



Using Instagram as a digital marketing tool to improve online presence - A case study on ASDA RY

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presence: A case study on ASDA RY**

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This bachelor's thesis was commissioned by AAR Social Development Association Ry (ASDA RY). The development task involved examining and improving the organization's Instagram presence to better connect with its target audience. The primary objective of the thesis was to increase the visibility and online presence of ASDA RY.

The theoretical framework was built upon concepts of digital marketing communication, social media, the advantages of Instagram and the impact of social media marketing on non-profit organizations. This framework was informed by literature reviews and online articles that explored the dynamics of social media engagement and its implications for non-profit entities.

Methods used in this study included a SWOT analysis of ASDA RY's existing Instagram content, qualitative interviewing, identification of areas of improvement and strategic content planning based on audience preferences and engagement. Key results indicate a need for consistency in content posting, visual elements, and usage of Instagram's algorithmic features to improve exposure and user interaction. Data collection primarily involved qualitative research methods, including interviews with key stakeholders within ASDA RY.

Based on the results, recommendations were provided for improving ASDA RY's Instagram marketing efforts, particularly in terms of content planning and engagement strategies. The conclusions drawn from the research contribute to the understanding of digital marketing for non-profit organizations, in the context of social media platforms like Instagram.

Keywords: Digital marketing, non-profit organizations, Instagram marketing, social media, qualitative research.

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1 Introduction

In today's digital age, accessing information is as simple as clicking on a post that piques our interest with its title or visuals. However, before delving into the content, we often pause for a moment to contemplate whether investing our time in this post is worthwhile. First impressions are crucial since these initial judgments are usually formed in just 50 milliseconds (Lindergaard). The internet with its extensive resources and content has changed the way we gather information. This accessibility to information has presented numerous opportunities, particularly for the youth, who are frequently targeted by organizations recognizing their potential as valuable assets for the future. As such, understanding the dynamics of online engagement among young audiences is crucial for organizations seeking to optimize their digital presence and effectively connect with their target demographic.

Having this in mind, the reason for undertaking this thesis lies in comprehensively analyzing the intricacies of digital presence. The objective of this thesis is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the digital marketing strategies used online, identifying areas where improvements can be made. Recommendations will be provided for ASDA RY's future online presence and effectiveness in the modern business landscape.

The choice of topic was due to the intention of benefiting other non-profit organizations that focus on the same values as ASDA. Surveys indicate that a significant majority, approximately 62% of consumers, are inclined to dismiss services if they cannot locate them online. (Kaitlyn Arford 2023). In cases where information about a service is insufficient, people may opt for a platform with a known online presence and established brand reputation.

Using Instagram as the main social media channel is shown to be the most suitable and simplest method for an organization to achieve visibility. As consumers increasingly gravitate towards online content consumption, the challenge of reaching the targeted audience becomes inevitable. Instagram offers a strategic solution by providing a platform where business and organizations engage with their audience effectively (Instagram marketing - The Ultimate Marketing Strategy 2020).

This thesis contains three key parts. Firstly, a brief overview of the topic and the research questions will be introduced. Secondly, the most important terms detailing the current digital marketing efforts of ASDA. Key facts and figures will be provided for relevant insights into the issue. A comprehensive marketing strategy is suggested at the end; defining how to compete in this market segment using Instagram as a tool and to develop a stronger online presence.

1.1 Case Organization

ASDA RY, standing for “Association for Social Development and Awareness” is an open youth development organization dedicated to guiding, supporting and empowering young individuals to reach their full potential (ASDA RY 2022). As a non-governmental organization (NGO), ASDA RY operates independently of any governmental influence, focusing on social, educational and developmental goals. NGOs like ASDA are typically nonprofit entities that play an important role in advocating for social change and providing community-based services without the aim of generating profit.

Based on its core values of inclusivity, empowerment and community engagement, ASDA RY offers a wide range of programs and services aimed at addressing the diverse needs of young people. These initiatives include workshops, seminars, training programs, mentoring sessions and community outreach activities designed to promote personal growth, skill development and social integration among participants (ASDA RY 2022). Each program is meticulously designed to address specific areas of need, ranging from skill development and leadership training to social integration and cultural enrichment.

The primary objective of ASDA is to establish a secure and organized environment amongst people of all ages. The NGO placed a particular emphasis on promoting diversity and is committed to serving individuals without discrimination based on gender, age, or ethnic background. The organization operates in Helsinki and consists of 590 members. ASDA receives funding from multiple channels, including grants from the European Commission and the Finnish National Agency for Education. Additionally, the organization benefits from support provided by foundations, KSL, membership fees and local contributions (ASDA RY 2022).

Regarding digital marketing, the organization has little engagement in social media marketing and does not possess familiarity with various digital marketing tools. Merely having updates and informative posts is insufficient to gain an online presence and efficiency in the digital marketing landscape. ASDA must acquire better knowledge in this area and ultimately develop a strategy for improved outcomes.

1.2 The Purpose of this Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to improve ASDA RY’s online presence and visibility among the 18-24 age group. Digital marketing offers limitless opportunities, yet it is crucial to identify the most efficient strategies tailored to ASDA’s needs (Digital Marketing Plan for Small and Medium Sized Companies. Laurea University of Applied Sciences 2019.) The thesis work will have a focus on the Instagram page as there is an existing account but has not been used effectively compared to the other social media platforms. The research questions guiding this study are:

How can ASDA RY use Instagram as a digital marketing tool to increase online visibility/presence? What strategies can ASDA RY implement on Instagram to engage with their target audience?

This non-profit organization has struggled to establish an online presence, particularly amongst the 18-24 demographic, which is their primary target audience. Despite efforts in social media marketing, ASDA faces challenges in effectively reaching and engaging their target demographic. By conducting informal interviews with the participants of the NGO, how they acquired knowledge about this organization will be answered. The study will review the impact of social media platforms alongside current digital marketing efforts, content planning and strengthening interaction with the youth demographic.

Developing a dynamic online presence holds an importance considering ASDA gears towards a youthful age group. Amnesty, a leading NGO that focuses on human rights globally, states that 59% of young people between the ages of 13 and 24, spend more than two hours of their daily life on social media (Amnesty International 2023). So, with these individuals being avid users of online platforms, improving the organization's digital footprint is a way of achieving their goal in the business field. Strategically harnessing engaging content and targeted digital marketing strategies, this can result in increased interest of the desired audience.

