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NGO Global Expansion: Models to Successfully Introduce the American Cancer Society's 'Relay for Life' in Chile

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NGO GLOBAL EXPANSION: MODELS TO SUCCESSFULLY INTRODUCE THE
AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY'S 'RELAY FOR LIFE' IN CHILE

By

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of the Requirements for
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Thesis Summary

The broad objective of this study is to apply an understanding of the global expansion of non-governmental organizations by incorporating personal experiences with a particular non-governmental organization's fundraising event and a nation where that event is not yet present in order to recommend potential best practices for market entry. The specific objectives of this study are outlined as follows:

- (1) To study the existing literature surrounding global non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- (2) To investigate the American Cancer Society and its history of global expansions and aspirations for further expansion, acknowledging the existing successes of the organization and the challenges that it faces.
- (3) To determine the feasibility of a partnership between the American Cancer Society and any of the existing cancer control NGOs in Chile, according to the American Cancer Society's standardized partnership and licensing criteria.
- (4) To draw an analysis of the effectiveness of the existing process of global expansion of the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life, from initially seeking foreign cancer control organizations with which to partner, to the ultimate licensing agreement, and to provide comments and suggestions for improvements and changes to the expansionary strategy.

The methods used for obtaining the information necessary to draw informed conclusions and suggestions in this study consisted of a literature review, both of the existing

academic materials surrounding global NGOs and related fields and of the American Cancer Society's publications, data, and some of its confidential licensing materials, and of interviews with key informants with expansive knowledge of the American Cancer Society's global programs and expansions. The study results in an expanded knowledge set of the American Cancer Society's current practices. As found in the study, the American Cancer Society relies heavily on coalition building by partnering with NGOs abroad and creating licensing agreements as partners to implement Global Relay For Life events. The American Cancer Society's process for partnership, and thus, expansion, is one that is standardized. At present, as South America stands out as a region lacking any presence of Global Relay For Life events, it is possible to conclude that the American Cancer Society's existing standardized strategy may not prove to be viable for engaging Latin American cancer control NGOs to partner with. Thus, it is necessary to recommend improvements and alternatives to the American Cancer Society's existing expansionary strategy. The study not only provides recommendations for the American Cancer Society to partner with a cancer control organization in Chile using its standardized strategy, but also provides recommendations for improvements to the existing strategy when attempting to enter into the Latin American market. Many of the strategy recommendations increase the visibility of the American Cancer Society's Global Relay For Life movement among cancer control organizations in Latin America and facilitate communication among potential coalition members. Alternatively, it is also possible to recommend a restructuring of the American Cancer Society's traditional coalition building amongst NGOs model to include universities or other likened institutions.

Abstract

The research identifies and evaluates the feasibility of potential models for successful international expansion of a large non-governmental cancer control organization, the American Cancer Society (ACS), into Chile through the introduction of a signature event, Global Relay For Life. The purpose of this study is to incorporate the conventional wisdom of existing research on the topic of the global expansion of NGOs and personal experiences with a particular NGO and foreign market to recommend best methods for introducing the NGO into the foreign market. The research question relates to the global expansion of NGOs, but narrows the scope of the topic to the feasibility of a single NGO fundraising event, ACS's Global Relay For Life, and a single foreign market, Chile, through the development of models to successfully introduce Global Relay For Life in Chile. The methodology of this research includes archival research of existing literature on the global expansion of NGOs, a literature search of ACS's own documentation, and interviews with key informants connected to ACS. This study results in a more clear understanding of ACS's global expansion pertaining to its Global Relay For Life event by illustrating that, at present, it forms coalitions by partnering with other NGOs and uses a standardized approach to expansion. A conclusion that may be drawn from the results regarding ACS's standardized approach and varying success is that it may benefit from variations in its expansionary strategy. Recommendations for effectively varying ACS's entry strategy in order to succeed in the Chilean market are outlined in the report, and include suggestions for increased contact between ACS and potential partner organizations as well as suggestions for altering the partnership process.

