

Bureau of Counterterrorism and  
Countering Violent Extremism



# DISCLAIMER

The Toolkit carries recommendations which may not fit all environments, as the advice shared is based on a particular experience in Kyrgyzstan where the target audience of the campaign was "radicalizing" youth. However, most of the lessons are applicable elsewhere, and recommendations are worth taking into account global.

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# INTRODUCTION

This Toolkit has been created on the basis of the key findings obtained in the framework of the Search for Common Ground (Search) “Social Media for De-Radicalization in Kyrgyzstan: A Model for Central Asia’s” pilot project funded by the Bureau of Counterterrorism, US Department of State. The project is based on two parts: a participatory approach, focused on UN Resolution 2250<sup>1</sup>, and a professional approach aimed at creating and conducting social media campaigns in Kyrgyzstan.

Extremist and terrorist groups use the Internet to radicalize and recruit young people through social media and instant messaging applications. Therefore, it is important to create new methods to combat online extremist propaganda, focusing not only on measures such as blocking and filtering content, or counter-narratives which are very popular and come naturally in response to radicalization and violent extremism, but also offering a positive alternative to extremist propaganda, while challenging their ideology and messages.

## APPROACHES

To achieve maximum effect, the project team used an approach based on three principles:

- *Creation and dissemination of positive stories*, often promoting tolerance and diversity, since such topics have more impact on the target group than reports on negative aspects of extremist propaganda. Also promotion of pluralism that allows young people to feel their involvement and learn how to think critically and constructively express their opinions;

- *Participation of vulnerable groups* in the implementation of this project: ahead of all, the project focused young people living in different socio-economic conditions, which are most susceptible to radicalization and recruitment by violent extremists in Kyrgyzstan (KR). The interactive campaign on social networks has allowed these groups to become direct participants in this large online platform.

- *Involvement of stakeholders* and fighters involved in radicalization and violent extremism on the ground.

## STAGES

The project implementation period was divided into several stages:

- *A preparatory stage*, which focused on mobilizing key project participants for development and implementation of social media campaigns. At this stage, the Advisory Working Group (AWG) was established, which included the staff of the 10th Main Department of the MIA of the KR for combatting extremism, the Anti-Terrorism Center, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the KR and several other important public and religious organizations<sup>2</sup>. Interaction with the working group was crucial, as it ensured participation in the project of authoritative local institutions and guaranteed that the positive messages created in the campaign were based on an agreed-upon analysis of the main factors that encourage young people to join extremist organizations. In addition, media production and media marketing partners were selected during this period for creating a professional campaign in social media and promoting positive messages aimed at the target group. Other important activities at this stage included two, one-day seminars to train young people in the south and north of the country in developing positive messages and inclusive media campaigns in their communities. The group of participants consisted of fifty influential young people who were part of the target group vulnerable to

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution 2250 (2015), Urges Member States to Increase Representation of Youth in Decision-Making at All Levels. This resolution encouraged to address conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders and other concerned groups in civil society, and by adopting “tailored approaches” to counter recruitment to violent extremism. <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12149.doc.htm>

<sup>2</sup> For details on forming a team of key partners for such projects, see Step 2 “Identify key partners” on page 10 of this Guide.

radicalization leading to violent extremism, including returning labor migrants, students from religious schools and local youth leaders. Both young men and women were included.

Working with a sensitive audience required us to design such a training program that would motivate young people to create projects for implementation in their own communities. This was achieved thanks to a flexible module that included special team building techniques aimed at breaking down the barriers within the communities and between the participants, facilitating a deep understanding of issues of violent extremism and religious radicalism in the modern world, raising awareness about the world's best practices of Internet campaigns for promoting diversity, pluralism, mitigating conflict and promoting peace, introducing models of social change in society through one's own participation, and training young people to write project proposals for small grants for inclusive campaigns. After the training ended, a contest among young people was announced and the most relevant ideas were selected. However, because of the limited capacity of young people to transform their ideas and thoughts into the given format, the project team had to work individually with each case to help improve applicants' approaches to preventing violent extremism. The project staff helped them to calculate the budget for events, identify key partners, agree on the terms of cooperation, plan the schedule and allocate roles in their teams, determine the format and program of the planned events, and select the appropriate time and place (for example, after Friday prayers in mosques, or hold an event during a free week after school examinations). In the next stages of the project, the trained young people then acted as researchers and promoters of positive messages on social media.

-A *research stage* was focused on conducting surveys among the target group in order to understand what content these users consume, how they gain access to extremist propaganda, which online platforms they use, who is the distributor of such information, what type of communications are used by young people, and what kinds of popular messages are instilled in the consciousness of youth which then lead them to radicalization. As part of the research, 108 young active consumers of information from social media in eight districts in the south and north of the country were surveyed. These areas were designated as the most susceptible to recruitment and violent extremism, from where, as of the time of writing the report and as reported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the KR, more than 500 people have left for combat areas<sup>3</sup>. These interviews were systematized and analyzed using 15 indicators<sup>4</sup>. The interview results showed a clear description of meanings, messages and images, which are most often found in popular video or audio clips, photos or texts that are attractive to local youth and can contribute to their radicalization<sup>5</sup>.

For example, among the visual images remembered by respondents from online video, we have identified the images of young fighters, often ethnic Uzbeks who speak Uzbek, in camouflage uniforms, on combat vehicles, in a battlefield or with an automatic weapon. Alternatively there are men calling for jihad in videos, who were often recognized by respondents as people they knew, and it made them doubt "maybe there really is a jihad?". While watching videos containing extremist propaganda, the audience becomes strongly influenced when hadiths and verses (in the form of narration or text in video) from the Quran are quoted with references to jihad or when suicide bombers perform, in the opinion of respondents, "a heroic act in the name of Allah" in videos. The messages identified during the research were classified into three categories, as causing a strife for such actions as *jihad, caliphate and takfir*:

- appeals to commit, join a violent jihad, or die in the name of Allah;
- appeals for the establishment of a caliphate in order to seek justice, since the caliphate is the only correct state system in today's world;
- appeals to fight against "murtads" ("apostates" in Arabic) and "kafirs" ("infidels" in Arabic), disobey the infidels' orders, since this is the right way forward when the infidels oppose Muslims.

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<sup>3</sup> For details on the research area map, see the Analytical report on Action Research "Messages, images and media channels promoting youth radicalization in Kyrgyzstan" <https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Kyrgyzstan-radicalization-social-media-report-ENG.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> See the Research Methodology in the Analytical report <https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Kyrgyzstan-radicalization-social-media-report-ENG.pdf> on page 24

<sup>5</sup> For details, see the section "Main topics, messages and remembered images" of the Analytical report <https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Kyrgyzstan-radicalization-social-media-report-ENG.pdf> on page 19

Based on the study's findings, the project team developed an action plan consisting of "soft" combat measures against radicalization, in this case – through social media campaigns<sup>6</sup>.

