

Civil society engagement underpins all of Breakthrough’s (BTM) activities. In order to achieve meaningful outcomes in complex and fast changing environments, we shape not only the attitudes and behaviours of our audiences but also the norms and institutions in which they operate. To do this we conduct audience segmentation analysis and wider context mapping including political, gender and conflict dynamics, to identify Civil Society Actors (CSAs) who have credibility, reach and influence at relevant levels of society, and design interventions which empowers them to effect sustainable and measurable change. We achieve this through: ♦ building their capacity to communicate and deliver interventions ♦ building networks and coalitions ♦ building their relationship with Government and governance more broadly ♦ developing independent media ♦ and helping build cohesive societies which are more resilient to conflict and extremism. These areas of work are discussed in greater depth below.

A scalable and agile model for building the capacity of CSAs We identify relevant CSA partners, including NGOs, independent media organisations, social media influencers and religious and cultural leaders. Alongside a structured onboarding process ensuring shared values and objectives, we conduct due diligence checks and design a risk management framework for partnership. We then conduct a needs assessment, allowing us to design our capacity building process and establish a baseline and KPIS against which we can measure our impact. Our capacity building is designed to ensure that participants gain the right skills and the confidence and ambition to continue their work sustainably. Our training begins with research rooted in Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, working with participants to develop a shared understanding of the issues they are trying to address, the challenges they face in doing so and what role they can play in making that change. Our in-house multilingual teams then adapt a range of training modules (e.g. ♦ audience analytics, ♦ research and strategic planning ♦ CVE campaigning ♦ content production ♦ evaluation) to the needs of the participants.

To ensure sustainability, we build in a longer-term co-delivery and mentoring process to all of our training activities, during which our specialist teams work with participants over an extended period of time to co-develop and deliver interventions. Participants are assigned a technical expert mentor to support them as required, enabling them to embed the skills and knowledge they have gained from training and for us to help them shape their internal structure, processes and plans to continue the activity sustainably.

We have adapted this model and employed it in multiple contexts at scale, for example supporting 50 social media influencers in Russia and Central Asia to challenge disinformation, building the capacity of 20 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Somalia to deliver CVE interventions, and supporting a network of investigative journalists in Russia working on corruption and governance issues.

Developing the capacity and sustainability of social media influencers in Tunisia: For our *Haya* project in Tunisia, we created a bespoke training programme to promote promising young voices as new social media influencers. We supported 16 young Tunisians, eight men and eight women, during a two-day coaching workshop to produce two pieces of original CVE-related content. Our partners have since grown into a collaborative network of highly influential influencers and social activists. They have generated over 2 million Facebook views, 24% of which came from audiences who were actively engaging with extremist or highly sectarian content, amongst which 60% expressed positive or supportive attitudes to the content or influencers.

Building networks and coalitions which help CSAs to better achieve their objectives and be more resilient in the face of political pressure. Often CSAs operate in a fragmented environment without strong networks or coalitions. We identify networks of CSAs with common objectives and values, and bring them together to jointly deliver projects, helping participants to identify synergies they can cooperate on in the long-term, and how to identify potential funding sources. For example, in Eastern Ukraine we brought together 12 online influencers, citizen journalists, and TV stations to deliver a messaging campaign that supported reconciliation between people in occupied territories and the rest of the country. These participants have since continued to collaborate on various projects.

Building bridges between Government and CSAs. In order to effect meaningful and sustainable change, civil society has to have a productive relationship with government, however it is often the case in FCAS environments that the relationship between the two can become increasingly antagonistic. BTM uses communication-focused interventions to support civil society’s integration with the governance process e.g. policy making or implementation, service delivery and elections and democratic processes.

Supporting civil society and government engagement: On our FCO-funded Government of Iraq (GoI) project, there was a significant reluctance by the GoI to communicate in partnership with civil society. We worked with the GoI to develop a range of platforms and campaigns that focused on thematic areas that CSAs were actively advocating on, such as reconciliation, gender and youth. We supported the GoI to develop platforms which highlighted the role of civil society in achieving change, building a following of over 2.3 million Iraqis with monthly views of up to 18 million. We leveraged this scale to build a network of over 70+ civil society influencers who not only regularly share GoI content but also collaboratively engage with Government communications.