Introduction

While considerable research has been conducted on the globalization of international for-profit corporations, scant attention has been devoted to the recent and rapid expansion of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs are significant on a global scale.ⁱ Take, for example, the American Cancer Society, which has expanded its signature event, Relay For Life, into more than 20 countries. Relay For Life's entry into each new country follows the same steps and essentially uses the same model for growth, yet with varying outcomes of fundraising success.ⁱⁱ As of now, there is no comprehensive research evaluating the successful expansion of this NGO fundraising event, although the gap in model development and testing should be addressed as it could have major implications for the effectiveness of the NGO and would benefit stakeholders around the world, all of whom have an interest in cancer control. This research will identify and evaluate the feasibility of potential models for successful international expansion of a large non-governmental organization, the American Cancer Society (ACS), into Chile through the introduction of a signature event, Relay For Life.

Introduction to NGO Research

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is an organization belonging to the third sector of the economy, meaning that it is neither a governmental organization nor a for-profit business. According to the World Bank, "the term NGO can be applied to any non-profit organization which is independent from government. NGOs are typically value-based

organizations which depend, in whole or in part, on charitable donations and voluntary service. Although the NGO sector has become increasingly professionalized over the last two decades, principles of altruism and voluntarism remain key defining characteristics.”ⁱⁱⁱ There are different types of social purpose NGOs in existence, with size or level of operation differences ranging from community based organizations to international NGOs. Additionally, there are different types of NGOs in the scope of what the organizations aim to accomplish. Some NGOs fall into the operational category, focusing on the design and implementation of projects. Other organizations are considered to be advocacy NGOs, which primarily support a cause by raising awareness of it.

Since the onset of non-governmental organizations, the general role of NGOs in civil society has expanded. Meanwhile, many individual NGOs have grown, as well, in their reach, a phenomenon that is explained well by the Iranian Studies Group at MIT: “with the improvement in communications, more locally-based groups, referred to as grass-roots organizations or community based organizations, have become active at the national or even the global level. Increasingly this occurs through the formation of coalitions with other NGOs for particular goals.”^{iv} Importantly, the trending expansion and formation of coalitions has held true in the case of the development of Global Relay For Life.

According to New York University, coalition building is the “ongoing process of cultivating and maintaining relationships with a diverse network of individuals and organizations who share a common set of principles and values.”^v Coalitions can be

formed across all sectors, but also tend to arise amongst NGOs as the members of a coalition tend to share values and common goals. Within a coalition, organizations often work together to implement a specific shared campaign or event. Coalitions are thought of as formal networks, and by working together toward shared goals, “coalitions may be stronger and more enduring than more informal networks.”^{vi} Coalitions can be formed amongst NGOs across the world. Forming coalitions with cancer control NGOs of similar scope and caliber in other countries is a best practice of the American Cancer Society that tends to help to ensure the success of Global Relay For Life events.

Overview of The American Cancer Society’s Relay For Life

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life movement is the world’s largest fundraising initiative to end cancer. Fundamentally, Relay For Life is an event that focuses on fundraising and on three key aims: celebrate, remember, and fight back. Relay For Life unites communities around the world to celebrate cancer survivors, remember lost loved ones, and take action to fight back against cancer. By participating in a Relay For Life event, and walking around a track for up to 24 hours, individuals and teams raise money and awareness for the American Cancer Society’s many missions. Funds raised by the American Cancer Society support cancer research, efforts for cancer prevention and education, and free information and services for cancer patients in need. The American Cancer Society is a hybrid, or integrated NGO type, proving to focus on both advocacy and operations, meeting as many of the demands for the fight against cancer as necessary.

Relay For Life expanded in a relatively short time from humble beginnings into an international staple of the fight against cancer. Relay For Life was founded by Dr. Gordy Klatt, a colorectal surgeon who wanted to raise funds for his local American Cancer Society. The first event was called a Run Against Cancer, and for 24 hours in May of 1985 in Tacoma, Washington, Dr. Klatt ran more than 83 miles and raised \$27,000 for the American Cancer Society. From there, what became the Relay For Life movement quickly grew across the United States. By now, across the United States, there are more than 5,000 Relay For Life events, with 3 million volunteers and 500,000 cancer survivors participating. More than \$5 billion have been raised.

