations will devote most of their efforts to

Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, [...]" (Thomas, 2018, p. xxiv f.), just like Plan International.

The "general purpose social media platform" Facebook (Thomas, 2018, p. xxiii) gains its attraction through "the near impossibility of organic reach". But on the other hand its commercial practices, such as NGOs paying for reach, makes significant organic reach "almost unattainable" (Kaun & Uldam, 2018, p. 2192). In addition, social media algorithms appoint the visibility of posts by interaction, which means that already well-positioned organizations, in terms of social resources, meaning "skills to circumvent the algorithm", are further privileged (Kaun & Uldam. 2018, p. 2190). One significant draw for nonprofits is Facebook's "social good" team, which promotes social causes by helping organizations. to reach their fundraising potential (Wallace et al., 2017, p. 2003). Also the presented study of Wallace et al. explicitly narrowed down the analyzed social media platforms to Facebook (2017, p. 2019) and many of the presented studies refer to Facebook as well.

The suggestion of Wallace et al. to ameliorate viral campaigns with the direct opportunity to donate via Facebook (Wallace et al., 2017, p. 2022) is already met by Plan International Deutschland e. V. but not yet by the action groups.

Even when considering only one platform, applying "different channel architectures" (Thomas, 2018, p. 31) can be helpful: There is for once the "complex architecture" with multiple accounts (Thomas, 2018, p. 32) of Plan International and the Action Group Coordination and additionally the over 90 Action Groups, of which some already own a proper social media page.

In the long run it might also be possible to strengthen the connectivity of the German volunteers, and supporters, with the recipients and project partners via social media: Facebook is the primary social media tool worldwide. Although a "pragmatic, balanced approach to digitization" should take into account "the limited access to new technology in some of the countries" where the NPO operates (Thomas, 2018, p. 100).

3) Motivations for charitable social media activities

Another important research stream in the field focuses on the motivations for volunteering through social media. For example Wallace et al. (2017) investigates "the relationship between young people's Conspicuous Donation Behavior (CDB) on social media platforms and their offline donation behavior, specifically intentions to donate and volunteer time" (Wallace et al., 2017, p. 2003). Whereas CDB is "the act of donating to charitable causes via the visible display of charitable merchandise or the public recognition of the donation" (2009, p. 16) (Wallace et al., 2017, p. 2004).

Interestingly, according to Anik et al. (2014), social media campaigns aiming at "making a personal difference to the lives of specific others" may enhance self-oriented CDB (Wallace et al., 2017, p.

2021). In our case, Plan International is already using this approach, as many of the volunteers are "godfathers" or individual sponsors ("Pate/Patin") of a specific child, with which they can even have a personal relationship.

As Wallace et al. additionally point out, with reference to Bennett (2016), applying emotive pictures in social media campaigns to 'tell a story' about the organization, might create a connection to the potential donor's ideals and values to the NPO and enhance their feeling of a 'warm glow' of giving (Wallace et al., 2017, p. 2021). Regarding our research topic, volunteers definitely have the potential to tell emotive stories about their unpaid work for the NPO and they could also be a positive example of self-oriented engagement on social media.

Furthermore, a study by Kim and Lee focuses on the "the young generation" only, remarking the "unique social venue to engage [them] in philanthropy", provided by social media. They explain this through social networks and "networking capabilities". Moreover "social capital, an outcome of the extensive use of [social media] was as an important driver of users' attitude and subjective norms toward volunteering via [social media]" (Kim & Lee, 2014, p. 160). But the social capital to be gained on social media is probably not that big for older people, since their network is less likely to be active on social media. On the other hand, especially with the somewhat "old" or outdated Facebook this is still changing.

Kim and Um analyzed "the effect of recognition for supporting a cause on the social networking site Facebook" (Kim, Um, 2016, p. 1863). Their relevant findings are:
- "social recognition, high cause-involvement and high self-efficacy resulted in more positive behavioral outcomes" and
- "social recognition served as a higher motivator to donate and volunteer for people with low cause-involvement" (Kim, Um, 2016, p. 1863).

When looking at the motivation of Plan-Volunteers to engage on Facebook, regarding the findings of Kim and Um (2016, p. 1863), one could conclude that they have a high cause-involvement, because they actually volunteer in the real-life. What can be altered by Plan International, might be the social recognition, once a social network of volunteers, staff, donors and other stakeholders is built, the social recognition for the individual, given by (the reach of the) network is probably increased. The social recognition for volunteers could also be supported by Plan International, especially in their learning phase.