Building social cohesion and resilience to conflict and extremism Our in-depth audience segmentation and contextual research helps us identify key social groups and actors, and better understand the wedge issues which divide them, as well as other long-term drivers to conflict and instability (e.g. uneven governance, resource distribution, unemployment). Where possible, we partner with actors who can help address these long-term issues, however where project scope and timeline does not allow this, we identify ways to reduce the likelihood that these underlying drivers will erupt into conflict or cause instability.

In Kenya, we pioneered the use of forum theatre and cinema to building cohesion and reducing antagonism across key social dividing lines. For the US Department of Defence, we partnered with Kenyan CSO *SAFE* to develop *Watafu*: a five-month mobile cinema project centring on a feature-length drama fictionalising stories of sectarian tension and resolution. Live theatre workshops in affected communities were used to both help develop the film, and to accompany it through film screenings encouraging dialogue and building resilience to conflict. We facilitated dialogue sessions in 37 locations at the Kenyan Coast particularly affected by communal violence, reaching over 10,000 community members.

Promoting social cohesion across South Asia by equipping CSOs to deliver effective online campaigning. We delivered a three-country programme for the US Department of State across South Asia, building the capacity of CSOs to counter extremism, prevent inter-communal violence and build social cohesion. In Bangladesh our research (adopting offline and online methods) highlighted intercommunal violence in society as a result of religious divisions and a fragmented and segregated education system. We therefore identified organisations working within madrassas and schools, and who sought to challenge societal stereotypes and divisions. A year later, four of these organisations continued to run scaled campaigns and interventions, with one securing 1.4 million engagements.

Supporting independent media A strong independent media sector is vital to democracy and to achieving a pluralistic civil society. In societies where civil society is shrinking, investing in independent media is an important way in which to increase space for debate and dialogue. Our approach to media development focuses on helping innovative media organisations build sustainable business models, adapt to a digital first environment, and importantly broaden their reach into a broader range of audience segments from across society through a data driven editorial and targeting approach.

We are currently delivering audience segmentation and targeting support for two of Russia's leading independent media outlets, *Meduza* and *MediaZona* and a range of independent investigative journalists in conjunction with data analysts at *King's College London*. The outlets lack the expertise and tools to understand their audience profiles or consumption habits, and to therefore promote content effectively to new audiences. Using action research methodology, our team is translating data provided by *King's College London* into audience segments that can be tracked online and offline and conducting weekly mentoring sessions with specialists from the outlets, upskilling them to create targeting profiles that reach these segments and adjusting their editorial and commercial strategy accordingly. This innovative model, bringing together leading academia, local journalists and cutting edge digital marketing helps outlets to reach broader audiences and create common framings of issues, thus contributing to healthy democratic public discourse.

Supporting independent media in the Baltics: On the FCO-funded Baltics Independent Media programme, we developed the Baltics Media Accelerator, designed to identify emerging media outlets wanting to reach larger audiences and increase sustainability. Participating outlets were immersed in an intensive design-thinking workshop and provided with business and media mentors over a period of six months. The outlets underwent a fundamental re-think in their business models, shifting their monetisation models in a way that was better tailored to small linguistic minority audiences. All three outlets have since engaged series A investors, increased their audience share and one has seen a 200% increase in revenue.

In-house technical capability, regional teams and an end-to-end methodology to design and deliver strategic communications which includes:

◆ Working with clients to define the brief ◆ Initial research to generate problem statement ◆ Target Audience Analysis (TAA) and Contextual Analysis to understand audiences and the environment they operate in ◆ Social and behavioural modelling to develop strategic approach ◆ Development of theory of change (ToC) as foundation for campaign and operational plans ◆ Internal campaign brief and strategy ◆ Distribution plans ◆ Content production ◆ Content dissemination ◆ Monitoring and Evaluation ◆ Feedback evaluation results into programme delivery.