From the beginning, Relay For Life founder Dr. Klatt has supported fighting back against cancer worldwide. In 2012, when Klatt, himself, was diagnosed with cancer, he wrote in a message to staff, “throughout the years I have spoken and written about how cancer can personally affect everyone. It affects the rich, the poor, and all nationalities and cultures around the world.”^{vii} The American Cancer society supports not only public health as it relates to cancer in the United States, but it contributes to global health programs and goals as well. Relay For Life became a global movement in 1996 when Cancer Research United Kingdom (CRUK) became the first licensed partner of the American Cancer Society’s Relay For Life outside of the United States. International NGOs such as CRUK are critical to coalition building with the American Cancer Society and ultimately to the successful development and implementation of Global Relay For Life events.

Over time, Global Relay For Life has expanded through the American Cancer Society's formation of a sustainably growing international cancer control coalition and now operates in 24 countries. In each country where Global Relay For Life operates, the American Cancer Society has signed a partnership and licensing agreement with a cancer control NGO well-established in the foreign market. The American Cancer Society has essentially built a coalition of cancer-fighting organizations around the world whose common short-term goals include raising funds by implementing successful Relay For Life events and whose long-term goals of cancer control align. Interestingly, there are not, at present, any licensed partners of the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life in South America, and therefore no Global Relay For Life events operating in South America.

The Current Situation in Latin America and Chile

A recent American Cancer Society publication outlines the overwhelming cancer burden in Latin America. Called an epidemiological transition, in Latin America, the disease burden is shifting from infectious disease to chronic conditions like cancer. In fact, the rates of cancer have escalated in the region. Economic development plays a role in the cancer burden of Latin America, as it can be seen that cervical cancer is a continued threat to lesser developed countries and regions, while the more industrialized countries begin experiencing increased rates of prostate and breast cancer. Large-scale dietary changes and tobacco use may be to blame.

The weakness of public health systems in Latin America correlates with a weakness in cancer control, although the possible exceptions of Chile and Uruguay, in this aspect, are noted. As the failure to focus on health challenges related to the evolution of chronic diseases, including cancer, threatens to bankrupt the public health systems of the region, issues of economic development and cancer control are thus even more connected. A further challenge in the Latin American region is the stigma surrounding cancer. Unfortunately, there is a culture of silence surrounding the disease and the disease can sometimes be viewed fatalistically, without perception of options for survival. Even more unfortunately, “given income inequalities and the weak health infrastructure, often options are indeed limited.”^{viii} Many of the challenges to cancer control in Latin America simultaneously limit entry into the region of an organization such as the American Cancer Society to operate effectively and necessitate that such an organization does enter and make a difference.

Thus far, the American Cancer Society has collaborated with and influenced many programs and NGOs servicing the fight against cancer in Latin America, in an effort of coalition building. “Over the past several years, ACS has collaborated with NGOs and institutions in countries throughout the Latin American region. In the region, ACS has worked on increasing civil society engagement in cancer control through trainings, technical assistance, funding, and building institutional capacity in cancer control advocacy and policy planning, patient empowerment, tobacco control, and NGO management.”^{ix} In Chile, specifically, the American Cancer Society has been instrumental in establishing both tobacco control campaigns and HPV prevention

campaigns. However, in order for cancer control in Chile to progress sustainably at the needed rate, increased fundraising efforts will be needed. A partnership with the American Cancer Society and the implementation of Relay For Life events is a clear means by which Chile could achieve the needed level of fundraising and advocacy that will make the desired difference in its national cancer control.

