RefTeCp

Refugee Teaching Certification Programme for Egyptian and Refugee Teachers Enabled by Blended Learning

FREDERICK UNIVERSITY

RefTeCp SWOT Analysis Toolkit in Partners' Faculties of Education

Developed by:

Prof.Dr. Vassilios Makrakis

Frederick University

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1.   What Is SWOT Analysis?

SWOT analysis is a classic strategic planning tool that often forms a useful complement to a stakeholder developed by Albert Humphrey at Stanford University in the 1960s. SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats depicted graphically with the following matrix or grid. The four headings that constitute SWOT provide a framework for organizations to identify strengths, mitigate weaknesses, seize opportunities, and avoid threats. Strengths and Weaknesses are **internal** SWOT factors while Opportunities and Threats are **external** SWOT factors. Strengths and Opportunities are **positive** factors, while Weaknesses and Threats are **negative** factors.

Table 1. SWOT Matrix

	POSITIVE/ HELPFUL to achieving the goal	NEGATIVE/ HARMFUL to achieving the goal
INTERNAL Origin facts/ factors of the organization	Strengths Positive tangible and intangible attributes, internal to an organization that are helpful to achieving the objective.	Weaknesses Factors that are within an organization's control that detract from its ability to attain the desired goal and objectives.
EXTERNAL Origin	Opportunities	Threats

facts/ factors of the environment in which it operates	External attractive factors that are helpful to achieving the objective.	External factors, beyond our control, which could place goals and objectives at risk.

In practice, the analysis component of SWOT comes after the information addressing the four headings is collected. In other words, the analysis refers to the discussion, refinement and interpretation of the SWOT outcomes by applying a brainstorming and critical reflective technique. Although, SWOT looks like a simple model and easy to apply, experiences show that there is need for careful planning to turn it as an effective and meaningful tool.

2. Why Use SWOT Analysis?

A SWOT analysis generates information that is helpful in identifying and assessing needs and capacities to perform certain activities and/or reach defined goals and objectives. It can also help to explore new opportunities and risks, make strategic decisions and prepare action plans. The results and interpretations can be very worthy, if SWOT is planned and implemented by a team represented by stakeholders with common interests to the questions addressed.

3. Who Should Take Part and How Much Time is Needed?

As stated previously, the representation of stakeholders makes the results of the SWOT more meaningful. In our case, there is need to include academic instructors, faculty and university administration, student representatives as well as representatives from external stakeholders. Applying a participatory approach representing internal and external stakeholders is more likely to come up with fruitful and meaningful data, while it also signals that community members should be part of the process. In other words, the best SWOT results come when the process is representative, collaborative and inclusive.

Taking time to do a thorough SWOT needs assessment is very critical to reach more fruitful and deep insights in understanding needs and developing workable plans. A SWOT analysis can range depending on the goals and objectives set. Usually, it ranges from a couple of hours to half a day or over the course of a day depending on the type and number of questions and the depth of the analysis and discussion. In any case, the SWOT activity should be seen as a serious workshop guided by the appointment of a facilitator or leader who has good skills in listening and leading discussion as well as one who can keep things moving and on track.

4. How Do I Conduct SWOT Analysis?

Step 0- Setting the stage

- Decide for the leader or group facilitator who has good listening and coordinating skills.
- Use a flip chart or a large board to record inputs.
- Introduce the SWOT method and its purpose.
- Let all participants introduce themselves.
- Divide participants into smaller groups (e.g. 3-5) and make sure you mix participants to get a range of perspectives.

The RefTeCp SWOT activity falls into Work Package 2 dealing with "Getting Stakeholders Involved". The overriding objective of WP2 is to establish, strengthen and facilitate the active and fruitful involvement of all stakeholders in all relevant processes. The first activity is to mapping stakeholders' needs and possible inputs for developing teaching standards and competences suitable for refugee learners' education as well as identify barriers and drivers concerning university-community partnerships in the RefTeCp.

The RefTeCp SWOT activity targets stakeholders from: 1) Faculties of Education at the partners' universities. 2) Public schools in the area of partner universities that have refugee learners and 3) refugee community schools. The SWOT activity will be carried out by a reference group in each of the three types of stakeholders.

All SWOT Activities must be implemented by 10th of February at the latest and preliminary results will be brought at the kick-off meeting for discussion on the following-up steps.

The general coordination of the SWOT activity will be under the responsibility of the Heliopolis University, which is the leading institution for Work Package 2.

Each Faculty of Education besides organizing its own SWOT activity colloquium that includes the Dean of the Faculty, the Heads of the Departments and staff members representing all subjects., will also be responsible for selecting 10 public schools in its area that have the host refugee learners. The criterion for selection will be based on the number of refugee learners. In each public school a facilitator from the Faculty of Education will be appointed to organize the running of the SWOT activity in the selected public schools. The SWOT group in each public school will consist by the principal of the school and 5-7 teachers from different subjects who have refugee learners in their classrooms.

