Fwd: FYSA FOLLOW UP: META/FB Points of Contact and Trainings

afagerblom@usaid.gov Amanda Fagerblom Friday, September 23, 2022 at 6:41:55 PM Eastern Daylight Time

To: pczajkowski@usaid.gov Philip Czajkowski
Cc: ddedeyan@usaid.gov Daniel Dedeyan, jkwok@usaid.gov Jannie Kwok

Hello Phil - Here's the write-up for potential platform engagement we talked about today. A lot of this is based on our experience and that of our partners, as well as the regular threat assessment Meta shares regularly.

Happy to answer any questions you may have.

Allbest,

Amanda

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From: **Amanda Fagerblom** <afagerblom@usaid.gov>
Date: Mon, 22 Aug 2022 at 11:35
Subject: Fwd: FYSA FOLLOW UP: META/FB Points of Contact and Trainings
To: Nora Pinzon <npinzon@usaid.gov>, Daniel Dedeyan <ddedeyan@usaid.gov>
CC: Cara Thanassi <cthanassi@usaid.gov>, Carrie Mitchell <camitchell@usaid.gov>

Hello Nora and Danny - Following up on the USAID LAC conversation with Meta/FB, please see Cara's email below and the attachment from Meta/FB. A phone call with Mission leadership, LAC bureau, and Meta/FB would be helpful given the sensitivities and security concerns around programming in country. The notes below are for us/USAID (but comfortable sharing to Meta/FB by phone)

I think continued engagement would be useful. Here is some initial thinking:

General points:

- Who is the Meta/FB **POC for Nicaragua**?
- **What are the ongoing, FB-funded initiatives/support** in Nicaragua (or regional that include Nicaragua)? I had heard there was something around connectivity along the border with Honduras (regional) when I was with Internews. This would be helpful to know so we can ensure our radio/media partners are aware of potential support.
- Stressing the point: the **information space is radilly closing** with very few on the ground professional reporters. In-country **media and digital literacy is incredibly low** despite high mobile penetration rates, leaving many Nicaraguans -in particular those new to the online world- susceptible to misinformation.
- Given the significant number of Nicaraguans forced into exile in Costa Rica, **Mission stresses the importance for Meta/FB to incorporate strategies for Costa Rica to include Nicaraguan diaspora.**
- **Costa Rica-Nicaragua Initiatives:** Many of our Nicaraguan media, business, and civil society partners are operating bi-nationally, legally registered in Costa Rica, but with main audiences and content in and related to Nicaragua.
- Mission is looking at medium-term planning and worst-case scenarios that include internet disruptions and blocking, coordinated account takedowns of independent media, small enterprises, and civil society social media accounts, among others. The **overarching concern for us is the timeline**. Space is closing rapidly and increasingly looking like a Cuba scenario.

Areas I see helpful collaboration for Nicaragua under Meta/FB lines of Central America support:

1. ***Elections and Integrity Efforts: Investigations and Account Removals.*** Despite the Municipal elections in November 2022 being called already with opposition in jail and forced exile, we anticipate the regime to silence independent voices in social media and carry out coordinated **misinformation** campaigns and coordinated account takedown attacks via troll networks. Investigations into the coordination (potentially increased over elections) may help us better understand the real risk and increased capacities of adversaries online so we can better adapt our digital security training and online safety for Nicaraguan partners. The quarterly adversarial threat report and coordinated inauthentic behavior report have been useful. With regard to the OAS cooperation agreement Meta/FB signed with the OAS, we want to know how our partners can plug into that.
2. ***Circulating phishing campaigns targeting Nicaraguans in WhatsApp***: Our Nicaraguan partners and digital security trainers have noted an increase in instances of these campaigns in Nicaraguan WhatsApp groups. If your

task force working on this line has any one-pagers or visuals in Spanish to raise awareness and/or details for reporting misuse we would very much welcome that to include in our training toolkits.