In addition, we identified nine media channels, which are most popular among the target audience consuming radical content. These are YouTube, Facebook, Odnoklassniki, VKontakte, Instagram, Twitter, and mobile applications - WhatsApp, Telegram and Imo. The identified channels were used as the main online platforms when planning and conducting the project's media campaign<sup>7</sup>. The project media experts created groups and accounts on these platforms where they published positive messages on a daily basis for five months<sup>8</sup>. More importantly, the project established a direct exchange of messages with the target group identified during the research stage of the project, and it later became a bridge for further dissemination of alternative messages.

It should be noted that the Action Research was noted by small circle of experts as unique, the first of its kind in Central Asia which managed to investigate key messages and media channels exploited by VE recruiters.

- *Development of the campaign design and media products* was the next step at this stage of the project, when the team, in close cooperation with partners in the media and marketing, developed the campaign brand, prepared online platforms, planned and created media products, and developed unique hashtags, based on the identified keywords, in order to ensure maximum reach of the created content to the target audience. When developing the professional campaign, the team used the topics and images mentioned by the respondents during the field study. Since the respondents identified themselves as part of the "Muslim world", alternative meanings were formed based on such perceptions. For example, the media products were based on the religious context via creating clear and accessible images and meanings of the story characters/heroes that were perceived by the youth. Producers were instructed to present religion simply and understandable for the audience, to give the user simple answers to his/her concerns, without equating Islam with radicalism. At the same time, the media products carried messages emphasizing the value of diversity and pluralism, which gave young people pause for thought before making a choice to join an extremist group. All videos, pictures, infographics and messages were created in Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek languages, taking into account the multilingual media space and the fact that the users surveyed can easily view the content in any of these languages. Preliminary testing of finalized positive messages took almost a month, since it required close work with key partners and experts to find the "golden mean", as there was no deciding opinion on what content actually had a positive effect and which did not.

- *Launching and conducting the social media campaign* included posting 3 video clips, 22 pictures, and infographics on a daily basis.<sup>9</sup> Efficacy was evaluated using daily monitoring and the standard web analytics tools<sup>10</sup> used in SMM campaigns. However, not all SMM methods are useful for online deradicalization. See the section below - *Step 5 Starting a campaign and content distribution*" for a step-by-step instruction on how to implement. In the same period, young grantees started another campaign which included various online and offline events, such as intellectual games, thematic lectures on sports, video lectures on science and Islam, contests, and dialogues in local mosques.

In this guide, referring to the lessons learned, we offer tools in the form of seven consecutive steps for planning, developing and conducting social media campaigns that can be used by practitioners and other interested stakeholders who want to make an impact in combating online extremism.

The guide is illustrated with several case studies from the campaign conducted in Kyrgyzstan, which can be useful not only in Central Asia, but also globally. The proposed toolbox is an accessible and convenient resource

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<sup>6</sup> For details, see the section "Recommendations" of the Analytical <https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Kyrgyzstan-radicalization-social-media-report-ENG.pdf> on page 9

<sup>7</sup> For details, see the section "Media channels most often used for recruitment" of the Analytical report [https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Action-Research\\_Outcomes\\_FINAL\\_RUS.pdf](https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Action-Research_Outcomes_FINAL_RUS.pdf) on page 18

<sup>8</sup> Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSq9WVvt0unRxb1i35-xRug> Odnoklassniki <https://ok.ru/profile/576790610626> VK page <https://vk.com/myjihadkg> VK group <https://vk.com/jihadkg> Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/yubovestijzn/> Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/positivelives/>

<sup>9</sup> For details, see the cases on pages 15, 16, 19, 20 of this guide.

<sup>10</sup> For an example of analyzing the statistics of search queries that led users to watch video clips within the framework of the professional campaign "Social Media For De-Radicalization: A Model for Central Asia", see a screenshot from the report of the media marketer of the project on page 23 of this guide

for social media users, civil activists, practitioners and other interested parties who strive for changes in the field of countering online extremism.

The guide is also available in English and can be downloaded in PDF format.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

**GAMSUMO** - State Agency for Local Self-Government of the Kyrgyz Republic

**GKNB** - State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic

**GKDR** - State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic

**MVD** - Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic

**NGO** - Non-Governmental Organisation

**SMM** - Social Media Marketing



## IMPACT OF ACTION RESEARCH

This approach shows how the findings and recommendations of [action research](#)<sup>11</sup> can be used to develop social media campaigns in the Kyrgyz Republic. The importance of understanding which radical ideologies and narratives influence to the audience is emphasized as the basis for creation positive messaging at the local level. Such research can be carried out on an individual basis as well but the outcome is often more effective by working in teams. The action research was part of a number of activities in the Social Media for Deradicalization in Kyrgyzstan: A Model for Central Asia's Project. The action research "[Messages, images and media channels promoting youth radicalization in Kyrgyzstan](#)" suggested particular ways to develop a social media campaign that produced the desirable influences on the target group. These steps also included investigating factors such as the reaction of youth to radical narratives leading to violent extremism; a portrait of the average Internet user; the ideals believed of the interviewed young people based on the extremist content consumed.

Findings of research have illustrated which way of social media campaign should be chosen. It is known there are several counter narrative's approaches with those typically identified at the global level. But our project team decided to create positive alternative messages, focusing on promoting the ideas of tolerance and diversity relevant in the context of the Kyrgyz multi-ethnic society, and also on the basis of selected topics/terms and images noted by the interviewed respondents. For example, during the field research, surveyed respondents pointed to several messages that are most often found in the videos or audio clips, visual content or text - they prompt discussions in their communities, touch their hearts, and can influence their future behavior in society. These messages can be classified into a few categories such as appeals to commit, join the jihad, and die in the name of Allah; appeals for the establishment of a caliphate in order to seek justice, since the caliphate is the only correct state system in today's world; appeals to fight "murtads" ("apostates" in Arabic) and "kafir" ("unbelievers" in Arabic), to defy the orders of infidels, since it is the right way when infidels are against Muslims<sup>12</sup>.

Therefore, media texts were developed by using religious topics with references to hadiths or surahs. At the same time, religious texts were presented in a language that is simple and accessible for the audience. Images and messages were created for the video clips as well as visual content which is clear for the young audience, with images with which they can identify. The action research gave the production group an opportunity to focus on the most critical elements of alternative messaging to better understand which images and meanings are most impactful for the target audience.