1.3 Research Based Thesis

A research-based thesis entails identifying a specific research question or problem, usually engaging in comprehensive or gathering data and systemically presenting the potential outcomes. A thesis begins with a defined research question or a problem statement, directing the inquiry towards previously researched literature and perspectives. The methodology section shows how data was procured and analyzed. The findings are articulated and interpreted regarding the research question resulting in conclusions and suggestions. (Kananen 2011)

2 ASDA`s current online presence in digital marketing

As younger people may tend to face difficulties developing into their career life and having a support system, there is no doubt that many could benefit from an organization like ASDA if they only knew about its existence. The organization offers various services and courses for people wanting to connect with others through a range of structured activities including Erasmus projects, training, and clubs. Although ASDA RY was established in the year 2000, there has not been much done in terms of marketing (ASDA RY 2022).

The NGO has relied solely on informal promotion methods, primarily spreading awareness through word of mouth among participants. Occasionally, small events are organized in public spaces like libraries and malls. However, these approaches alone are insufficient for achieving effective marketing outcomes. Several factors have hindered ASDA from investing in proper marketing efforts, due to the heavy reliance on volunteers and limited resources. Therefore, using a powerful marketing channel such as Instagram may be a solution for increasing visibility.

Throughout this research, a concerted effort has been made to increase ASDA RY`s online presence and expand its visibility to a broader audience. Strategies have been made and implemented to increase traffic on their Instagram page. Detailed accounts of this are explained in depth in other chapters.

2.1 Analysis of digital marketing efforts

The author of this thesis has been working on how to make ASDA RY visible via Instagram, primarily focusing on Instagram as a digital marketing communication tool. At the early stage of process, an examination of ASDA RY`s activities were conducted, alongside a thorough review of their Instagram account. Instagram was identified as the most suitable channel for the NGO`s online marketing communication.

As mentioned before, ASDA RY has relied solely on informal methods, instead of investing on strategical plan. Previous studies have been made on ASDA RY`s digital marketing. Suggestions on focusing on the Facebook page were mentioned, however now that there has been a shift on the target group of the projects, it is important to reevaluate these recommendations. The concept of “experience economy” also plays a significant role in understanding which steps to consider in improving the online visibility of ASDA RY. In simple terms, it means to treat customer experience as distinct products. This viewpoint is particularly relevant for the organization, given their need to effectively connect with their audience.

Analyzing the current use of their Facebook page, the author has identified two categories of Facebook posts; giving recognition and acknowledgement of current and local events and projects which primarily contributes to audience-building, while responding to public responses are more directly associated with open dialogue. These categories collectively accounted for 84% of the Facebook posts. These posts showcase the organizations involvement in the community such as youth clubs, camps, and gatherings. Facebook is effective for engagement. However, Instagram may offer additional benefits due to its more interactive rate and visuals considering the demographic.

ASDA RY currently does have an Instagram page, but the organization doesn't use it to its full potential due to insufficient activity. The page appeared outdated and lacked the appeal needed to attract a substantial following. Essential information about the NGO was either missing or inadequate and the content did not effectively represent the brand identity. Additionally, posts were infrequent, and the content failed to engage users resulting in minimal likes, comments and shared. On average, posts received a low number of likes indicating a lack of audience interaction.

3 Theoretical Frameworks

3.1 SWOT analysis of ASDA RY

The SWOT analysis is a strategic planning framework used by businesses to assess their competitive position within the market. Four critical components are listed that help recognize, analyze, and examine the internal as well as external elements that may impact the ability of a service or the effectiveness of a decision. While SWOT analysis is frequently used by business, it is also utilized by nonprofit organizations to a lesser extent and for individuals' personal assessment. This analysis is a valuable tool for assessing and proving insights on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. (Techtarget 2019)

A swot analysis of ASDA RY`s use of digital marketing channels could be specified as following:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Monthly events/projects • Cooperation with other NGO`s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No focus on Instagram page; barely any posts, no activity. • No presence whatsoever • More activity on other social media platforms (that are not much used by the target audience)

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More use of Instagram; scheduled posts, content planning. • Increased traffic = Increase in visibility • Collaborations with influencers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low engagement • Failure to leverage Instagram feed or reels for interactive content/features. • Inadequate use of advertising opportunities

Table 2 *SWOT Analysis*

Despite not investing in marketing, ASDA RY has established a website and a Facebook page, providing platforms to inform visitors about their activities and initiatives. The representatives of the NGO partake in projects and seminars, in which they get an opportunity to verbally `market` the organization to others. This falls under word-of-mouth marketing, which is considered as a form of marketing that encourages authentic interpersonal communication in various forms (Meiners Norbert H 2010). ASDA capitalized on this by organizing numerous projects and events both within in Finland and abroad, which has proven to be somewhat successful as they have been able to forge relations with other organizations. One of the strengths lies in the frequency of the events and activities, which enhances the likelihood of word-of-mouth promotion.

Although this form of marketing has tremendously contributed to spreading information about NGO`s presence, ASDA has yet to make use of other marketing tools and methods to place them in a visible position. As listed on the SWOT analysis above, multiple weaknesses lie in the limited activity on social media platforms, such as Instagram which is widely used as a marketing tool. The organization`s Instagram page has been inactive and rarely updated.

There is no doubt that ASDA RY can be well-known amongst their demographic if they engage in social media networks effectively. The likelihood of their online presence would be much greater by investing in their Instagram page. Active presence and planned content may lead to a rise in followers and participants.

The current lack of visibility may be due to a lack of marketing because ASDA does not have a long-term team or individual delegated to this specific task. Resources and effort must be allocated towards strategic marketing initiatives. Simply maintaining a page may not suffice to overcome the existing marketing hurdles, so the organization should take some sort of action to overcome this threat.

3.1 Digital marketing communication

This section aims to explore relevant theoretical frameworks derived from previous research. Theories related to social media, social media marketing with a particular focus on Instagram.

The growth of internet users over the past 25 years has shown a significant impact on online marketing in today's digital age. The public's access to the internet is steadily increasing, which has altered the way individuals interact and engage with digital platforms. People now rely on the internet for many things such as shopping, communication, research etc. (Online Marketing Strategies: The future is here)

It is important for businesses to understand the impact of digital marketing communication on the marketing industry. The shift of digital communication has brought significant changes across various sectors as the opportunities on the internet are immeasurable. Digital technology has increased global competition, requiring companies to integrate them into their businesses and strategies. Web surfing has become ubiquitous with smartphones and other devices used daily, making internet and social media essential necessities of individuals lives. This also gives people a voice where they can share experiences, find information, and socialize in like-minded communities. People trust personal experiences more than ads or research findings. This means that companies need to use digital media to build their presence and reach potential customers (Current trends in Digital Marketing Communication).