List all participants in the following table

Name of the Institution:		e-mail

	Name of the SWOT facilitator:	5
Name of the SWOT participants	Function at the Institution	e-mail

5. **RefTeCp SWOT Matrix: Guiding Prompts/Questions**

	POSITIVE/ HELPFUL to achieving the goal	NEGATIVE/ HARMFUL to achieving the goal
INTERNAL Origin facts/ factors of the organization	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**
	1. As a Faculty of Education, what do we do best in preparing future teachers and in-service teachers to cope with refugee learners' needs? 2. What unique knowledge, talent, or resources do we have to cope with pedagogy suitable to refugee learners' needs? 3. What advantages do we have to respond to refugee pedagogy? 4. What do other people say we do well in relation to refugee learners' education? 5. What resources do we have available for that? 6. What is our greatest achievement in relation to refugee learners' education?	1. What could we improve in preparing future and current teachers to cope with refugee learners' educational and social-psychological needs? 2. What knowledge, talent, skills and/or resources are we lacking for that purpose? 3. What disadvantages do we have? 4. What do other people say we do not do well in relation to that? 5. In what areas do we need more training? 6. What are refugee learners, parents and others' complaints about the way we are responding to refugee learners' needs?
EXTERNAL Origin facts/ factors of the environment in which it operates	**Opportunities**	**Threats**
	1. How can we turn our strengths into opportunities? 2. How can we turn our weaknesses into opportunities? 3. Is there a need in our school that no one is meeting? 4. What could we do today that isn't being done? 5. How is refugee pedagogy changing? How can we take advantage of those changes? 6. How can be supported?	1. What obstacles do we face? 2. Could any of our weaknesses prevent our school from meeting our goals? 3. Who and/or what might cause us problems in the future? How? 4. Are there any standards, policies, and/or legislation changing that might negatively impact our efforts?

Step 1: What is the Situation Now… Brainstorming on Strengths and Weaknesses

At this step, the SWOT team will start brainstorming on each question listed in the above SWOT Matrix and fill out their own strengths and weakness in the following SWOT chart. The SWOT facilitator should encourage groups to collect as many as possible answers to the questions without doing any analysis of the answers at this strep. Participants should be frank with themselves when considering strengths and weaknesses. List all strengths that exist now. Then in turn, list all weaknesses that exist now. Be realistic but avoid modesty! During your brainstorming session, the facilitator asks each person to supply one bullet point for the category they are working on. Make sure one person is responsible for writing down all of the strengths mentioned.

It is usual habit that everyone tries to exaggerate strengths and minimize weaknesses. So, asking people to report about weaknesses might not be at comfort. However, it is vital information and as such, there is need to truthfully mapping the weaknesses within each entity for this SWOT analysis to be effective and meaningful. As pointed earlier, in the context of a SWOT analysis, weaknesses are internal factors that take need to be corrected. Accordingly, in the SWOT brainstorming session, participants should be motivated to think of weaknesses that relate to the subject under investigation. You will put this information on your four-box SWOT template.

Table 2: List of Strengths and Weaknesses

	POSITIVE/ HELPFUL to achieving the goal	NEGATIVE/ HARMFUL to achieving the goal
INTERNAL Origin facts/ factors of the organization	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**

Step 2: What might be… Brainstorming on Opportunities and Threats

At this step, following-up the same process as before, brainstorm and list all opportunities that exist in the future. Opportunities are potential future strengths. Then in turn, list all threats that exist in the future. Threats are potential future weaknesses. By knowing your threats, you might be able to find a suitable strategy to minimize them, or at least, come up with a plan on how to handle them in an effective. As in the case of weaknesses, developing a list of threats can be difficult, although for different reasons. Such as the difficulty in coming up with possible threats in mind and due to the fact that threats are coming from external factors.

Table 3: List of Opportunities and Threats

	POSITIVE/ HELPFUL to achieving the goal	NEGATIVE/ HARMFUL to achieving the goal
EXTERNAL Origin facts/ factors of the environment in which it operates	**Opportunities**	**Threats**

Step 3: What to Do with the Data…. Refinement, Analysis and Interpretation

A brainstorming activity always culminates with lots of ideas, which need further treatment. Reaching also some consensus about the most meaningful items in each SWOT category is very critical.

There is need first to proceed in the refinement or polishing of the brainstormed answers in each part of the SWOT chart. In others words, through careful consideration, the brainstormed lists will be refined and eventually narrowed down to. It is often useful to rate or rank the most important refined strengths and weaknesses (perhaps with symbols: ++, + and 0). It is also important to be specific, keep your SWOT short and avoid complexity, gray areas or duplications. Thus, it is necessary to do the refinement before you do the analysis.

When creating the analysis, the SWOT group should proceed in pooling their individual and shared knowledge and experience in a relaxed, friendly and constructive environment and start interpreting the refined results in relation to the objectives of the SWOT activity.

Table 4: Refinement of the SWOT results

	POSITIVE/ HELPFUL to achieving the goal	NEGATIVE/ HARMFUL to achieving the goal
INTERNAL Origin facts/ factors of the organization	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**
EXTERNAL Origin facts/ factors of the environment in which it operates	**Opportunities**	**Threats**

Interpretation is very critical, as it will provide useful inputs to translate the analysis to action plans and strategies at a later step, when the SWOT inputs will be substantiated with other type of data collected through survey activities. Analysing and interpreting the results of the SWOT activity, opportunities and threats is a challenging process that needs special care and effort.

As pointed earlier, at a later stage we are going to developing a strategic plan, by taking the highest-ranking strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and answer the following questions:

- How do you use your strengths to take advantage of opportunities?
- How do you overcome weaknesses preventing you from taking advantage of opportunities?
- How can your strengths reduce the probability of threats?
- What can you do about your weaknesses to make the threats less likely?