Another idea is to offer an "online 'I've donated' symbol', such as a tick or a color" in order to motivate other-oriented CDB (Wallace et al., 2017, p. 2022). This advice is not yet met by Plan International. Thus, for example, a Facebook profile picture frame for their donors and volunteers, as known from other organizations or civic movements, could be worth trying. Apart from that, volunteers could state their work for the NPO in their personal information on Facebook.

4) Social media for the older generation

Given that the participants in this study skew older (as detailed later) and high social media usage is a behavior often associated with younger individuals, issues concerning social media training targeting older volunteers warranted specific research attention.

The previously-cited studies by Kim and Lee (2014) and Wallace et al. (2017) focused solely on the young generation and on engaging younger individuals through social media with philanthropic aims. This means that there can be substantial differences when researching the same topic among older volunteers. Thomas (2018), on the other hand, contains a special focus on the older generation. Further information on the topic can also be found in Filsinger & Freitag (2019). Older individuals may have particular difficulties with regards to their adaptation and introduction to social media, and may be more uninterested than younger generations in adapting their established behavioral patterns to accommodate social media demands (Thayer & Ray, 2006; Thomas, 2018).

Empirically, the 50-69 age group in Germany reports far lower social media stats than its younger counterparts: according to a 2019 survey by ARD & ZDF, 19% of them are Facebook users, compared to 48% of 14- to 29-year-olds, 46% of 30- to 49-year-olds and 6% of those over 70 years old (ARD & ZDF; 2019).

The key motivation, especially for older aged users, is to "commit to continuous learning. Social media is not going to go away - it has become to embedded in all of our professional and private lives" (Thomas, 2018, p. 201).

5) Social media training

According to the research on the topic compiled by Pynes (2013), for an effective training to take place, specific training objectives should be defined beforehand, with consideration given to how each objective was targeted. On the other hand, Chang et al. (2013) highlight that nonprofit training practices are seldom systematic and tend instead to be offered more ad hoc on an as-needed basis, unlike in corporations. When designing a training these additional insights might be taken into consideration:

According to the relevant social media groups defined by Thomas (2018, p. 44 ff.), from Plan Internationals organisational perspective, the volunteers can mostly be defined as social media "sharers" or "users". But, as an ultimate goal, some might become "spokespeople", in the complex channel architecture of several Plan-Action Groups, strengthened through training and organizational support.

The most effective way to mobilize sharers is to: "provide training [...] in how to make the most of social media. This is different from the standard social media training programs that often focus on the negatives and the things to avoid and, as a consequences, tend to dissuade [...] from getting involved" (Thomas, 2018, p. 44 f.).

Therefore the NPO should "supplement formal policies with informal guidelines that adopt a less legalistic, more friendly tone of voice" (Thomas, 2018, p. 47), which can be said about the the Facebook Guide for AGs.

For the group of supporters, a "sample note" on "How you can support us though your personal social media channels." is suggested: "As supporters you can play an important role in helping us spread the word about our work across your social networks" (Thomas, 2018, p. 36). In our case this sample note is exceeded by far with the offered Facebook Guide, which targets the "sharers" among the volunteers. This could be complemented by these specific measures for "supporters".

Adopting the informality of language and tone and additional emoticons, emojis and acronyms and hashtags "can be something of a challenge for senior professionals" (Thomas, 2018, p. 196). Thus the set of guidelines should also cover the appropriate and not appropriate language, the tone of voice and the type of conversations in which to get involved (Thomas, 2018, p. 111). The language is not explicitly treated in the Facebook Guide, but there is a little information about that included in other guides for Plan volunteers. Nevertheless this could or should be treated in follow-up training.

But then the linguistic capabilities are still easier to adopt, for senior professionals, then visual expressions and skills (Thomas, 2018, p. 196). Seniors often need to further develop their visual literacy to better express messages in photographs, info-graphics or even films (Thomas, 2018, p. 198). Therefore the practitioner advises a training by "challenging yourself to replace a standard piece of written communication with a visual or infographic" (Thomas, 2018, p. 201).

6) Evaluation of social media activities

Currently the Volunteer Coordination is in the phase of analysis:
"Meeting the needs and expectations of your stakeholder requires a thorough analysis of their social media habits and preferences, focusing on the following questions:
- What channels do they use?
- What types of content and experience do they appear to find most valuable, based on what they are sharing and/or commenting on?
- What do they want/expect from you when it comes to communication?
- How effective is your current communication with them and how might it be improved through the use of social media?