It is said that non-profit organizations should actively listen to follower's feedback. If we consider the resource constraints faced by this NGO, digital communication can offer cost effective marketing opportunities. Consistent sharing of information across social media, following the 80/20 rule (80 percent content, 20 percent promotional) may help increase visibility and interest of audience. (Bplans 2019)



Figure 1: 8 steps for customer engagement for non-profit communications. Philanthropy Circuit, 2022

ASDA RY have successfully accomplished the initial four steps. To propel forward, considering the following strategies aligned with these steps could be profitable. Nonprofit organizations

like ASDA RY can benefit from using several types of communication strategies to engage with their audience.

Conversation Starters:

Conversation starters to initiate interactions with the audience. The NGO can feature polls on Instagram stories or post events, projects on their feed. This can result to an increase in audience participation that may build stronger connections beyond monetary goals.

Curation:

Curating content from external sources, ASDA RY can provide valuable information to their audience. They can gather experiences from previous participants or volunteers and can share upcoming projects to keep the audience informed and engaged. This is a critical aspect to consider, especially considering ASDA RY`s current shortcomings in maintaining a consistent and scheduled presence on social media. A regular and organized posting schedule is a way to market the organization and improve visibility.

Nonprofit Communication Plan:

A comprehensive nonprofit communication plan is important to effectively reach their audience and raise awareness. By following the eight outlined in the plan, ASDA RY can ensure that their communication efforts align with their overarching goals.

3.2 Social media marketing

Social media has become an integral part of daily life for communicating and information sharing on a wide range of platforms. This transformation in consumer behavior requires a corresponding response from companies (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). As per data gathered by the CMO Council, 71% of internet users show a greater inclination to use a service they follow on social media (Online Marketing Through Consumers 2013).

Interaction through social media heightens the likelihood of them sharing information with others, therefore involving the targeted segment in the marketing process enhances the credibility of the service. Social media usage tends to be most prevalent among younger demographics, with 84 percent of individuals ages 18 to 29 actively engaged on at least one social media platform. (Forbes 2024)

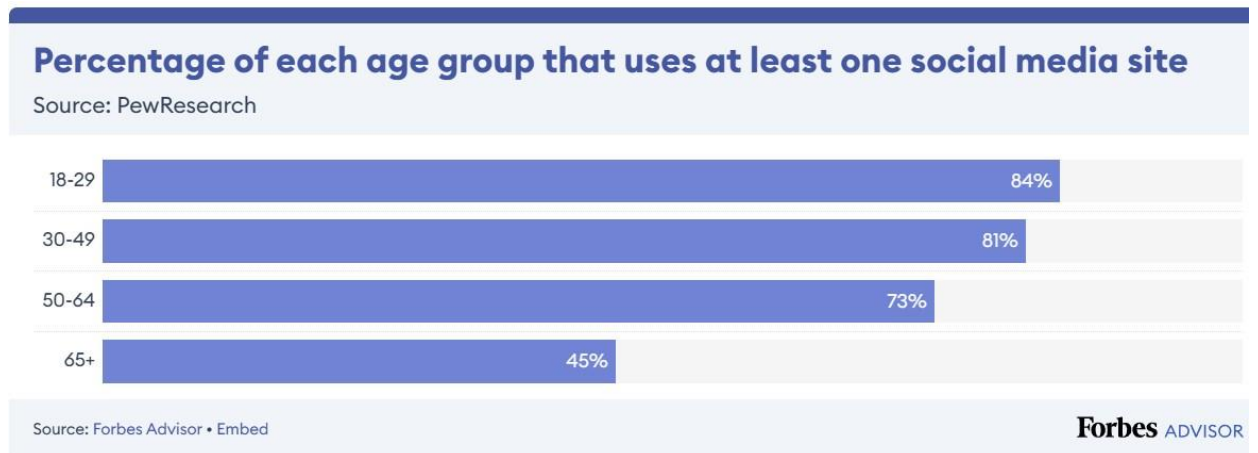


Figure 2: Percentage of each age group that uses at least one social media site.

A substantial portion of small businesses, totaling 77 percent, use social media platforms to engage with their customers (See figure 2). The primary purpose of this type of marketing is to increase online visibility. Short-form videos have become the most engaging type of content, typically lasting less than a minute. These are 2.5 times more watched than longer videos, making them highly shareable and effective in capturing audience interest. (Forbes 2024). Furthermore, online marketing generates 3 times as many leads as traditional marketing, but costs 62% less (Online Marketing Strategies: The Future is Here).

The use of social media by business has been significant, with over 50 percent of EU companies using at least one type of SM for marketing and over 80 percent of these companies' using SM for marketing (social media and Entrepreneurship).

According to studies, when social media is utilized effectively, it can create an emotional connection between the organization and consumers and contribute to enhancing creativity. Even the smallest company can reap significant benefits from maintaining a social media presence. It is one of the most effective methods to ensure that your brand remains consistently prominent in the minds of your customers as, *“Social media is one of the fastest growing, rapidly changing industries in the world”*. (The biggest social media trends in 2023)

Social media and websites both serve as channels to facilitate engagement for, although there is argument that neither is exclusively capable of achieving this goal specifically for NGO's. Previous studies have demonstrated that web pages often lack strategic interactivity specifically for these types of organizations. This limitation may stem from organizations' lack of experience in developing socially engaging web pages with effective discussion and connection, which is shown to play a significant role with the 18- 24-year-old demographic. However, this can be easily explained due to inexperience or lack of knowledge.

3.3 Advantages of social media marketing

As per data gathered by the CMO Council, 71% of internet users show a greater inclination to use a service they follow on social media (Online Marketing Through Consumers 2013). Interaction through social media heightens the likelihood of them sharing information with others, therefore involving the targeted segment in the marketing process enhances the credibility of the service. Social media usage tends to be most prevalent among younger demographics, with 84 percent of individuals ages 18 to 29 actively engaged on at least one social media platform (Forbes 2024).

Social media shows a departure from the traditional model of media. In the past, television or magazines were static and one-directional, with information being spread to passive viewers. However, with digitalization, anyone can now create and distribute their own content easily. A post or video can reach millions of people at little to no cost. This holds a special position in the consumer decision journey, as it is the only form of marketing that can engage consumers and every step of the process, which starts from the initial consideration till the end of the experience.

Marketing literature has increasingly recognized the importance of experiential perspectives in understanding consumer behavior. Holbrook and Hirschman's work (1982) paved an interesting viewpoint on consumer behavior. This perspective suggests that consumers are not only rational beings but also driven by emotions, with consumption experiences often aimed at fulfilling enjoyment. This provides an opportunity for the NGO to create visually pleasing content. Although, this literature may be outdated, there is still value in understanding its foundational principle.