Entry Strategy of Global Relay For Life

A partnership between a Chilean NGO and the American Cancer Society will benefit all involved parties in the advancement of their respective goals. According to material that is provided to potential partners, Relay For Life benefits a partnering cancer control organization as it provides an evidence-based model to accelerate efforts to educate the public, government, and healthcare community about the cancer burden, mobilizes the community to recruit volunteers to become engaged in cancer control activities, promotes survivorship and challenges the stigma of cancer as an absolute death sentence, establishes a community presence to raise public awareness of an organization's programs and services, and develops a year-round fundraising tool. Additionally, Relay For Life benefits communities by allowing communities to save lives through promoting cancer awareness, prevention, and early detection programs, providing support in times of need through programs and services, empowering people to fight back against cancer through Relay and advocacy efforts, allowing emotional healing as Relay recognizes family, friends, and neighbors who have been profoundly affected by cancer, and by reducing stigma. Finally, the promotional material makes known the worldwide benefit

of the Global Relay For Life movement in that it leverages limited global resources to fight cancer by creating sustainable, self-creating, self-replicating programs.

As of now, there is no Relay For Life in South America, though entering the South American “market,” so to say, is a main priority of the Multilateral Global Health Advocacy group of the American Cancer Society. Throughout the various market entries or global expansions of Relay For Life, the strategic plan for entry is standardized. Typically, a cancer control NGO outside of the United States approaches the American Cancer Society in order to begin the partnership process. Occasionally, the American Cancer Society connects with existing contacts at cancer organizations in other countries in order to initiate the partnership. It is rare, though possible, that a third party, much like myself or any other student or volunteer, could connect the American Cancer Society to a cancer control NGO abroad.

After initial contact between the American Cancer Society and a cancer organization abroad, there is some basic criteria that must be met before a partnership can be considered. The mandatory criteria is that the organization must be a non-governmental organization, must service all cancer sites, must not be affiliated with any tobacco companies, and must have grassroots capability. Once the criteria is proven to be met by the potentially partnering organization, the American Cancer Society will send on an inquiry packet containing a marketing video, flyer describing what the Global Relay For Life movement is, information regarding the American Cancer Society Global Health program, and a Relay Readiness Template.

The Relay Readiness Template asks for more information regarding the country and the organization. Key areas of interest regarding the country and its history are the legal and cultural barriers, economics, politics, memberships, and primary languages. Important organizational information asked in the template include the mission, priorities, programs, services, budget, staffing, structure, volunteer involvement, and foreign fundraising. The Relay Readiness template is designed to provide insight into whether the mission, goals, and organization of the potential partner are similar in scope to the traditional Relay For Life model and whether the organization is adequately prepared to implement the Global Relay For Life program. After the American Cancer Society receives an organization's Relay Readiness Template, another round of vetting occurs, and if the organization still seems to be a viable partner, a preliminary Relay For Life development meeting will be arranged.

At a Relay For Life development meeting, it is instrumental that the partner organization's senior staff attend. The meeting's agenda will include a criteria review of the organization, a self-assessment regarding budget and staffing, a timeline for implementation, an introduction to the licensing standards, and expectations for Relay For Life growth and the submission of data to Global Relay For Life. At the time of the face-to-face meeting, a memorandum of understanding will be signed. If, at the meeting, an inability to implement a Relay For Life event becomes apparent, alternate American Cancer Society programs can be discussed. If mutually agreed to move forward, an official License Agreement is provided for the partnering organization's review and

signature. The License is a three-year commitment, and outlines the American Cancer Society annual licensing fee (5% of gross revenue), all of which will be restricted for the purpose of supporting cancer prevention and cancer control activities.

The final step of a partnership between the American Cancer Society and a foreign NGO is planning and training, which will be provided by the American Cancer Society both virtually and face-to-face. Typically, the steps in the process of partnership take from nine months to one year to complete. A country's first Relay For Life event should take place no less than nine months after the start of training, as it is important to ensure that all possible effort is undergone in order for the event to be successful, as shown by the ratio of expenses to income. Although it is important to recognize that it is more significant in the scheme of Global Relay For Life to grow sustainably and have long-term profitability than to be profitable in its first year, an unsuccessful first year can be detrimental to the long-term motivation and goal orientation of a partnering organization. The American Cancer Society does all that it can to promote success and sustainable growth among partnering organizations.

Suggestions for Entry Using the American Cancer Society's Current Strategy

If the American Cancer Society's current strategy of contact with a potential partner and the traditional vetting and training process are to be used to enter the Chilean "market" with Relay For Life, then it is recommendable to focus efforts on identifying a Chilean

cancer control NGO that fits all of the American Cancer Society's criteria for international partnership.