## BEFORE YOU START

When **developing an idea** or a project proposal, you first need to decide which type of social media campaign you intend to conduct. Campaigns on the Internet aimed at preventing violent extremism and containing counter-narratives can be **professional**, involving a large team of specialists, media experts and producers, and **inclusive**, created by activists, within the framework of a large professional campaign, or either of them. A **professional** campaign in social media can be simultaneously complemented by an information campaign in traditional media. In this case, its reach to the target audience and efficiency significantly increase. It is necessary to take into account the complexity, campaign design, as well as the amount of resources needed for the frequency and distribution content on social media platforms, since you will have to use both free tools and paid advertising. This is especially important when launching a professional campaign. The campaign plan and multimedia production targeting "radicalizing youth people" are not only expensive but also very difficult, as they require religious experience and direct access to the relevant audience. Our experience implementing in Kyrgyzstan showed that visual content production by professional

<sup>11</sup> "Messages, images and media channels promoting youth radicalization in Kyrgyzstan", Action research within the framework of the Social media for deradicalization in Kyrgyzstan: A model for Central Asia's project <https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Kyrgyzstan-radicalization-social-media-report-ENG.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> For more details, see "Main topics, messages and memorable images", on p. 19 of Analytical Report on the Action Research at "[Messages, images and media channels promoting youth radicalization in Kyrgyzstan](#)"

producers companies and online advertising costs an average of 25 USD (per one picture)<sup>13</sup>. The minimum price for one multimedia product was 3,000 USD. According to our experts' estimates, at least ten media products are required to implement a successful campaign, in order to maintain an intensive flow of alternative messages on several Internet platforms simultaneously. According to the law enforcement bodies of Kyrgyzstan, the current ratio of online alternative content to extremist propaganda is about 1: 147. This data indicates that the fight against online radicalization requires at least a similar amount of positive alternative content.

*A social media campaign means coordinated actions  
for achieving the goal by using one or more media platforms.*

To conduct a campaign in traditional media, it is necessary to plan the creation of new products on TV and radio in the appropriate format. According to the current rates of media production on TV and radio channels of Kyrgyzstan, the cost of one video clip with multiple daily run can be as much as 5000 USD per day.

STEP

II

## IDENTIFY KEY PARTNERS

To create an **effective social media campaign**, it is important to understand from the very beginning who are the key partners for the implementation of your idea. The campaign's success depends significantly on cooperation with partners and their contribution to deradicalization messaging. You need to contact organizations that conduct similar activities and identify the partners for your campaign who will contribute to increasing its effectiveness. First of all, they have to be specialists with an expertise in the field of religion, fighting extremism and radicalism, and security issues.

### WHO CAN BECOME A PARTNER OF YOUR PROJECT?

**First of all**, these are various security agencies that are involved in the process of combating radicalization as a source of violent extremism. In Kyrgyzstan, it is [the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic](http://www.gkn.gov.kg/)<sup>14</sup> (GKNB), which deals with countering extremist and terrorist activities and participates in ensuring information security, and [the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic](http://www.mvd.kg/index.php/kg/)<sup>15</sup> (MVD) represented by the 10th Main Department which works on combating terrorism and religious extremism. During the professional social media campaign, the representatives of these agencies were members of the working groups to develop and launch the campaign, and their competencies were useful for production groups creating video clips and visual products, as well as for media experts who disseminated the content. **The second** and no less important group of partners is local authorities that will make it easier for you to involve local leaders and stakeholders in your project. The local self-government bodies in KR ([the State Agency for Local Self-Government of the Kyrgyz Republic](http://www.gamsumo.gov.kg/)<sup>16</sup>(GAMSUMO), local councils (aiyl kenesh), local administrations (ayil okmotu), city councils (city kenesh), city administrations, akimiats, etc.) are the first stakeholders to whom people turn to for help and voice their problems and questions. [The State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic](http://religion.gov.kg/KY/)<sup>17</sup>(GKDR) that develops and implements the state policy in the religious affairs of the country and [the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan](http://muftivat.kg/)<sup>18</sup> are included in the **third** group of partners which are indispensable during the launch of the campaign for deradicalization. **Finally**, the scientific community, traditional media, [the Assembly](#)

<sup>13</sup> Rates as of spring 2017 in Kyrgyzstan

<sup>14</sup> Web-site of the State Committee for National Security of KR, <http://www.gkn.gov.kg/>

<sup>15</sup> Web-portal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of KR, <http://www.mvd.kg/index.php/kg/>

<sup>16</sup> Web-site of the State Agency for Local Self-Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, <http://www.gamsumo.gov.kg/>

<sup>17</sup> Web-site of the State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, <http://religion.gov.kg/KY/>

<sup>18</sup> Web-site of the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, <http://muftivat.kg/>

[of the people of Kyrgyzstan](#)<sup>19</sup> and civil society, including local NGOs and activists, can also help create and distribute media products in online platforms. . For example, before starting the social media campaign, the Search team created the Advisory Working Group, which included 29 experts from ministries, the religious and scientific communities, civil society, and the media. Below presents a few examples and lessons learned from the efforts of the project team and all stakeholders involved. It was the first such campaign in Kyrgyzstan that brought together youth, media professionals, theologians and religious scholars, security experts and activists for an in-depth study of the issue and development of an action strategy where everyone contributed in accordance with their competencies. In Kyrgyzstan, where communications between the authorities, the civil society and the media are well established, the creation of a large stakeholder team was one of the prerequisites for conducting an effective social media campaign.



## ANALYZE YOUR AUDIENCE

**Before planning a campaign**, you need to understand how you can influence your audience and which potential groups your counter-narratives will target. Ask yourself few questions about your potential audience, for example, such as:

- ✓ ***what is the age of the main information user that you intend to target during your campaign;***
- ✓ ***what social, professional and gender groups do this audience represent;***
- ✓ ***what information preferences and interests does the audience have.***

Highlight the main characteristics of your audience. There should be as many differentiated target groups as possible (schoolchildren, students, women, men, unemployed, labor migrants, etc.), so that when creating content, its authors/producers will have a clear understanding of what arguments to apply to different segments of the audience.

Then, analyze which media platforms and messengers your potential audience most often spends their time using. Study the content and profiles. Customize your profile so that it looks similar to the audience which you targeted. It is important to understand the focus of virtual teams and communities, media platforms, and also conduct a test review of the content published there. Engage partners and Internet activists in testing audiences to understand which segment of it is susceptible to extremist content and consumes/distributes it in closed social media groups. Having studied this, you will know which audience prefers to receive information and share it.

Finalize your analysis and create a descriptive portrait of the reader/viewer who is receptive to radicalization, and thereby is the target for your media campaign. A descriptive image should include such markers as the hobbies, preferences and values of your potential consumer of information. Also, develop a portrait of future, alternative user image to understand what kind of audience you would like to see after the campaign. Make a table with an analysis of your observations and findings, as it can be helpful for strategic planning.

<sup>19</sup> Web-site of the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan, <http://www.assembly.kg/bb.html>

# STEP IV

## DESIGN RESONATING MESSAGES

**Resonating narratives should be the basis** of your campaign because they provide the alternative to extremist propaganda. They can be in the form of texts, posts, articles, video clips, and audiovisual content. All of them should contain such messages, which will effectively reach youth and users vulnerable to online recruitment.

### DETERMINE WHAT YOUR MESSAGES WILL SAY

Resonating messages are determined based on results of the studied content and main topics that your target group views, listens or disseminates. On this data you must build most of your arguments and creation of alternative narratives delivering positive messages. Your messages can be unique, taking into account the obtained analytical data, or related to such areas as **diversity, pluralism, tolerance, social changes, peace and ecology, religion and freedom of belief.**

*The analysis of the messages of extremist and terrorist groups is one of the main steps in the construction of counter-narratives. The discourse of such groups is based on ideas, emotions and feelings. They often offer in their messages a mixture of theological, cultural and political topics.*

You can define the topic more specifically after analyzing the content viewed by your audience and identifying repeated references to certain concepts. Most often, these concepts in extremist propaganda are interpreted in a specific way or are implicit in order to persuade people to follow the proposed ideology. The analysis of such narratives is an important step in creating alternative messages.