3.4 Instagram

This digital platform was created in 2010 as a mobile application enabling users to edit and share photos and videos from the devices. As of the latest data, Instagram has 600 million active monthly users, primarily consisting of young women aged 18-29 who engage with the platform daily (Virtanen 2017). Businesses have been drawn to this specific app not only due to its expanding user base but also because of its features that have a focus on visual content. Instagram utilizes visual storytelling as a form of communication. Visual content has gained traction in social media marketing, as images are processed and understood by our brains more quickly than text (Virtanen 2017). Based on findings of Krallman (2016), investing in Instagram could be beneficial for marketing goals focused on connecting on a personal level with consumers.

Instagram primarily targets a younger audience. According to recent data from Statista (2022), Instagram emerged as the third most popular social media platform in Finland, with a

usage of 52 percent among respondents. Additionally, 60 percent of Instagram users are aged under 34, while 18.1 percent fall between the ages of 35 and 44 (Kiely Kuligowski 2024). These percentages correspond to the organization's market segment.

A study involving nineteen individuals ages 18-28 in which they participated in in-depth interview to explore their perceptions of Instagram and their reasons for using it. The predominant motivation for Instagram were identified as curiosity, entertainment, and connections (Understanding motives, usage patterns and effects of Instagram use in youths). This highlights the appeal of Instagram and indicates its potential as a platform for engaging with younger demographics, such as the target audience of ASDA RY.

One distinction between Instagram and other digital platforms is the age demographic of their user bases. Instagram tends to attract a younger audience, with most users under the age of 30. This demographic preference for Instagram may stem from younger consumers propensity to gravitate towards new trends rapidly. As new social networks emerge, younger users are often eager to explore the latest platforms, contributing to Instagram's popularity among this specific demographic. For companies targeting a younger age demographic, this platform provides a valuable opportunity to engage with this demographic effectively. If we look at engagement metrics, Instagram holds a distinct advantage over other platforms, for example Facebook. Studies indicate a substantial disparity in engagement rates between the two platforms. Instagram has an engagement rate of 1.50% per post, compared to Facebook's 0.09% (Sproutsocial 2019). This difference shows Instagram's effectiveness in users' interaction. However, these numbers may have changed considering this may be outdated.

Instagram Statistics
1 billion monthly active users
500 million daily active Instagram stories users worldwide
68% of Instagram users visit the platform daily
77% of marketers use Instagram in brands social strategy

Table 1 *Instagram Statistics*, Sproutsocial 2019

3.5 Benefits of Instagram marketing

In the past decade, social media has become a dominant source of communication. According to a report, there has been a steady increase of 1 percent to 2 percent annually in the number of brands marketers in online advertising (Chiang). This trend suggests that nearly nine out of ten marketers will incorporate this source of communication into their strategies. Additionally, 70 percent of customers use social media to listen and learn from other people's experiences, with 65 percent seeking information about services and actively engaging in brand compliments (Chiang). These findings indicate that customers are no longer a passive recipient of information, instead, they are actively sharing their opinions on products and services. ASDA can use this as an advantage since what they offer can be seen as a value to the users of social media.

Previous studies support the reasoning of choosing Instagram as a tool for improving online presence. According to Jena Iswar, a business owner who markets in Instagram, states that this platform has significantly contributed to the growth of her business. Iswari also noted that frequent updates play a crucial role in attracting more audiences (Opportunities and Challenges of Instagram Algorithm).

A real-life example featuring a post from Quest Nutrition that was both shared on Facebook and Instagram. Despite Quest Nutrition having 1.1 million Facebook likes 491,000 Instagram followers, the Instagram post gathered over 2,400 likes and 20 comments, significantly surpassing the engagement levels of the corresponding Facebook post, which received only 21 likes and one comment. (Sproutsocial 2019)

3.6 Challenges of Instagram

Instagrams algorithm is a systematic arrangement of big data aimed at meeting user needs on the platform. The algorithm functions through different points, including post exposure, shadow banning, interactions, stories, and hashtags. While posting content, users posts undergo monitoring within the first 60 minutes, which during that time only 20% of the audience will initially see the content. Exposure depends on the level of interaction the post received with higher interaction ultimately leading to broader visibility that is a concept known as algorithmic post exposure (Opportunities and challenges of Instagram algorithm in improving competitive advantage). Furthermore, the algorithm penalizes content where captions are edited within 24 hours or if posts are deleted and re-uploaded. This is a reoccurring issue with the NGO`s page. Many posts have been deleted and reuploaded due to errors in content and captions.

Users` initial impressions during the first moments of interaction significantly influence their decision to continue navigating a platform. Research by Lindegaard indicated that users form

these initial impressions within a mere 50 milliseconds. This shows that visuals are important to capture the user's attention and for further engagement. Statistics from the Visual Teaching Alliance emphasize the importance of visual marketing, with 65 percent of the population being visual learners and the brain processing visual images 60,000 times faster than text.

Despite these challenges, there is potential for ASDA RY to turn them into advantages. The significance of visual content in capturing users' attention shows the importance of utilizing compelling visuals in ASDA RYs Instagram posts.

4 Methodology

4.1 Research Questions

Research questions in a thesis provide a clear focus on the study, guiding the entire research process to achieve its objectives. The questions specify the exact topic to be explored, clarify the objectives, direct data collection and analysis and generate results. The research questions guiding this study are: How can ASDA RY use Instagram as a digital marketing tool to increase online visibility/presence? What strategies can ASDA RY implement on Instagram to engage with their target audience?

4.2 Research Methods

Research methods provide different avenues for exploring phenomena, each possessing different strengths and weaknesses. Quantitative research is the analysis of numerical data to discover certain patterns, whereas qualitative research delved deeply into phenomena through techniques such as interviews and observations to achieve better understanding of the subject or question at hand. A qualitative approach is best suited for this type of research as it can give answers as to individuals' experiences and perceptions. (Kananen 2011)

4.2.1 Qualitative Research

The research methodology used is the qualitative method, which involves relatively small sample sizes. The techniques used include informal interviewing and group discussions, which were carried out in person to ensure reliability. Qualitative research is concerned with rich and detailed insight rather than measurement. There is often criticism on this choice of research method as the findings from the sample is no way in form a representative in the statistical sense of the wider population from which the sample was drawn, however, this critique is misguided as the findings from qualitative research are not intended to be statistically indicative (Yvonne McGivern 2009).

Since the type of interview chosen for this research is less structured and standardized, this may mean that it can be relatively low in reliability (Yvonne McGivern 2009). Subsequently there is more flexibility in the questioning, the interviews were more like a guided discussion with open-ended questions.

4.3 Data Collection

Data collection is the process of gathering and analyzing information from different sources to answer the given research questions, assess outcomes and eventually predict trends (Simplilearn 2023). Specifically, data collection will focus on obtaining any needed data relevant to ASDA RY`s use of Instagram as a marketing tool.