We have a strong in-house capability of over 200 staff organised into functional and thematic specialisms including research, strategy and planning; creative and production, a digital acquisition, campaign management, evaluation. These teams each have in-house regional and linguistic specialists in Russian, French, Arabic, Hindi, Urdu, Somali and Swahili. This strong on house capability means we can take an iterative approach to campaign design and delivery, constantly adjusting our strategy and products on the basis of near real time digital data or ongoing evaluation on the ground. Together with our trained local staff in regional hubs in East Africa, the Gulf, North Africa and Eastern Europe, this enables us to mobilise and deliver multilingual, pan-regional projects at pace, whilst maintaining quality control at all times.

Our strategic approach moves beyond ‘messaging’ by influencing not only the attitudes and behaviours of our audiences but also the social networks which they are embedded in and the norms and institutions which shape them. This requires us to deliver integrated campaigns that operate at multiple levels of society from individuals and specific groups through to civil society, businesses and Government. We have successfully applied this approach to both international and hyper-localised audiences at pace and scale. We have delivered ambitious UK-wide campaigns to counter violent extremism for the Home Office involving a network of 60+ Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and influencers as well as national media.

Integrated communications campaign for security sector reform: In Somalia, we delivered a security sector reform campaign to build trust between youth and the police which involved building anonymous WhatsApp groups between young people and local police chiefs, whilst simultaneously running a recruitment campaign targeting minority clans, as well as conducting community engagement training with front line officers using innovative participatory theatre, to achieve our overarching strategic objective. Over 40% of people polled in Baidoa had seen one element of the campaign and over 50 incidents of police corruption were reported via WhatsApp over 3

In-depth research to inform campaign design: Research is led by our Head of Research and Strategy who has 20 years’ experience in the development of communications and behavioural psychology. We conduct research based on the client’s brief to establish (i) **contextual understanding** of the information, political, conflict and gender environments (ii) segment **audience groups** on the basis of how they think, feel and behave and understand their social networks and (iii) map the **norms and institutions** in which they operate. Using this analysis, we apply a range of behavioural and social change models to develop an overarching strategic framework and. Translate this into a Theory of Change (ToC). From our ToC we identify key assumptions, risks and unintended consequences which are then integrated into our campaign. Research methodologies we use include: ◆ digital mapping and analytics ◆ focus groups and participatory research ◆ ethnography ◆ semiotics ◆ interviews ◆ and public opinion surveys, augmented with academically informed desk research and expert analysis by our in-house regional specialists.

Cutting edge Research Tools: *Brandwatch, Audiense, Newswhip and TalkWalker* are social media monitoring software tools we use to identify influencers, target audiences and track public engagement with selected topics and news stories. We use these platforms to extract key insights and combine them with our in-house expertise to build a detailed understanding of complex issues that inform our evidence-based communications strategies.

Integrated campaign approaches: Our multidisciplinary teams, drawn from TV production, branding, advertising, community engagement, PR and advocacy, enable us to deliver effective integrated campaigns. Examples of key approaches and tactics we deploy are explored below:

Harnessing the reach of broadcast to shape public discourse: In many FCAS regions, TV and radio are the primary mediums that shape both the wider public debate and perceptions of opinion formers. We create cross-channel content in key CSSF FCAS regions spanning broadcast, print and digital platforms. We have in-house production team specialising in TV, social and radio content experienced producing a range of formats, ensuring we are able to produce quality broadcast content at pace. We also have extensive dissemination networks who also act as co-production partners ensuring localised content and value for money. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa we have a network of over 180 TV broadcasters who have disseminated our content, covering all key regions. In Somalia we have built a network of over 50 local radio stations for nation-wide reach, who we collaborate with to co-produce content that resonates locally.