Identify what meanings and concepts are instilled in the context's mass consciousness and how they influence your audience. You can do this while studying your audience or you can conduct a separate research of messages, posts, videos and other media which your audience is interested in. Carefully study the content most often distributed by extremist groups for the purpose of recruitment.

**Ask yourself the following questions:**

*What should my audience feel after receiving your messages? What should the audience remember?*

Below are examples of creating resonating alternative messages based on preliminary studies of meanings and images, and the lessons learned from our project implementation. The campaign, which was created by professionals, has taught us that media products should be more diverse, cover different youth audiences according to their interests, education, geography, gender, age, and social status.

The key features of the campaign were:

- clarification of key aspects of religion in order to make users think about whether it is worth joining the ranks of violent extremist recruits;
- combining online and offline activities for simultaneous coverage of a wider audience.

Given the fragmented linguistic space and the existing multilingual Internet audience in Kyrgyzstan, all scripts for the media products must be written by authors in the *native language*, and the video and audio should be voiced by *native speakers*.

## CASE #2

“Ilmizar” (an inclusive campaign in social networks).

The Internet project was aimed at increasing the awareness of young people through the dissemination of evidence-based information.

The initiative group created a series of video lectures on such topics as:

- ✓ why are young people vulnerable to recruiting by radical groups?
- ✓ why has Islam separated from secular science?
- ✓ what is religious radicalization and what active Islamic schools are there in Kyrgyzstan?
- ✓ what opportunities are there for the interreligious dialogue in Kyrgyzstan?



The experts/scientists who study or work on religion, ethnos, history, culture and society, were involved as speakers in the video lectures. The lectures were distributed through YouTube, posted on some social media and became a kind of open information resource for those who are interested in the topics of Islam and science

Another important lesson learned is that it is necessary to take into account the quantitative balance of positive messages and content distribution by the extremist and terrorist groups.

*Alternative messages should “talk” in the language of “your” audience, offer a positive alternative and a resonating argument, making people think about the problem. Use only credible sources when developing the stories of your messages, include the human factor, tell your story through a character, resonate by speaking of the consequences of extremism, and use humor and satire in your messages to undermine the credibility of extremists.*

A successful factor for the project was a team approach at the step of developing social campaigns and conducting workshops with influential youth – one in the South and one in the North of the country. These youth have their roots in the primary target group and include returned migrant workers, students from religious schools, and local youth leaders. The latter were assigned roles of researchers, creators of alternative campaigns and envoys in social media. The skills learned at the seminars were used by participants to create their own alternative narrative ideas. Ten original projects, such as intellectual games and sports events for young people in the regions, discussions on raising awareness, video lectures, amateur video clips aimed at preventing religious radicalization of young people, complemented a professional campaign for deradicalization in social networks.

However, to ensure wider involvement of youth and other stakeholders in the online campaign on preventing radicalization as a source of violent extremism, it is necessary that they all have certain skills to create multimedia content on the Internet and a basic level of media literacy. The experience in Kyrgyzstan shows that some project stakeholders are often not competitive in terms of their technological skills. Similar projects require both expert and financial investments in building technological capacity in

order to achieve the expected results and goals.

### TIME & RESOURCES OF YOUR CAMPAIGN

To promote alternative narratives in social media, you will need more time and money than would be required for a typical online advertising campaign. The duration of your campaign should be quite long, as a “alternative brand” needs 6-9 months to develop. Alternatively, a testing

period can be limited to four or six weeks. Then the campaign will be strategically flexible, while there will be enough time for promotion in social networks. Your calendar should take into account three main stages:

- **A preparatory stage**, which includes consultations, negotiations and cooperation of the project team, religious groups, other key partners and creators of media products;

- **A production stage**, which is allocated for the development of media products;

*“While promoting such public lectures in the Internet and receiving feedback, we have well understood how to work with the audience which was ready to consume and discuss the information,” Zarina Urmanbetova, leader of the video-lecture production team said. “We also realized that people want to see more such information and it must be distributed to them”*

- **A testing stage**, which requires close work with key partners in order to find a happy medium and plan which media products will bring positive effects. Testing content will help you to understand whether it contains the “right” message and whether it attracts the audience effectively. It is important to choose a testing method, whereas it is best done in a small focus group similar to your audience. Such an approach will help you to fix possible errors before starting the campaign.

Make sure that all participants share information about their campaigns with each other and allocate roles in the process of activities. The possible roles can range from creating additional amateur content to posting and distributing it to different groups and users’ accounts. The information that you can get from partners in the course of such cooperation is very useful. These may be specific questions related to the interpretation of religious dogmas (use this for your scenarios and production of any content) or the level of recruiting of a particular group (important when creating a scheme for distributing content and defining a target audience). Each of these periods can take from four to six weeks, but this is necessary because then you do not have to spend as much effort on improving media products during the ongoing campaign.

The **budget** of a social media company should involve several funding opportunities, including partnership assistance in the form of covering organizational expenses, consulting and logistics support, providing equipment and premises.

### WRITE A MEDIA PLAN AND IDENTIFY ITS GOALS

#### MEDIA PLAN EXAMPLE



Any successful media campaign requires careful planning, and a campaign for deradicalization using alternative narratives requires its creators to have high competencies and responsibility. Successful campaigns are determined by their potential, goals and resources, multiplicity of options. Try, for example, to create activity consisting of two components: a **professional campaign**, involving production centers, media experts, and traditional media for running media products, and an **inclusive campaign** that is built and launched by youth groups, NGOs, and individual activists. The goals of your campaign should be a clear statement of intent.

Set up a goal by answering the question “what?”. Classify your campaign’s type and online platforms where you will distribute all media products. Make a social media campaign schedule. An **inclusive** media campaign plan differs from a **professional** one in that a large number of volunteers, Internet activists, students are involved along with voluntary donations. Keep experimenting. Use elements of crowdsourcing and crowdfunding to create a self-regulating online team with the goal to prevent online radicalization.