Identifying the ideal cancer control organization in Chile has proven difficult. However, it is possible to recommend at least one organization for further coordination with the American Cancer Society, noting some key identifiers that as of yet prove unavailable.

The National Cancer Corporation in Chile, or La Corporación Nacional del Cáncer (CONAC), is a non-profit, non-government entity whose missions are education, prevention, and early detection of cancer. CONAC also consists of medical centers that provide safe and reliable services at low cost to patients.^x Many of CONAC's missions seem to align with those of the American Cancer Society, though it is worth noting that the American Cancer Society and many of its existing partners are not in the business of running medical centers, but focus their funding on research, prevention and education, and services assisting cancer patients and survivors. It is difficult to decipher whether CONAC is a cancer control NGO of reasonable scope and similarity to ACS or if it is more likened to a medical center in general. It is also difficult to gain insight into the staffing and volunteering structure of the organization and its outside affiliations.

Alternatively, it is clear to see that CONAC's early detection, prevention, and patient assistance programs connect it to the American Cancer Society's goals and that its community engagement and fundraising are good indicators of the sort of coordination needed to successfully implement a Relay For Life event. It is evident, when living in

Santiago and keeping an eye out for existing cancer control fundraisers, that many are in support of CONAC and its programs.

Suggestions for Improvements to the American Cancer Society's Current Strategy

For some time now, the American Cancer Society has insisted that partnering with South American cancer control organizations and implementing Global Relay For Life programs is a priority. When viewing the world map and the highlighted countries where Global Relay For Life operates, there is one large and apparent untouched continent. It is also abundantly apparent that many of the existing Global Relay For Life events are held in countries where English is one of the languages spoken. Another priority of the American Cancer Society is to expand Global Relay For Life in more countries that will necessitate overcoming a language barrier. South America can offer a major opportunity for the American Cancer Society because of the well-established and successful Relay For Life in Puerto Rico (Relevo Por La Vida Puerto Rico), which is conducted in Spanish and which directly raises funds for the American Cancer Society. The directors at the American Cancer Society already know that the leadership team of Puerto Rico's Relay For Life can be of critical assistance in the training of future Spanish-speaking partner organizations. A necessary first step seems to be that said leadership team could also be instrumental in connecting potential partner organizations to the American Cancer Society.

It is apparent that there are already global conferences held by the American Cancer Society. Senior staff from potential partner organizations in South America should not only be invited to global conferences, but the last day of each conference should be dedicated to meeting with organizations and beginning the vetting process for partnership. Furthermore, as soon as a first partner is established in South America, likely in Uruguay, as the partnership process has already begun there, cancer control organizations of other South American nations should be invited to the first Relay For Life event, along with staff from the American Cancer Society, and meetings should be planned there after the event in order to begin the vetting process.

Moreover, when strategizing an entry into the Chilean market, the American Cancer Society should emphasize coordination with its current connections in Chile as far as its tobacco and HPV control programs, as those connections could be influential in organizing heightened contact between the American Cancer Society and potential partners. Likewise, there is currently a Communications Director at CONAC named Nancy Ortiz who has served as a Global Ambassador of Cancer in Chile to the American Cancer Society, so this connection between the two organizations must be utilized to ensure contact.

The American Cancer Society could also be served well by increasing contact with doctoral students in South America who have studied in the United States and had contact with Relay For Life there, as these students could be instrumental in sharing a passion for the event with cancer organizations in the home country. In fact, this is the means by

which the first South American Relay For Life event likely will be set up. Uruguayan doctoral student Sabrina Fischer became acquainted with the Relay For Life movement while studying in the United States and is now in the process of connecting an Uruguayan cancer control NGO with which she works with the American Cancer Society in order to facilitate the first steps of the partnership process between the organizations.^{xi} If this model proves successful in introducing Global relay For Life in Uruguay, then it would be sensible to expand this strategy across Latin America by ensuring that students can more easily access American Cancer Society contacts so as to connect the NGO to potential partners.