For this study, data collection will involve interviews and group discussions with the chosen participants. The sample for the group was indicated by the age (18-24). Answers will be collected through detailed notes as none of the participants agreed to audio recordings.

4.4 Interview Questions

1.	Do you follow ASDA RY on any social media platform?
2.	How did you find out about this organization?
3.	Were you introduced to this organization through word-of-mouth?
4.	Have you ever heard of any events or projects organized by this ASDA RY? If so, how?
5.	Have you ever seen ASDA RY mentioned or featured any social media platforms?
6.	Which social media platform do you use the most?

4.5 Interviews and Group Discussion

The chosen interview structure was semi-structured interviewing. Fully structured interviews involve predefined, direct questions aimed at gaining specific responses, leaving little room for discussion. On the other hand, unstructured interviews are more open-ended questions, encouraging respondents to freely discuss topics rather than simply providing answers. The chosen structure offers a middle ground. (Collins & Hussey 2003).

Face-to-face interviews represent a conventional approach that is conducted in person, a direct interaction and rapport building between interviewer and participant. Conversely, remote interviews occur when the interviewer and participant are geographically separated, which may offer more convenience but also potentially lack non-verbal cues. This is the main reason for the choice of face-to-face interviewing. (Collins & Hussey 2003)

After the interviews, a short group discussion was held to verify the answers obtained. The observation was that many individuals are active on Instagram mainly through updating their stories rather than posting traditional feed content may show a shifting trend in user behavior. This can suggest these users are more inclined to temporary forms of sharing such as stories as opposed to permanent posts on their account. For ASDA RY, this can present an opportunity to use this as tactic for their content. Instead of focusing solely on feed posts, they can upload regular stories. For example, instead of posting a regular post, it can be added on Instagram story. Use of interactive features like polls and countdowns can also attract new users and result in user retention.

4.6 Content Analysis

Content analysis, a method used to systemically analyze qualitative data, plays a vital role in uncovering patterns and meanings within texts, images or other forms of qualitative material. In this chapter, the purpose of content analysis will be defined, the differences between inductive and deductive approaches and shortly explain why an inductive thematic approach was chosen.

As outlined by Sarajärvi and Tuomi (2009), inductive thematic analysis involves deriving themes directly from the data without imposing pre-existing theories. On the other hand, a deductive analysis begins with pre-established theories that may guide the identification. In this study, it is possible for individuals to discover ASDA RY and their knowledge of its activities, an inductive approach allows to explore participants experiences without predefining categories. Researchers can apply existing frameworks to the data, selecting themes that complement theoretical concepts. This deductive approach is more structured and suitable for research questions with clear theoretical implications. In a deductive analysis of social media strategies, researchers may start with theories on digital engagements.

Interviews were conducted with seven participants at an event held in the organization's office. The event served as a gathering for previous participants and provided an opportunity to interact with individuals familiar with the organization. Participants were approached during the event and invited to take part in the interviews, which took place in a designated area to ensure privacy and comfort. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed about the nature and objectives of the study and verbal consent was obtained from each participant. Each participant was assured of confidentiality and their responses were anonymized in the analysis. This approach resulted in data collection and thematic analysis.

Interviewee	ASDA RY Social Media Follower	Source of Awareness	Awareness of Events/Projects via Social Media Platforms	Mention of ASDA RY on social media	Most Used Social Media Platform
1	Yes	Instagram	Yes	Yes	Instagram
2	No	Facebook	No	No	TikTok
3	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	Yes	Yes	Instagram
4	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	Yes	No	Twitter
5	No	Instagram	No	Yes	Instagram
6	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	Yes	Yes	Snapchat
7	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	No	No	Instagram

Based on the responses provided in the table, a thorough analysis will be used to analyze how people discovered ASDA RY.

Social Media:

Several interviewees mentioned discovering the organization through social media platforms, the most common was Instagram as it was stated twice whereas Facebook once. Considering

that the average age of the participants was 19, Instagram was commonly cited as the most used social media platform.

Word-of-Mouth:

Some interviewees were introduced to ASDA RY through word-of-mouth referrals from friends. This appears to evidentially play a significant role in spreading awareness about the organization.

High Awareness:

Most interviewees indicated awareness of events/projects organized by the NGO. This suggests that the organization effectively has somewhat promoted its initiatives and these activities are noteworthy enough to capture the attention of these specific participants.

Low Awareness:

Some interviewees reported low awareness of ASDA RY's events or projects. This could indicate potential areas for improvement in digital marketing communications and strategies to gain a broader reach.

One participant answered *'I would tell my friends to also join the Erasmus projects they offer but they don't find it legitimate enough because there is not much information about them in social media'*.

This answer highlights an issue in the organizations social media strategy which is the lack of information and visibility on their current social media platforms that can undermine the perceived legitimacy and trustworthiness of their projects. Social media presence plays a huge role in building credibility and trust among potential participants. As stated previously, a significant percentage of social media users (over 50%) are inclined to engage with content they have encountered before. This behavior shows that repeated exposure to content increases familiarity and trust, making users more likely to further.

The key themes include source of awareness, social media engagement, word-of-mouth and perceived effectiveness of ASDA RY'S communication strategies.

Overall, the thematic analysis reveals that social media and word-of-mouth marketing are key channels for discovering ASDA RY and its activities.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

It is important to uphold ethical principles to ensure the safety and fairness of the study. This is to ensure that the avoidance of harm and unethical conduct is achieved. Consent from each

participant is necessary for the interviewing to take place. This process is essential for safeguarding privacy, maintaining confidentiality, minimizing risks, and respecting participants' right to withdraw from the study.

Ethical and moral consideration have been considered. In the process of analyzing the reasoning of a weak online presence, a strong emphasis has been placed on upholding ethical and legal standards. The literature review and materials utilized have been conducted according to standard guidelines provided by Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Furthermore, consent has been obtained from each participant in this research work.

Below is a table that was used to guide the interviews.

Ethics Considerations	Actions
Informed Consent	Provide participants comprehensive information about the research, its objectives, and the expected involvement before seeking their agreement to participate (Banks, 2021)
Confidentiality	Safeguard all information disclosed, use of pseudonyms when presenting finding to uphold anonymity (Banks, 2021)
Sensitivity	Use of appropriate language and communication (Banks, 2021)
Respect	Treat participants with dignity throughout the research process (Banks, 2021)

Table 3 *Ethics*

4.8 Reliability

Reliability holds importance in upholding validity and credibility of findings. In quantitative studies, reliability pertains to the ability to replicate processes and results consistently under similar conditions, Conversely, qualitative research poses a more intricate challenge due to its diverse methodologies. While exact replication may not be feasible or desirable in qualitative research, reliability focuses more on consistency. That means ensuring that the

chosen methodology and approach yields data that are conceptually aligned, even if variations exist (Leung 2015).