### DEVELOP A FLEXIBLE MEDIAPLAN

*“Offline meetings helped us to look at people and their true reaction to our media product and messages. Meetings with target groups are needed offline.” Svetlana Verchenko, producer for the Antares Creative Group.*

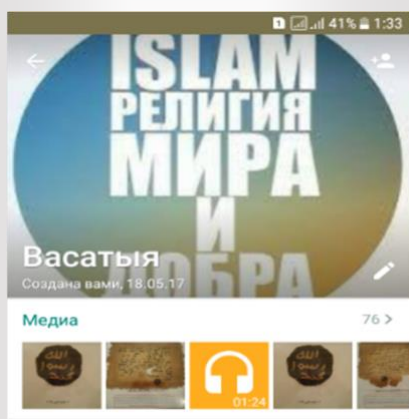
A significant lesson we learned during this project is that social media campaigns must simultaneously be complemented by offline work. This will help you to increase the reach to the target audience. Offline activity helps young people, especially those who are prone to radicalization leading to violent extremism, to get more information or knowledge on religion and other areas. Action research noted that vulnerable youth lack understanding of the importance of diversity and pluralism, and secondly, they lack critical thinking skills and

media literacy. We managed to fill this gap when two more experts were involved for autonomous work in the course of our professional campaign. In Kyrgyzstan, there is an environment in which combined methods, autonomous and online activities lead to a more effective impact of efforts. Other Central Asian states, as well

## CASE #3

The creation of “Vasatyya” group in WhatsApp to raise awareness of the youth of Kyrgyzstan in order to prevent their involvement in radical groups.

The group distributed video and visual content in Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Russian languages created as part of a large campaign for deradicalization in social media. The user’s reaction showed their increased interest in the problem. The group administrator has received phone calls and requests to meet offline so that group members get answers to their questions.



Sherzod Yusupov, administrator and initiator of the WhatsApp group under the project on youth deradicalization, tried to dispel the doubts of some users during personal meetings. “The most important thing is not to be afraid to meet face-to-face with such people and explain everything to them.”

“One [member of the group] wanted to return his mother who went to Syria. He himself was not a supporter of radicals,” - Sherzod said. - I explained to him if he goes to Syria for his mother, he too can be recruited there.

Secondly, there are no guarantees that radicals will not kill him for interfering with his mother's choice. A few days later he informed us that he was going to find a lawyer so that he would help to get his mother back through law enforcement agencies”.

as global practices in general, can benefit from studying our experience. On the other hand, several offline events organized within the framework of youth projects have highlighted their effectiveness in increasing the capacity and awareness of religious leaders who took part in discussions and special lectures, answering questions from the audience, and people who have a secular worldview and are susceptible to secular radicalism.

Discussions aimed at raising awareness, public lectures involving target group listeners, youth intellectual games, and sports play the role of a bridge to target groups that have limited access to the Internet. This problem is still relevant to the context of Kyrgyzstan. According to [Internet World Stats](http://www.internetworldstats.com), an international web-platform that monitors the current use of the Internet in correlation with population statistics<sup>20</sup>, the level of Internet penetration in Kyrgyzstan as of May 2017 is about 34%. Besides, not all residents of the country have permanent access to the Internet, including mobile Internet, especially in rural areas, because it is expensive compared to other countries. For example, the price of unlimited Internet in Bishkek, the capital of the country, is about 40 USD or less for Mbps per month, while in the southern regions of the country, the cost of the same traffic is near 100 USD<sup>21</sup>.

Another significant lesson we learned during the project implementation period is that **traditional media** should not be left out during the campaign on deradicalization in social media. Despite the fact that social networks are more dynamic, allow the audience to communicate directly with producers of information and deliver it to a large number of users in real time, the key source of information for the population of Kyrgyzstan is still TV and radio broadcasting (television – 88.2% of respondents, and radio - 30%), an independent media research reports.<sup>22</sup> And, although we did not aim to focus on traditional media, the team still decided to better adapt to local needs and run three videos containing counter-narratives on Yntymak and Osh Perim television channels in the south of Kyrgyzstan.

However, we could not ensure the top rate of audience engagement such as viewing and reacting, due to the following reasons:

- Longer video format (more than 30 seconds) which naturally reduced the attention and focus of the audience;
- The video scenes included emotionally appealing images that were designed to encourage young people to reflect and to prolong their hesitation period on the pathway to radicalization. This content is easily perceived on the Internet, as there are many similar ones there and virtual communities are accustomed to such

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm#asia>

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.internetsociety.org/sites/default/files/Kyrgyz%20Word\\_ru\\_22%20Nov.pdf](https://www.internetsociety.org/sites/default/files/Kyrgyz%20Word_ru_22%20Nov.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Analytical policy document on the transition to digital TV in Kyrgyzstan. 2014. The Project under the Program “Freedom of Information” of the Soros Foundation -Kyrgyzstan. Basic study of the behavior and perception of the media audience. 2011. “M-vector” consulting agency. USAID Project.

## CASE #4

“Social Media for De-Radicalization in Kyrgyzstan: A Model for Central Asia” (a professional media campaign).

The producer company developed 22 pictures with the text from the hadiths and surahs from the Quran in Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek languages, and infographics on such topics as “5 facts about jihad”; “12 methods of recruiters”; “8 reasons for radicalization”, “4 categories of citizens susceptible to recruitment”. It was decided to title the groups/communities created for product placement as “My Jihad”, because the study results identified “jihad” as the most searched keyword. When typing “jihad”, users often come across extremist propaganda. The content created as part of the campaign was distributed under similar keywords and hashtags, as the authors thus tried to offer alternative to users



engage those activists who have long been members of those virtual communities where you would like to place your positive narratives.

images. The TV audience has other needs and values, so therefore the distributed content was perceived by many as a negative and problematic message carrying messages of extremism.

### REACTION OF THE AUDIENCE

You must be prepared to receive an ambiguous reaction to the messages you distribute. We have identified two absolutely opposite types of user’s responses to the content distributed.

- One part of audience perceived counter-narrative messages as Islamophobic content. These users underlined that they were going to fight in Syria and were sacrificing their lives in defense of all Muslims. Project media experts found that this was a general comments trend in Kyrgyzstan.

- The other part expressed their “fatigue” from Islamic themes and did not quite understand what was being said in video clips and visual content, but they were open for discussions. The project team explanations in the form of comments helped these users to better understand the content.

### ONLINE MARKETING

Traditional online marketing is not applicable to the distribution of alternative narratives, since direct advertising does not always work. For example, we posted our content without any problems on Facebook and YouTube, but Odnoklassniki and VKontakte banned our messages by suspicion that it was created by a terrorist group.

Another lesson learned in this field is that traditional marketing communications are not important for the target group. These users learn and explore a media product in their own ways and make decisions based on other indicators. They attach much greater importance to recommendations to watch a particular video or read an article and to reviews by people from their communities and networks.

Finally, it was also difficult to distribute the content in closed virtual communities and religiously focused groups where most of the youth exchange messages. Although project communicators joined these groups for a while, it was difficult for them to communicate, while the alternative content was quickly banned and a paid advertisement was not accepted. And after a short communication with the administrators, all contacts were terminated. Therefore, when planning a campaign, you need to



## CAMPAIGN MODEL AND PACKAGING OF YOUR MESSAGES

Develop a campaign based on the type of the program or idea you are implementing to prevent violent extremism, your experience, and other available resources. Many programs have several components and it is important to have a specific focus. For example, if there are program elements on religious literacy in schools or on strengthening the capacity of religious leaders to fight extremism, do not mix them into one campaign. Their goals, objectives and audiences are different and therefore it is better to create different campaigns in social networks in order to achieve the best results.