- How else could you meet their needs that are currently not being addressed?" (Thomas, 2018, p. 11)

The Volunteer Coordination already measures social media success regularly, as advised by Thomas (2018, p. 15ff.). The effect of the training methods should be measured accordingly (reach, engagement, advocacy, action and impact) but due to the limited extent of this study, such a comparison is not included.

7) Further interpretation of the study results

Socio-demographics:

Nearly 80% of the participants are women. And the most part, over 50%, possesses a university degree, which represents a higher educational level than the average population (32,5%; Statista, 2020b). This also reflects the prime target group of donors and sponsors of Plan International. Interestingly it was found that a high social status is contributive to volunteering offline and online, and online voluntary behaviour is often complementary to offline volunteering (Wehner et al. 2018, p.11).

The most part of the participants (38,6%) are volunteering for Plan International for more than 10 years. Only 12,5% are active for less than one year. The fact that many have been active for a long time, can be interesting in terms of organizational change in the direction of online activism.

The biggest occupational group are the employees with 42%, followed by the retirees with 35%. Thus the share of retirees is much higher than in the average population (approximately 21,5%) (Statista, 2018).

Only few participants live in rural areas and the most parts lives in urban cities and towns. 83% live at least in a smaller town ("größere Kleinstadt"). Thus the participants are more urban, than the general population (BBSR, 2020; Urbanisierungsgrad Deutschland, 2018: 77,31%; Statista, 2020b).

Social media involvement:

When participants were asked, which of the several activities listed, should be covered in a potential Facebook training, the most popular choices were: the creation of engaging content (38.6% of respondents); outreach expansion and networking (37.5%); and sharing of Plan International campaign content (36.4%). The least popular choice, with only 8% of participants being in favor of its inclusion, was Facebook account creation. Thus it should be considered to exclude the basics from the standard training from volunteers, and offer additional support in this area, if needed.

Taking into account the limited and varying case numbers in the study, a correlation matrix might be used as an additional exploratory method, see appendix J. This reveals that:

- There is no significant correlation of age or gender with Facebook skills.
- The Facebook skills are positively correlated with the frequency of using Facebook privately and for Plan International, as well as with the goals for digital engagement.
- The frequency of using Facebook for Plan International is positively correlated with the motivation and the goals, even with a higher coefficient than the skills.
- The interest in a Facebook training is positively correlated with, the roles web-administration and public relations, as well as with the goals and the motivation.
- The Facebook skills are positively correlated with the roles web-administration and public relations.
- The roles web-administration and public relations are also correlated with each other, meaning that they are often performed by the same volunteers in the Action Groups. The roles are also positively correlated with either the goals or the motivation.
- But only regarding the role web-administration there is a significant middle strong positive correlation with the frequency of using Facebook for Plan International.

Comparison to the Facebook statistics:

Compared to the Facebook statistics of the "Plan-Aktionsgruppen" page there are differences to be found:
- The share of women is lower on Facebook, than in the „real world" of Plan-volunteers, regarding the fans and subscribers (56%) even more than the reached people (60%).
- The share of older people is lower on Facebook than in the „real world" of Plan-volunteers, regarding the fans and subscribers even more than for the reached people

Facebook: age-groups	volunteers	Facebook fans	Facebook subscribers	Facebook reach
13 - 17	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
18 - 24	5.0 %	6 %	7 %	5 %
25 - 34	5.9 %	19 %	19 %	12 %
35 - 44	6.9 %	17 %	17 %	18 %
45 - 54	16.8 %	23 %	23 %	28 %
55 - 64	30.7 %	20 %	20 %	22 %
> 65	34.7 %	15 %	15 %	17 %