3. ***Trusted Partners Program:*** We would be interested in knowing what this includes. Many of our independent media partners face coordinated social media account takedown attacks (ToS violations, etc.) and impersonated fake accounts in their names. Does this program offer a rapid response to those crises?
4. ***We Think Digital/Meta Blueprint*** **(digital/media literacy, online entrepreneurship for youth, and economic growth online)*:*** Mission is looking at how to work with our Nicaraguan partners (youth entrepreneurship, independent media, and other civil society organizations) to increase digital literacy and raise awareness about misinformation among their audiences and beyond. As many Nicaraguan entities are forced into exile in Costa Rica, they are looking to expand their economic growth online, so we would like to hear more about Meta/FB **Programs to Support Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners** (Nicaraguans in Nicaragua and Nicaraguans in Costa Rica).

Happy to add or expand on any of these. This was what stood out to me.

Allbest,

Amanda

Amanda Fagerblom

Technical Officer

USAID I Nicaragua
https://www.usaid.gov/nicaragua
Work: [redacted]
Cell: [redacted]

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From: **Cara Thanassi** <cthanassi@usaid.gov>
Date: Thu, Aug 18, 2022 at 1:40 PM
Subject: FYSA FOLLOW UP: META/FB Points of Contact and Trainings
To: Daniel Dedeyan <ddedeyan@usaid.gov>, Amanda Fagerblom <afagerblom@usaid.gov>

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Cara Thanassi** <cthanassi@usaid.gov>
Date: Mon, Aug 1, 2022 at 9:32 AM
Subject: FOLLOW UP: META/FB Points of Contact and Trainings
To: James Kovar <jkovar@usaid.gov>, Robert McKenney <rmckenney@usaid.gov>, Elizabeth Beth Wager <ewager@usaid.gov>, Cael Savage <csavage@usaid.gov>, Jeremy Williammee <jwilliammee@usaid.gov>, Bruce Kay <bkay@usaid.gov>, Shannon Schissler <sschissler@usaid.gov>, Lisa Chandonnet-Bedoya <lchandonnet@usaid.gov>
Cc: Janina Jaruzelski <jjaruzelski@usaid.gov>, Kenneth MacLean <kmaclean@usaid.gov>, Jennifer Graetz <jgraetz@usaid.gov>, Matthew Rees <mrees@usaid.gov>, Michael Camilleri <mcamilleri@usaid.gov>, Ariana Scurti <ascurti@usaid.gov>, Caitlyn Davis <caidavis@usaid.gov>, Michael Samras <msamras@usaid.gov>, Russell Porter <rporter@usaid.gov>, Colleen Jones <cojones@usaid.gov>

Hi All,

Thanks to those of you who participated in the call with META/FB on July 22. Attached, they have provided points of contact for your respective countries, a description of their activities, and trainings that you, other mission staff, and, potentially, IPs could benefit from. Given that there may be interest in training from multiple missions/posts, I'm happy to serve as a focal point for coordinating that with META/FB so just reach out. Where you may want to flag issues of country-level concern for META/FB POC, I would ask that you keep myself, the desks, and Michael on copy.

Please share this information with your teams and let us know if you have any follow up concerns or questions.

Best,
Cara

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From: **Sandra Luff** <[redacted]@fb.com>
Date: Mon, Aug 1, 2022 at 7:41 AM
Subject: Follow-up Infomation
To: Michael Camilleri <mcamilleri@usaid.gov>
Cc: Pedro Less <[redacted]@fb.com>, Brian Rice <[redacted]@fb.com>, Íñigo Fernández <[redacted]@fb.com>, Becky Moore <[redacted]@fb.com>, Catherine Eng <[redacted]@fb.com>, Nicolas Comini <[redacted]@fb.com>, David Martinez <[redacted]@fb.com>, Marcos Tourinho <[redacted]@fb.com>, Cara Thanassi <cthanassi@usaid.gov>, Emma Buckhout <ebuckhout@usaid.gov>, Deborah Galindo <[redacted]@fb.com>

Michael,

Thank you again for the productive call we recently had with you and your team. We look forward to continuing this conversation and our collaboration.

As discussed, please see attached the information requested during our briefing, including a compilation of trainings as well as relevant points of contact for follow-up.

If you would like further details on any of these issues, please let us know.

Many thanks again for your partnership on these important issues.

Best,

Sandy

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Cara L. Thanassi

Democracy Specialist for Latin America and the Caribbean

USAID Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, Democracy and Human Rights Team

Cell: [redacted]

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Amanda Fagerblom

Technical Officer

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Attachments:

Meta - Northern Triangle[28].pdf 78k