A social media campaign consists of one or several types:

- ✓ **texts, catchphrases, slogans, hashtags, blogs;**
- ✓ **video clips, films, animated cartoons;**
- ✓ **sound clips, audio slideshow;**
- ✓ **images (photos, infographics, pictures, collages, sketches, demotivational posters, photoshopping, slideshow, longreads, timelines);**
- ✓ **information posters;**
- ✓ **satire and caricatures.**

When determining a campaign type, you should first choose a platform. Remember that you have already studied your audience on the first stage. If you understand where on the Internet your target group is spending their time, it will help determine an optimal campaign platform. For example, if you decide to use only text messages to produce alternative narratives, then it's best to do it on discussion-oriented web-platforms. It can be forums or blogs. Video content should be first posted on the video hosting services such as YouTube, and then distributed from there on the selected platforms. During the preparatory period of our professional campaign, we conducted a research [“Meanings, images and media channels promoting radicalization of the youth of Kyrgyzstan”](#)<sup>23</sup>, which includes a list and description of popular media platforms for our target group.

## CREATING MEDIA PRODUCTS

At this stage it is important to hone the style, tone and characters of your media products. Be guided by the thematic focus of your messages that you found when planning a campaign. Alternative messages can be created in different tones. There is no clear rule for the use of style and tone when developing content. You can work with real characters of the story, as well as former repentant extremists and virtual personalities. Your style can be scientific, ideological, and satirical. Most importantly, the style of your content should reflect the goals of your campaign.

Be focused on five components:

- ✓ **determining the content creators - activists or professional producer centers;**
- ✓ **developing scripts for your video clips, images and other content;**
- ✓ **consultations with experts on necessary topics and finalizing the media text;**
- ✓ **content production and selection of platforms for its posting;**
- ✓ **creating viral content that will increase the reach of your campaign to the target audience.**

When creating video clips, make sure that the first **five seconds** of your video carry the main message and attract the audience as much as possible. Do not make a long video as it is difficult to keep the users' attention. Running time of a video clip should be from twenty to ninety seconds. Add convincing and emotional music to an audio slideshow and other static visual content. This is a good technique to influence the audience. However, do not forget to check copyright restrictions on the use of music from the Internet and find websites where you can download music for free under free licenses.

Visual content must be of certain size. To be displayed correctly on desktops and laptops, the optimal image size should be at least 200x200 pixels, and for tablets and other gadgets at least 600x600 pixels. Be sure to add infographics, as it is better than long text and statistics which are usually skipped by readers. To create

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<sup>23</sup> [https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Action-Research\\_Outcomes\\_FINAL\\_RUS.pdf](https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Action-Research_Outcomes_FINAL_RUS.pdf)

infographics, use multimedia online services, like [EaseLly](#). Use photo banks under free licenses, such as [Pixabay.com](#), [Flickr.com](#), [Photobucket.com](#). You can find their free, high quality images to illustrate your messages and publish them.

Viral content is a sensational video, photo or slogan that instantly spreads on the Internet. Make use of it.



**Viral marketing** is based on the principle of emotional attractiveness. Therefore, the more emotions in your video, picture or slogan, the more chances that the maximum number of users will share your product with their friends. If you are creating a video, keep in mind that its length should be as short as possible. The main audience does not watch videos longer than 10 seconds. The other audience segment watches media for no more than a minute. Therefore, your main counter-narrative should always be at the beginning of the message. The most successful viral campaigns begin with the content dissemination on the “right” media platforms.



## LAUNCHING CAMPAIGN AND DISSEMINATION

After you have identified your Internet audience, you can easily understand **which platform will be best** to reach that group. Once again, look at the table of popular media channels that you compiled, analyze the preferences of your audience and draw conclusions:

- ✓ **Discover which social media are most popular** and then decide on the platforms where you will post your products;
- ✓ **Find out which messengers** are used as often as social networks to share content among your audience;
- ✓ **Make a list of cross-channels** for spreading alternative narratives, make sure that you link all of your content. Cross-channel promotion (i.e. simultaneous posting on several online platforms) usually makes the greatest impact on the audience, therefore do not hesitate to use many platforms and associate them with each other. However, you should be aware of what works and how it works on each of these platforms.
- ✓ **Create hashtags relevant** to your campaign

In Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian countries, the most popular platforms are [Facebook](#), and Russian social networks [VKontakte](#) and [Odnoklassniki](#). If you have a video you can post it on [YouTube](#) and simultaneously on the above-mentioned online platforms as they all allow posting videos and are actively used by the Kyrgyz users. In [zona.kg](#), one can also upload videos to [Namba](#) and [Super.kg](#). Do not leave out popular instant messengers. The applications that support instant messaging, such as [WhatsApp](#), [IMO](#) and [Telegram](#), are increasingly being used to share content and to maintain contacts. [Whatsapp](#) is very common in Kyrgyzstan, so this channel must also be used during the campaign.

Make sure to familiarize yourself with how your potential audience uses these platforms and how it interacts with other consumers of information, and also:

- ✓ **Evaluate which types** of messages are most popular within the target group;
- ✓ **During a day**, which hours are most intensive in terms of content sharing in the selected communities; determine the prime time for your target audience;
- ✓ **Develop a communication strategy** to interact with your target audience and selected platforms.

Conventional SMM strategies may fail to disseminate alternative content effectively. In this case, your strategy should be a small plan that ensures the uniformity of your participation on certain web platforms and forums.

You must have prepared message templates to respond to comments for different subgroups of the target audience. During the launch period of the campaign, employ a team approach, create a communication network among young Internet activists and stakeholders in order to ensure an uninterrupted flow of online work. It is very important that the participants of this communication network should be advanced users and citizens interested in reducing radicalization. If your budget allows, it is recommended to use social media advertising to have direct access to a selected audience. Ask yourself which free tools can be used to promote the campaign. Do not also forget that dissemination in closed virtual communities is preferable, but access to such groups is limited, even though the optimal duration of the campaign can help develop its image and be part of many groups.



## WORK WITH YOUR

### How good are your communication skills?

A positive answer to this question opens up great opportunities for interaction with your audience and bringing your messages to it.

It is communication skills that are the key to success in the distribution of content on social networks. Online platforms were initially created not only for sharing and disseminating information, but also for joint discussion.

### GRAB YOUR USER'S ATTENTION

*"The analysis of some re-posts and "likes" to disseminated alternative messages showed that the target group more sensibility to a local content such as an image of mountains or nature. In fact, that any pictures from Internet don't attract them, however, pictures focused on local color will be a favorite. If we add a life story with a deep meaning the success is assured". From report by Ikbolzhon Isakov, the project's SMM partner.*

The best way to attract a large audience to your media products, to stimulate its participation, thus increasing the impact on the target group, is to constantly communicate with your viewers. To attract more people, simply exchange "likes" with friendly users and "like" the most interesting posts of users to attract attention to your account. It's better if you start doing this before the active phase of your campaign and before the content is distributed. Therefore, your social network profiles and pages created for the campaign should be already active. During this period, you can get feedback, comments and even ideas that will give you more precise directions for your actions.