Table 1: Comparison to the Facebook statistics of the "Plan-Aktionsgruppen" page.
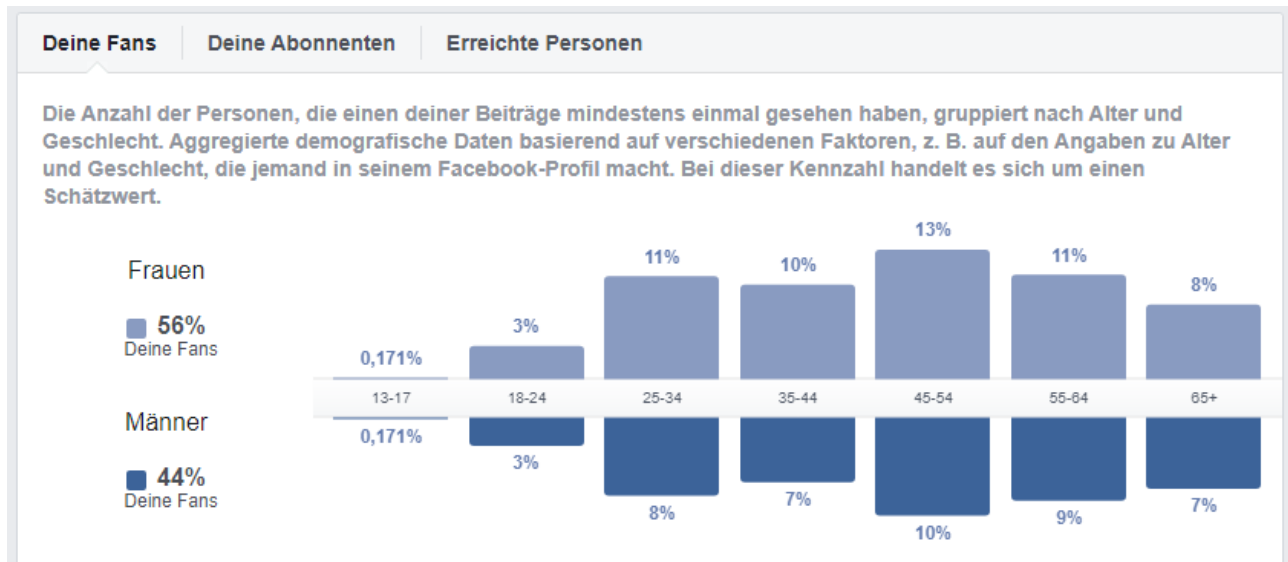
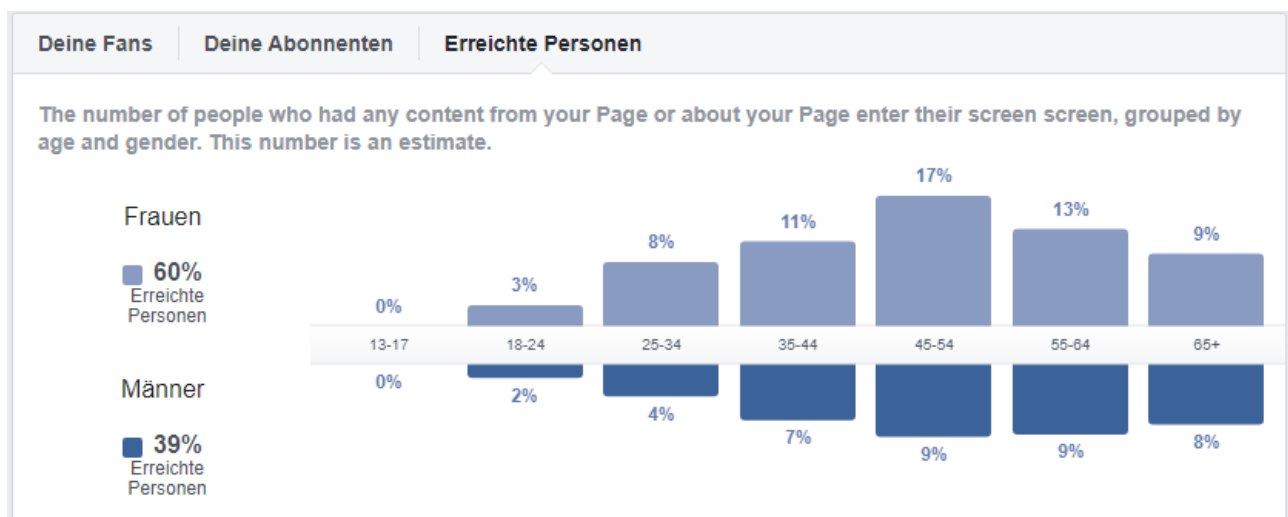Figure 4: Facebook statistics of the "Plan-Aktionsgruppen" page: Fans.

Figure 5: Facebook statistics of the "Plan-Aktionsgruppen" page: Reached people.

It can be assumed that the algorithm of Facebook does assort rather old people to Plan International's Action Groups, which would be congruent to the main donor and volunteer profile. Thus the stigma of applying Facebook in order to reach young people, as issued by some volunteers, should be overcome. Also on Facebook the main target group of the rather old volunteers will be rather old social media users.

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