In the context of the chosen research method, reliability is vital. The interviews and group discussion were conducted face-to-face at an event ASDA RY was hosting. This will ensure accuracy because the responses are accurately captured and interpreted. Maintaining consistency in the research process and approach becomes imperative to uphold the reliability of qualitative findings. (Leung 2015)

5 Instagram marketing for non-profit organizations

For successful Instagram and ASDA RY marketing, the first step is to select an impactful cover image, which is a crucial factor when attracting a user. Therefore, consideration should be given to selecting an image that accurately represents the organization and captures the attention of potential followers. The author of this study and the executive manager of ASDA dedicated time to choosing the most suitable image. Opinions were exchanged and numerous options were meticulously reviewed, seeking input from others as well. Ultimately, a consensus was reached on the ideal image to use for the NGO's Instagram. The organizations must implement a content strategy to improve their online presence.

5.1 Content Planning

The goal is to inspire action from the audience, whether it's a simple like or a view. Communication in this context is no longer a linear, one-way process but rather a dynamic exchange between the organization and the user. (Miller 2013). Although gaining likes is a positive sign, the true aim is to encourage deeper engagement such as comments and shares. Non-profit communication revolves around answering two key questions:

1. Who is the target audience?
2. And how will this message be delivered?

ASDA RY needs to consider the demographic of their organizations. Social media channels like Instagram are transforming the way non-profit organizations deliver their messages. This shift means that ASDA alone no longer decides what is relevant to its activity, participants and viewers also have their say. Consequently, this influences the content of its messages (Miller 2013). Since the target demographic is 18-24-year-olds, the content is designed to speak directly to them. Visually pleasing posts with trendy hashtags that show that youth is important is a way to achieve this. These posts describe what ASDA RY is, what it stands for and the services it offers. While creating content, creative styles were used to make them

eye-catching and motivating. Various colors and soft appropriate language were also used to give the content vibrancy.

Effective content planning for NGO`s should be based on listening and observing ways to connect and engage with the audience (Miller 2013). The main objective is to be relevant and to create valuable content for followers. However, achieving relevance can be challenging as it varies from person to person. From the moment someone learns about the organization, every subsequent action contributes to building a collaborative relationship. Each action taken by a supporter such as liking or commenting on a post, not only strengthens their connection to the organization but also increases visibility within their network. This is often referred to as "feeding the feed" which means that an engaged follower helps spread the organization's message each time they engage in an action (Mathos & Norman 2012).

During the thesis, the author had the opportunity to manage the organization's Instagram page, publishing three posts and uploading 4 Instagram stories over the course of a week. Analyzing the engagement rates of these posts and discussion from participants revealed the need for strategic content planning for upcoming projects. This involved developing a marketing strategy that outlines how the organization will compete in its market segment (Rowley 2014).

The first post was designed as a "stay tuned" announcement showing the importance of youth to ASDA RY. This post aimed to build anticipation and the organization's commitment to empowering young people. The second post provided information about an upcoming youth exchange program but intentionally did not reveal the location, creating a sense of mystery and encouraging followers to stay engaged for further updates. These posts did generate interaction, with followers commenting and tagging other users thereby increasing engagement and visibility. For future strategies, a content calendar would be highly effective. A content calendar ensures a consistent posting schedule that can help maintain regular engagement with followers. It allows for the strategic planning of diverse content types such as informative updates etc.

Content planning strategy:

To maximize engagement on Instagram, the organization should use a comprehensive content planning strategy that included creating content calendar, using analytics tools, and adapting the content based on audience feedback and current trends. The first half of the week can focus on stories or experiences of past participants with success stories of how the organization impacted their life. In addition, detailed information about upcoming projects or facts related to ASDA RY`s mission. Wednesdays can feature behind-the-scenes content to humanize the organization and build a personal connection with the audience. The second half of the week can be used for more interactive posts such as stories or polls on which

country the youth want to visit the most and calls to action to encourage followers to take specific actions such as signing up to events or sharing content can take place also. The end of the week can include a recap of the week's activities to keep followers informed about recent efforts. During the thesis, one of the reels posted received 52 plays and reached 27 accounts. This shows the importance of continuing to use reels to maximize reach and interaction.

6 Results

Social media holds immense potential for organizations. Regardless of the type of business, it has changed marketing by offering the possibility to reach larger audiences rapidly and often at little to no cost. Although a wide range of platforms are available, organizations must strategically use the ones that align best with their objectives and target audiences. Consistently engaging and strategically planning content is key to maximizing attraction from target audience, as shown from the analysis of group discussion. The selective nature of users on platforms like Instagram shows the importance of delivering content that is both relevant and engaging, with careful attention to factors such as post location and timing.

The findings suggest that this organization can benefit from a dynamic approach for communication that may result in more common interactions with their audience rather than relying solely on one-way communication. Use of stories can help deepen their connection with their audience. In addition, organizations need to strategically plan the content they generate to ensure quality in their posts.

The author managed ASDA RY's Instagram page during the thesis. In the primary stage, screenshots were taken initially to compare results. The management includes posting reels, visuals and stories. Previously, no posts were uploaded on the Instagram page. There was a statement that posts were uploaded but did not receive more than 3 likes and were taken down frequently (ASDA RY 2024). All posts made received more than 15 likes within less than 24 hours. Compared to earlier, there is a noticeable improvement. Comments and shared also have increased.

Insights gathered from participant interviews shed light on the motivations and preferences of users which provided guidance for content creation and strategy development. ASDA RY can use this as an advantage to achieve their marketing objectives.

From the feedback gathered, the improvements made during the thesis have significantly impacted the organizations. The changes implemented on the Instagram page has improved ASDA's online presence. According to ASDA RY's manager, many individuals are contacting them and inquiring about their youth projects.

6 Recommendations & conclusion

The primary purpose of this thesis was to improve the online presence and to determine a strategy to attract followers/views to ASDA RY's Instagram page. Using strategic content creation, the author has achieved a reasonable increase in followers. For future suggestions, it might be beneficial to maintain this current momentum and further refining content strategies might expand the NGO's presence on Instagram.

The author has achieved notable success in increasing followers and attracting views to the organization's page. Previously, the organizations posting frequency was irregular with content being shared infrequently. Recognizing this inconsistency as a weakness, an effort has been addressed by posting content over the course of a month. Although there has been a growth in the number of ASDA RY's followers and increased awareness of the organization, the increase could even be greater. Consistency in maintaining and updating is important for ASDA RY's online success. There is still room for further growth in terms of interactions, shares, and followers. It is recommended that ASDA RY continues to maintain and further improve its Instagram presence by actively posting content in the future.