This is achieved through conducting online surveys to discuss some relevant campaign topics or similar content distribution in order to get feedback, increase the number of followers, start new discussions in other virtual communities. In media technology there is a "get on the hook" technique used to catch the attention of the audience. There are many methods, but the principle is the same for all: to make a hook out of a topic that is currently important to most people. Utilize this approach. In campaigns on deradicalization, such topics can be:

- ✓ **security issues;**
- ✓ **religious extremism;**
- ✓ **respect for religious feelings;**
- ✓ **the future of children and teenagers in the context of the current fight against violent extremism;**
- ✓ **another topic of your choice.**

You can find similar online content and discussions on these issues. Thus, by the start of your campaign, the audience will be ready to digest alternative messages that you will publish on your pages and distribute further. Talk to your audience, react to all comments and posts, create calls for action such as “watch this video!” Or “follow us on social networks!”. From the first reaction to your content in the form of comments, control the communication process and guide it to the right direction.

For example, during our professional media campaign, the media expert conducted several interviews and discussions with the involved users to clarify their views on the subject matter of the project and their reaction to the published content. At the same time, he was looking for additional posts, articles, images on a similar topic and posting them. Drawing conclusions from the analyzed opinions, he could identify what meanings should be reflected in the posts about the distributed media products. According to the results of our campaign, the number of users involved in watching video clips was about 300,000 people. Perhaps this involvement would have been higher if there was not a fear of engaging in dialogues, as the new law in Kyrgyzstan <sup>24</sup> stipulates that information materials, including those placed on the Internet, may be recognized as extremist and terrorist.



## MONITORING AND EVALUATING

In order to understand whether your campaign is evolving in the right direction, you need **tools for tracking** and measuring your steps, as any such media campaign is aimed at raising awareness and combating “softly” against radicalization. Do not delude yourself into thinking that you will get excellent results just by engaging the marginalized youth in the campaign. It is possible that in the process you will act by the method of “trial and error” and you will not always know what the consequences will be. In this case, the evaluation of your activities and related conclusions will show you the right way. While it is almost impossible to accurately measure the changes that occur in a radical environment exposed to violent extremism because of the rapidly changing actions, monitoring and evaluation can provide some kind of early warning that helps update the process when necessary.

### WHAT TOOLS SHOULD BE USED?

Refer to the **goals of the campaign** that you formulated at the planning stage. The more clearly your goals are set, the easier it will be for you to evaluate your success.

For example, if you want to find out if people's reaction to the propaganda of violent extremism has changed and whether users are more selective in absorbing the content.

For this purpose:

- ✓ **conduct a weekly / monthly / quarterly** check of your progress on social media; make a working calendar, where you enter all the data; be sure to take screenshots and save them in a separate folder;
- ✓ **organize all reviews and comments** on your pages by several markers (social, demographic, ethnic, age, gender);
- ✓ **identify thematic indicators** to analyze responses to the disseminated content (positive, negative, neutral). You can use additional indicators to determine if your messages have an emotional effect. By analyzing the responses, you can determine the level of critical thinking of users and its change. Such sampling will allow you to focus on those user groups with which you need to work more.

<sup>24</sup> On 4 August 2016, President Atambayev signed the Law “On Amending Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic (KR) in the Sphere of Combating Terrorism and Extremism” to toughen punishment for crimes related to international terrorism and extremism. This law amended the Code of Administrative Responsibility, the Criminal Code and the Penal Enforcement Code of the Kyrgyz Republic, the laws of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Combating Terrorism”, “On Countering Extremist Activity”, “On Citizenship of the Kyrgyz Republic” and “On State Pension Social Insurance.”

- ✓ **analyze the statistics** of visits to your pages and the reaction to the content on a weekly basis; identify which media platforms with your content are most attractive to your target group;
- ✓ **adapt your strategy** in accordance with the findings, do not be afraid to experiment during the campaign.

General web-analytics tools have three types of indicators:

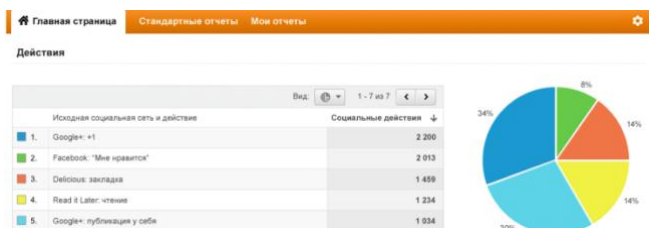
awareness indicating the number of involved users and views, or video views; demographic information (age, gender, geographic location) that will give you an idea of what kind of audience was reached;

participation is a quantitative indicator that shows how many people interact within your campaign. Pay attention to user accounts and websites, taking notes about the frequency of video saving, the number of liked comments or actions.

Impact that will help you determine if you were able to achieve the goal of your campaign. To do this, you need to analyze the content of all comments, count the number of likes and shared content.

At the final stage, evaluate your campaign using the built-in web analytics tools which will give a quick overview of the overall effectiveness of the effort. They will also provide you with a good picture of what was the reach of your audience, how many people were involved in the campaign, and whether users from the target group were involved at all.

It is recommended to use the free [Google Analytics](#) service in daily work. By clicking on this link you will find detailed instructions how to do it. Be sure to install a free quick access toolbar in Google Analytics that includes real-time data on social channels of engaging the audience, the most popular posts that visitors shared, and the results of your surveys and campaigns. [Facebook Analytics](#) helps you collect all the information distributed from your Facebook account, will measure the level of retention on your pages and video views, and help collect statistics on visitors. By tracking the behavior of the audience, you will be able to increase the viewing of posted media products by your target group.



This is how a web analytics page looks like.  
Source: the official web-site of Google Analytics.

This is an example of analyzing the statistics of search queries that led users to watch video clips within the framework of the professional campaign "Social media for de-radicalization: A Model for Central Asia."

A screenshot from the Media Marketolog Report.

Исходная социальная сеть и действие	Социальные действия	Социальные действия	Социальные действия	Социальные действия	Социальные действия	Социальные действия	Социальные действия
1. Google+ +1	2 200	2 200	2 200	2 200	2 200	2 200	2 200
2. Facebook: "Мне нравится"	2 013	2 013	2 013	2 013	2 013	2 013	2 013
3. Действия: закладки	1 459	1 459	1 459	1 459	1 459	1 459	1 459
4. Read & Later: чтение	1 234	1 234	1 234	1 234	1 234	1 234	1 234
5. Google+ публикации у себя	1 034	1 034	1 034	1 034	1 034	1 034	1 034

To analyze your information in Russian social media VKontakte and Odnoklassniki, you can use the service [Socilastats](#), which scrutinizes all posts, comments and likes, and identifies the most active users.