Finally, there is a much less conventional suggestion which would require some major changes to the American Cancer Society's current strategy and licensing procedures. It is possible that in order to find success in Latin America, it cannot be left to cancer control NGOs to seek a partnership with the American Cancer Society and to fully undertake the necessary planning and sourcing necessary to implement a successful Relay For Life event. Of course, cancer control NGOs in South America would benefit greatly from the funds that a fundraising event such as Relay For Life could bring about, but the issue for many of the cancer control NGOs in South America seems to be limited infrastructure, staffing, and volunteer capacity that would render the organizations unable to successfully implement such as large-scale fundraising event. The ultimate recommendation is to partner directly with universities in South America and allow student organizations to plan nations' Global Relay For Life events similar to the Collegiate Relay For Life events held in the United States. Of course, this would still

necessitate licensing with the partner cancer control organization which would receive the funds raised, but it would diverge from the convention of necessitating that cancer control organizations plan the premier Global Relay For Life events entirely on their own. Personal familiarity with Collegiate Relay For Life in the United States facilitates the idea that students are committed to causes and capable of successful event planning and fundraising on a level rivaling that of, or even exceeding that of any community-based Relay For Life planned directly through a local site of the American Cancer Society. Through experience as a university student in Chile, it seems likely that an NGO fundraising event such as Relay For Life would be a sensible endeavor for a student organization to take on. In Chile, student organizations are somewhat dissimilar to those in the United States, as there are student organizations for almost every fathomable interest on campuses across the United States, but at universities in Chile, the only opportunities for student involvement are political or work toward a non-profit cause. Thus, most university students in Chile do seem to seek involvement in non-profit and NGO events, especially those at school, and would likely welcome the opportunity to be involved with an event of Global Relay For Life's scope and significance. A student organization meant for planning a Relay For Life event seems feasible across campuses in Chile. It is evident that in order to succeed at expanding into South America, the American Cancer Society must expand upon and make changes to its existing strategy for market entry, and restructuring its partnership process to allow for student organizations to plan Relay For Life events in Latin America, and beginning in Chile, could very well be the change needed to make a difference in the American Cancer Society's effective entry and eventual success in the region.

Conclusion

This study sought to expand the information available regarding the global expansion of NGOs and to encounter the best methods for entry of the American Cancer Society's Global Relay For Life event in Chile and Latin America. In order to gain a true understanding of the global expansion of NGOs, let alone contribute to the academic literature on the topic, much more research, including literature review, interviewing, data collection, and personal, volunteer, and work experience is necessary. Moreover, in order to be informed and able to give realistic recommendations to the American Cancer Society regarding its international partnering and expansionary efforts, greater access to the American Cancer Society's key contacts and data would be necessary. The ability to make educated recommendations for expansionary strategy could likewise only be possible with adequate time and express permission from the American Cancer Society and its partners to sufficiently test any new models that may be innovated from a deeper understanding of the NGO's current global standing, plans, and priorities.

Nonetheless, with limited time, resources, and permissions, some results, conclusions, and recommendations were made possible in this study. As far as studying the American Cancer Society's Global Relay For Life event to gain more information on its current strategy, the result appeared to be that the American Cancer Society uses a standardized approach for partnership and market entry and that it attempts to build coalitions with partnering organizations in order to work together toward the common goal of controlling cancer. By analyzing the American Cancer Society's existing successes in expanding

Relay For Life globally as well as by analyzing the existing weaknesses of the organization in strategizing to enter the Latin American market, it is possible to conclude that in order to successfully expand Global Relay For Life into Latin America, and, more specifically, into Chile, changes and improvements should be made to the expansionary strategy. Educated recommendations for strategy changes and improvements were based off of personal experiences with the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life and with the foreign market of Chile, and included both ways to increase the visibility and contact of the American Cancer Society in Latin America and ways to reconsider the partnership structure that is currently standardized.

It is recommendable that further research be conducted on the global expansion, market entry, and sustained success of international NGOs and their fundraising events. It would benefit NGOs and their constituents around the world to increase the knowledge set regarding the global expansion of NGOs by increasing the likelihood of the implementation of well-established best practices and tested models for market entry and sustainable NGO growth.

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