Being a non-profit organization, ASDA RY can benefit from substantial marketing with the usage of social media platforms to better establish themselves among their target audience. This low-cost, effective strategy gives potential participants insight into the activities of the organizations by viewing posts, stories and reels on their Instagram page. Therefore, for ASDA to grow in the future, they need to continue the efforts made currently on the page to attract new participants for their upcoming projects.

ASDA RY's manager appreciates that this study has been beneficial for their organization in many ways. Not only did the organizations gain more recognition, but also more people are visiting the organizations center. The manager has also stated that ASDA RY is receiving positive feedback from other organizations regarding their increased activity on Instagram. Additionally, ASDA RY has been contacted by other EU youth organizations that are considering creating cooperative activities with them.

In conclusion, this thesis has demonstrated the potential of strategic content planning to improve the online presence of ASDA RY on Instagram. The manager of ASDA RY has expressed appreciation for the positive impact of this study on the organization.

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Figures



Figure 1: 8 steps for customer engagement for non-profit communications. Philanthropy Circuit, 2022

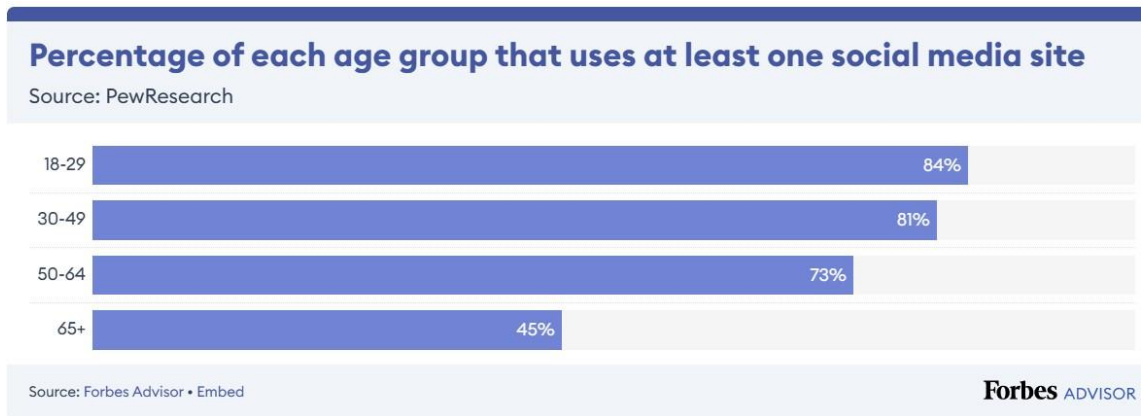
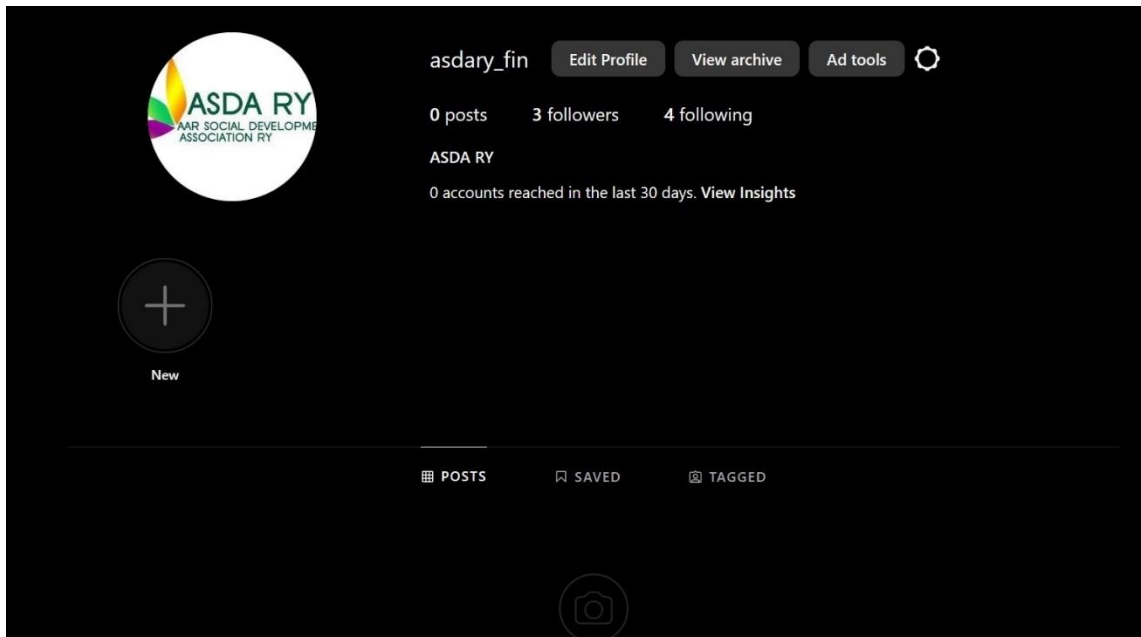
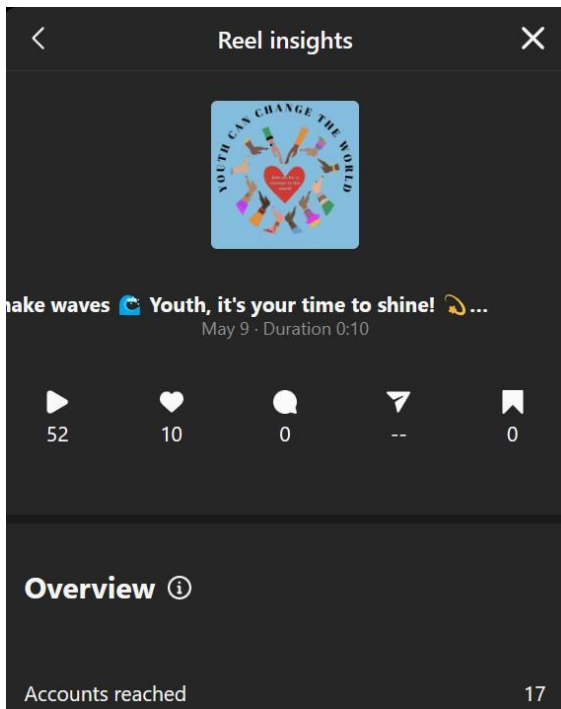