Innovative digital campaigning to engage niche audiences by working with hyper-local influencers:

We have pioneered digital campaigning built around online social influencers. We select partners based on their suitability, authenticity and standing with the groups we seek to impact, often working with individuals who enjoy a direct link to our target audiences. Our research and production teams work with them to draw on digital analytics to inform effective and bespoke content to deliver messages that are both resonant and credible with specific audiences. We nurture these networks over extended periods of time, enabling us to deliver both long terms strategic messaging to audiences, but also to conduct multi-layered ‘rapid response’ communications following key events. For example, in Russia we were able to activate a range of content within 12 hours of the recent telegram protests.

Delivering communication campaigns through influencers in the Baltic states for the UK FCO: We were tasked with responding to attempts by Russian-backed media outlets to sow division on ethnic and linguistic grounds by alienating young ethnic-Russian Latvians and Estonians from their national societies. We identified and recruited 12 Russian-speaking social media influencers with credibility among our target audience. We supported them to create and disseminate 28 videos promoting a message of cohesion and tolerance. These videos attracted an overwhelmingly positive response and achieved over 3.4 million views, representing a successful strategic intervention in a complex and changing media environment.

Transforming civic space by unleashing the capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs): We have a successful track record of collaborating with CSOs on strategic communications. We identify and cultivate relationships with CSOs based on their credibility and potential, and train them in core skills including production, content management and campaign strategy, and then build them into networks and coalitions to deliver genuinely strategic campaigns which can achieve sustainable change. In Somalia, we worked with a Somali organisation Marginalised Communities Advocates, and co-created a campaign that encouraged disenfranchised Al Shabaab fighters to defect, by showing them that it was possible to leave the group and reintegrate within their communities. We reached a social media audience of 1.4 million, and more than 1.7 million heard at least one of our radio broadcasts, this resulted in a 300% increase in defector enquires to the centre and more than 50 additional defectors being processed each month.

Building the capacity of national and multilateral institutions to achieve sustainable change: At a national level, we work directly with government agencies to build their capacity to engage with citizens. We have built national platforms such as *For A New Iraq*, on behalf of the FCO and the Government of Iraq (GoI). This project has achieved a following of over 3.5 million to date, including more than 300 million views via campaigns such as ‘Mark of Duty’, which used social video to encourage youth voter participation in Iraq’s recent national elections. We helped to build the long-term communications capacity of the GoI by mapping communications work flows through departments, identifying key blockers and enablers and designing a targeted training programme to secure their buy in. We have also worked at senior levels of the GoI to get them to further align multiple layers of messaging to secure their strategic objectives. For example, we worked with the Economic Reform Unit on a grassroots campaign in partnership with business leaders and bodies. We promoted Iraqi made goods, built a PR driven campaign around Iraq’s economic reform and aligned Ministerial level GoI messaging with the narratives we had generated from the bottom up.

We work closely with the public sector on developing and embedding best practice in CVE. In 2015, we worked with RICU to establish a joint unit with the EU Commission, providing strategic communications consultancy to 20 EU Member States offering research, actionable recommendations for communications initiatives to tackle extremism, and advice on institutional change required to deliver over the long term.

Similarly, we use a rolling digital analysis capability to support the US Government to develop their public diplomacy objectives in South Asia into compelling messaging, and then turn this into viral digital content in Urdu and Hindi to reach native language audiences online. Since November 2017, we have increased the total follower base by over 1000% and increased engagements by leading journalists by 800%.

Rigorous and ongoing monitoring and evaluation (M&E): At the beginning of the campaign development process, we use our ToC to establish KPIs against inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact, and establish a relevant baseline to monitor progress. We constantly monitor campaign performance throughout the delivery period through digital analytics, linguistic analysis and primary qualitative and quantitatively research, as well as client and stakeholder feedback. This establishes a positive feedback loop that helps us to iteratively adjust our strategy and content and measure success against project KPIs. We provide weekly ‘digital dashboards’ for our clients, enabling them to track not only key digital performance statistics but also the sentiment expressed by different segments and evidence of offline behavioural change. If required, we use third party evaluation. For example, on a recent project influencing youth at risk of radicalisation in Kazakhstan we worked with *R/WI* to carry out forced exposure content testing to a representative sample of n = 1,533.