The analytics in a virtual environment has a margin of error, since it is difficult to determine whether the users who viewed your messages are the right audience. Therefore, it is important to know that some online platforms do not disclose how they determine the above-mentioned indicators. Using these tools, you will receive valuable information about your campaign on social networks and will be able to cultivate a fairly complete picture of the effectiveness of your activities.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. When initiating an activity on deradicalization in social media, plan it as a professional campaign. Do not seek to do government's job, as any media campaign aims to raise awareness and lead a "soft" fight against radicalization. Do not delude yourself with the hope that by engaging "radicalized" youth in the campaign, the results will be highly effective. Due to their lack of knowledge and critical thinking, it is better to work with such an audience at a more grassroots level, for example, by creating additional offline components, organizing meetings, and conducting awareness-raising activities.
2. When planning a campaign, it is necessary to increase its duration, while a preparatory period should include the development of a communication strategy, the creation of flexible communication networks and the trial stovepiping in order to determine effective methods for promoting content. Conventional SMM tools should be avoided or their use should be minimized to apply to "viral marketing" only.
3. Implement self-regulation in online communities and expand their capabilities with the aim of deradicalization. This is the best option for joint work. People can actively distribute alternative content themselves and develop their own standards for its acceptability. It is recommended to create an online panel where users can access reporting mechanisms and procedures for filing content complaints, thereby allowing the audience to be more effective in terms of self-regulation and more responsible.
4. Involve in your work opinion leaders that are popular among the Internet audience. Motivate them to create messages about the need to prevent violent extremism and this content will spread faster in social networks, since their accounts have many followers.
5. Develop and disseminate messages about the differences between the verses and hadiths. Ordinary people are not required to know all the verses and hadiths, but the audience should know the differences between them in order to avoid manipulation and be able to critically evaluate the information.
6. Share knowledge about violent extremism with project participants from production and media and train them in analyzing extremist trends. This will help them better understand how to create alternative messages in their products. Simultaneously organize trainings on Internet and media literacy (including work in social networks, multimedia content production, countering hate speech and ensure digital security) for the project team, volunteers and interested partners.
7. Attract talented young people and university graduates with majors in IT to create start-ups, web and mobile game applications to reduce the appeal of extremist messages, create multiple online resources in local languages on training in media and Internet literacy, and the tools of the digital age. Publish all educational online resources under free licenses.
8. When creating and disseminating content on the Internet, research the capabilities of each social network separately, and have some statistics about their audience.

# GLOSSARY

**Awareness:** a metric that indicates exposure of content to target audiences (including impressions, reach, video views and viewer retention).

**Alternative narrative, counter-narrative:** a message that offers a positive alternative to extremist propaganda, or alternatively aims to deconstruct or delegitimize extremist narratives<sup>25</sup>.

**Crowdsourcing** refers to the act of soliciting content, ideas or skills from online users outside your organization who collectively help you solve a problem.<sup>26</sup>

**Deradicalization:** the process of fostering a change in an individual's belief so that they accept that violence is not justified in pursuit of an ideological, religious or political goal. Some individuals abandon their extremist mindset and adopt mainstream views through this process<sup>27</sup>.

**Engagements:** interactions between audience members or with campaigners themselves, which could be positive or negative and help provide an insight into reactions to a campaign<sup>28</sup>.

**Hashtag** is a community-driven convention for adding additional context and metadata to your tweets or posts. Users often use a hashtag like [#followfriday](#) to aggregate, organize and discover relevant posts<sup>29</sup>.

**Impact:** a measurable change in behavior, ideally constructive, that can be attributed to exposure to or engagement with counter-narrative content<sup>30</sup>.

**Ideology:** a set of conscious and unconscious ideas that make up an individual's goals, expectations, and actions. An ideology is a comprehensive vision and a way of life that imposes a pattern, structure and interpretation on how we read facts, events, occurrences and actions<sup>31</sup>.

**Google Analytics:** a free service that tracks, measures and reports website traffic, and can also be used for apps or your YouTube channel. It can provide insights into who is visiting your site or channel, and what content they find most engaging.

**Metrics:** different social media or website analytics services will offer different types of data. There are a vast range of different metrics that can help you understand who you reach, how well you engage your audience, and the impact your campaign is having.

**Positive information** (positive message)—good news<sup>32</sup>.

**Positive narrative** (story) - a message that offers an alternative to extremist propaganda<sup>33</sup>.

**Promoted content:** posts or tweets that have been promoted through paid advertising to appear in selected audiences' news feeds on social media platforms<sup>34</sup>.

**Platform** is the framework or content management system that runs software and presents content.

WordPress, for example, is a service that serves as a platform for a community of blogs. In a larger context, the Internet is becoming a platform for applications and capabilities, using computer<sup>35</sup>.

**Radicalization:** most of the definitions currently in circulation describe radicalization as the process (or processes) whereby individuals or groups come to approve of and (ultimately) participate in the use of violence for political aims. Some authors refer to 'violent radicalization' in order to emphasise the violent outcome and distinguish the process from non-violent forms of 'radical' thinking<sup>36</sup>.

**Social media campaign:** a coordinated marketing effort to reinforce or assist with a business goal using one or more social media platforms. Campaigns differ from everyday social media efforts because of their increased focus, targeting, and measurability.<sup>37</sup>

**Violent extremism:** the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals. This includes terrorism and other forms of politically motivated and communal

<sup>25</sup> Institute for Strategic Dialogue, <https://www.isdglobal.org/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.socialbrite.org/sharing-center/glossary/>

<sup>27</sup> The Global Terrorism Research Centre (GTReC), <http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/gtrec/>

<sup>28</sup> Institute for Strategic Dialogue, <https://www.isdglobal.org/>

<sup>29</sup> Social Media Glossary <https://www.bigcommerce.com/ecommerce-answers/what-is-a-social-media-campaign/>

<sup>30</sup> Institute for Strategic Dialogue, <https://www.isdglobal.org/>

<sup>31</sup> The Global Terrorism Research Centre (GTReC), <http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/gtrec/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://homepages.wmich.edu/~bowman/gdnews.html>

<sup>33</sup> Institute for Strategic Dialogue <https://www.isdglobal.org/>

<sup>34</sup> Social Media Glossary <https://www.bigcommerce.com/ecommerce-answers/what-is-a-social-media-campaign/>

<sup>35</sup> Social Media Glossary <https://www.bigcommerce.com/ecommerce-answers/what-is-a-social-media-campaign/>

<sup>36</sup> Roger Scruton, The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought, 3rd edn. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Social Media Glossary <https://www.bigcommerce.com/ecommerce-answers/what-is-a-social-media-campaign/>

violence. If a person or group decides that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change, and then acts accordingly, this is violent extremism<sup>38</sup>.

**Viewer retention:** what duration of your video a viewer watches, either as a percentage of the total length of the video, or the average amount of time viewed. **Views:** the number of times a video is watched or played<sup>39</sup>.

**Web analytics:** the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of Internet data for the purpose of understanding who your visitors are and optimizing your website<sup>40</sup>.

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[www.sfcg.org](http://www.sfcg.org)

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<sup>38</sup> Roger Scruton, *The Palgrave Macmillan Dictionary of Political Thought*, 3rd edn. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>39</sup> Institute for Strategic Dialogue, <https://www.isdglobal.org/>

<sup>40</sup> Social Media Glossary <https://www.bigcommerce.com/ecommerce-answers/what-is-a-social-media-campaign/>