Figure 2: Percentage of each age group that uses at least one social media site

Pictures



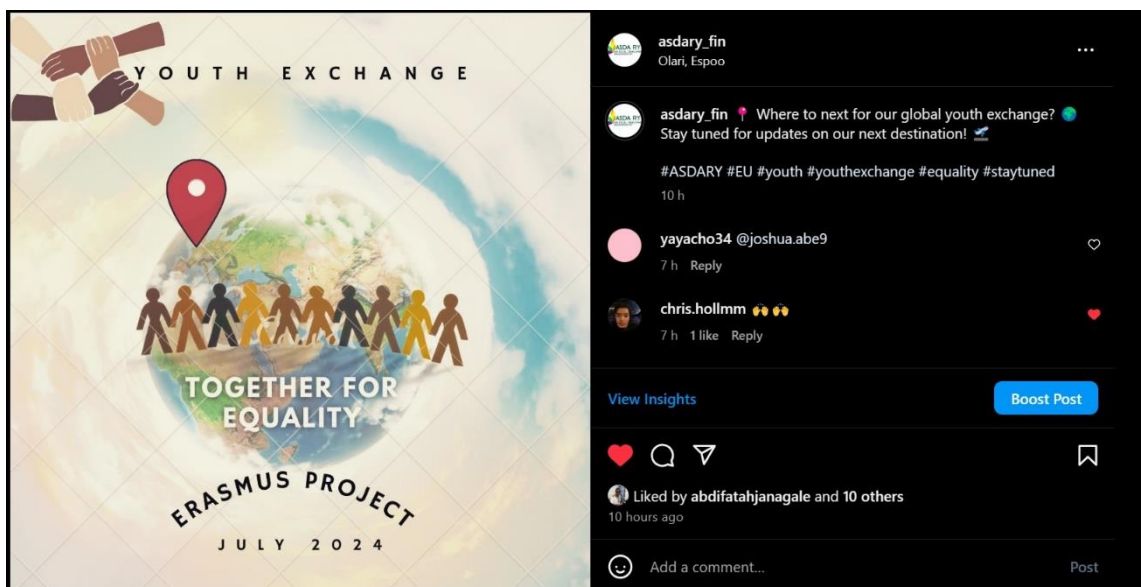
Picture 1: Screenshot of the initial Instagram account of ASDA RY. 0 accounts reached in the last 30 days.



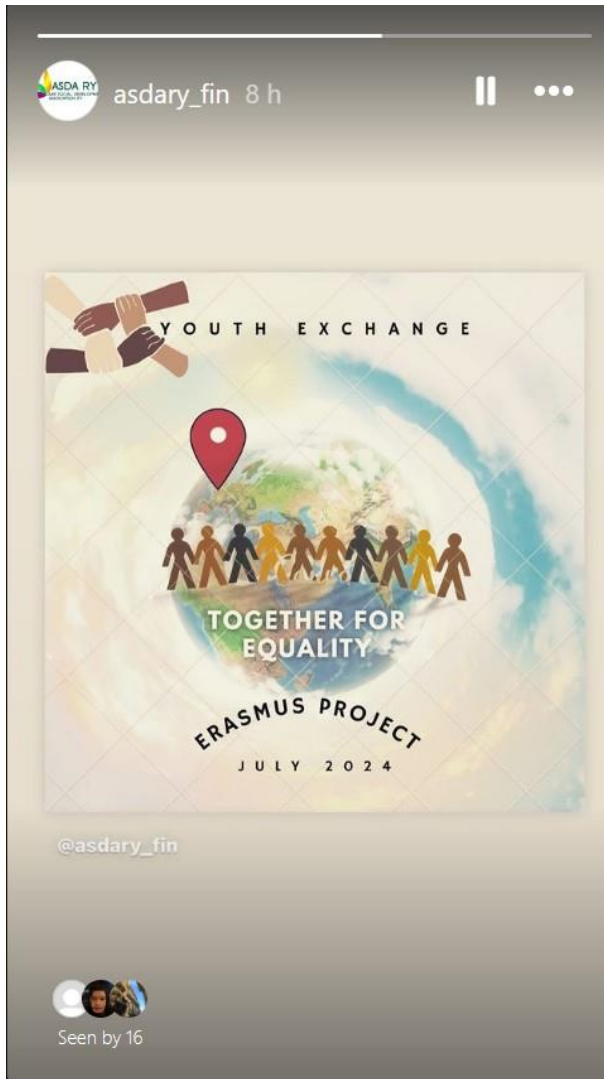
Picture 3: Insight on accounts reached by reel during the thesis. 52 plays and 17 accounts reached.



Picture 4: Overview of ASDA RY Instagram account during the thesis



Picture 5: Two mutuals commenting on the Instagram page. One tagged another user.



Picture 6: Instagram story seen by 16 accounts. 12 are non-followers.

Tables

Instagram Statistics
1 billion monthly active users
500 million daily active Instagram stories users worldwide
68% of Instagram users visit the platform daily
77% of marketers use Instagram in brands social strategy

Table 1: Instagram Statistics Error! Bookmark not defined.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Monthly events/projects • Cooperation with other NGO`s 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No focus on Instagram page; barely any posts, no activity. • No presence whatsoever • More activity on other social media platforms (that are not much used by the target audience)
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More use of Instagram; scheduled posts, content planning. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low engagement

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic = Increase in visibility • Collaborations with influencers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to leverage Instagram feed or reels for interactive content/features. • Inadequate use of advertising opportunities
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Table 2: SWOT Analysis.....

Interviewee	ASDA RY Social Media Follower	Source of Awareness	Awareness of Events/Projects via Social Media Platforms	Mention of ASDA RY on social media	Most Used Social Media Platform
1	Yes	Instagram	Yes	Yes	Instagram
2	No	Facebook	No	No	TikTok
3	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	Yes	Yes	Instagram
4	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	Yes	No	Twitter
5	No	Instagram	No	Yes	Instagram
6	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	Yes	Yes	Snapchat
7	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	No	No	Instagram
Interviewee	ASDA RY	Source of Awareness	Awareness of Events/Projects via Social	Mention of ASDA RY on	Most Used Social

	Social Media Follower		Media Platforms	social media	Media Platform	
1	Yes	Instagram	Yes	Yes	Instagram	
2	No	Facebook	No	No	TikTok	
3	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	Yes	Yes	Instagram	
4	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	Yes	No	Twitter	
5	No	Instagram	No	Yes	Instagram	
6	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	Yes	Yes	Snapchat	
7	Yes	Word-of-Mouth	No	No	Instagram	

Table 3 Interview questions

Ethics Considerations	Actions
Informed Consent	Provide participants comprehensive information about the research, its objectives, and the expected involvement before seeking their agreement to participate (Banks, 2021)
Confidentiality	Safeguard all information disclosed, use of pseudonyms when presenting finding to uphold anonymity (Banks, 2021)
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Respect	Treat participants with dignity throughout the research process (Banks, 2021)
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Table 3 Ethics