RAN C&N

Ex post paper

10-11 December 2015, Berlin

The aim of the Communication and Narratives (C&N) working group is to gather insights on both online and offline communication that 1) offers alternatives to or 2) counters extremist propaganda and/or challenges extremist ideas. The working group will focus on the **content** of these narratives, its **target audiences**, the **credible messengers** (civil society, victims, formers and youngsters), various ways of **dissemination** (face-to-face interventions, testimonials in class rooms, blogs, chatrooms, websites and social media), and its **effects**.

Tips and tricks from Google and Facebook

Counter - and alternative narratives can be used as preventative tools to offer individuals multiple/different perspectives on societal challenges. Internet and social media might be channels to plant seeds of doubt. These online efforts should go hand in hand with initiatives in the offline domain, for example by educating young people at schools about the consequences of violent extremism. And also the other way around; what is already happening offline can have a bigger online element. To help practitioners use online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, two of the biggest Internet companies presented some inspirational campaigns and shared their tips and tricks with the working group on making successful use of these platforms.

Tips and tricks for campaigns using Google/YouTube
- To enhance the effect of a campaign build a community network around it with possibilities to engage and interact. For example, link to a #twittersomething or Facebook and possibility to forward or like the campaign or the idea behind it.
- If you are using videos, they should be interesting without sound. Most people watch video's without sound on their smartphone. Subtitles can help in this regard.
- Do not forget to use bloggers or vloggers, the can be a very strong voice on the internet.
- There is no need to produce HD professional videos; simple footage from a mobile phone could do the trick already.
- YouTube has trainings on video-skills for NGO's and has special NGO grants to use on YouTube. (More info: type 'YouTube for NGO's' on your local google-page and you'll find more information.)
- Examples: 361 grad respect, it gets better, YT#respekt – YT creators together with NGO's to make school material.

Tips and tricks for campaigns using Facebook
Facts about Facebook:

- Facebook is used by 1 billion people daily and every day millions of pieces of content are shared.
- People often check their newsfeed (on average 15 times a day); for many people it is the first thing they do in the morning and the last thing they do before they go to sleep.
- Every newsfeed is different – people see the content that is relevant to them (because of the algorithm with over 100.000 criteria).
- Most of the posts and videos are viewed on smart phones (more that 65%).

Facebook commissioned Demos Center for Analysis of Social Media to do research on what elements make counter speeches successful on their platform. The key findings were that there are fewer counter speech pages than there are hateful pages, and that counter speech pages produce far less content. However, the counter speech content has a broader reach and more interactions per posts on average. More info:
http://www.demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Counter-speech.pdf
http://www.demos.co.uk/research-area/centre-for-analysis-of-social-media/

Based on these findings, Facebook came to the following **best practice tips:**

- The form of speech: across all countries and groups studied, photos and videos are the best format to ensure a post reaches a wide audience.
- Type of content that work well:
  o Timely content
  o Emotional content/storytelling (in this case longer posts can work) – example **Humans of New York**
  o Facts and numbers (easy to share)
  o Content with elements of surprise
  o Content with a strong opinion
  Regarding counter speech, the lessons learnt are:
  o 'Constructive counter speech' was the most popular successful type of content,
  o On the whole, satire and humour was the type of content that received the most interaction,
  o Even neutral content was more likely to receive interactions than angry, attacking content.

- Use a wide range of voices to deliver your message effectively.
- Make your target group very specific.
- Your posting has to gain the attention of the people in a few seconds – when they are scrolling though their newsfeed. Because of the algorithm (made up of 100.000 criteria), each newsfeed is different. Usually, within 30-60 minutes you will know if you content was a "success". This enables testing which target groups can be addressed with which message.
- Keep posts simple to enable snowball effect: don't post a lot of text (unless it is emotional content).
- Incorporate a clear call-to-action: be as concrete as possible.
- Upload videos directly to Facebook and use subtitles (because often people don't play the sound).
- Find supporters with a big reach (e.g. Michele Obama's #BringBackOurGirls). Use these people as influencers. Bring them to share your story within their network.
- Post at least 1 piece content per day.
- Use of Facebook advertising can help find your target group, e.g. you can target all people that have watched one of your videos to the end with a second ad.

More info: Building your presence with Facebook Pages: A guide for non-profit organizations is available on https://scontent-ams2-1.xx.fbcdn.net/hphotos-xfa1/t39.2178-6/851576_586720838019392_1759737346_n.pdf.

Inspirational campaigns to counter polarisation and extremism

Exit Germany is an organization that helps people safely escape from extremist organisations (mostly the neo-Nazi scene). Over the years, they have launched several successful campaigns. Two of these campaigns were presented during the RAN C&N meeting in Berlin. Both of these campaign make cleaver

use of social influencers, for example a live ticker about how much money is. The practices are foreseen to be included in the RAN Collection. Exit Germany runs a network of formers neo-Nazis.

Nazis against Nazis (offline)

In Germany many neo-Nazi marches take place throughout the country every year. In 2014, Exit Germany asked the inhabitants of Wunsiedel to turn the annual march held by neo-Nazis in this tiny German town into a clever fundraising campaign using the goose-steppers as unwitting participants in an "involuntary" walkathon. Residents and local businesses would sponsor the 250 marchers and pledge €10 for every meter they walked. They raised € 10.000, and a lot of publicity for Exit Germany.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvjIYl_Nlao

Hass Hilft / Donate the Hate (online)

Donate the Hate (DtH) – the "involuntary" online charity, is the online counterpart of Nazis against Nazis, turning hate-comments into involuntary donations for refugees and against the far right. For each flagged xenophobic comment or piece of hate speech on Facebook, an involuntary donation of € 1, - is made to refugee projects and Exit Germany on behalf of the person that posted the hateful content. This way, the "haters" are making a donation against their own cause. DtH makes cleaver use of the overflowing racist and xenophobic comments on the Internet, creating a catch-22 for the "haters". The funds used to turn hate comments into involuntary donations are being provided by partners and supporters, such as radio stations, newspapers and television stations. Facebook also helped set up the campaign.


For the implementation, Exit Germany has set up a Facebook page and designed a microsite.
With the Facebook page, registered users/admins (around 10 people, mostly former neo-Nazis) can make hate comments into involuntary donations. These admins answers the person posting the hateful content with one of the prepared DtH-posts that includes a celebrative image (as depicted above). By commenting on the xenophobic post, the donation is visible on the "hater's" Facebook wall. The Facebook page received 500.600 people engaged with the page's content in the first week; more than 8,000 site likes in 48 hours (21,000 in two moths), and 100.000 - 250.000 timeline visits weekly.
https://www.facebook.com/HassHilft/

On the microsite, the amount of donations collected is shown (over € 5000,00 in two months), comments can be found, as well as the top ten involuntary donators (anonymous). Many German and international news and television stations report on DtH, and currently the campaign is copied to an English version.
http://www.hasshilft.de/index_en.html

The RAN C&N working group wants to set up a campaign to draw attention to the prevention of violent extremism. The 11th of March, the European day for the remembrance of victims of terrorism, is chosen as a momentum around which to launch this campaign. The aim of the meeting of 10-11 December was to design an outline for this campaign: what should be the main message/ overarching theme? The overarching theme should function as an umbrella for all kinds of local initiatives and campaigns around counter narrative, alternative narrative and counter speech. This "brand" can help visualise local initiatives. Ideally, each RAN partner should be able to contribute in a way that fits their local context but is still connected to this overarching main campaign; make 1000 flowers bloom. The overarching theme of this campaign could for example be something like "Europe United" (promoting unity).
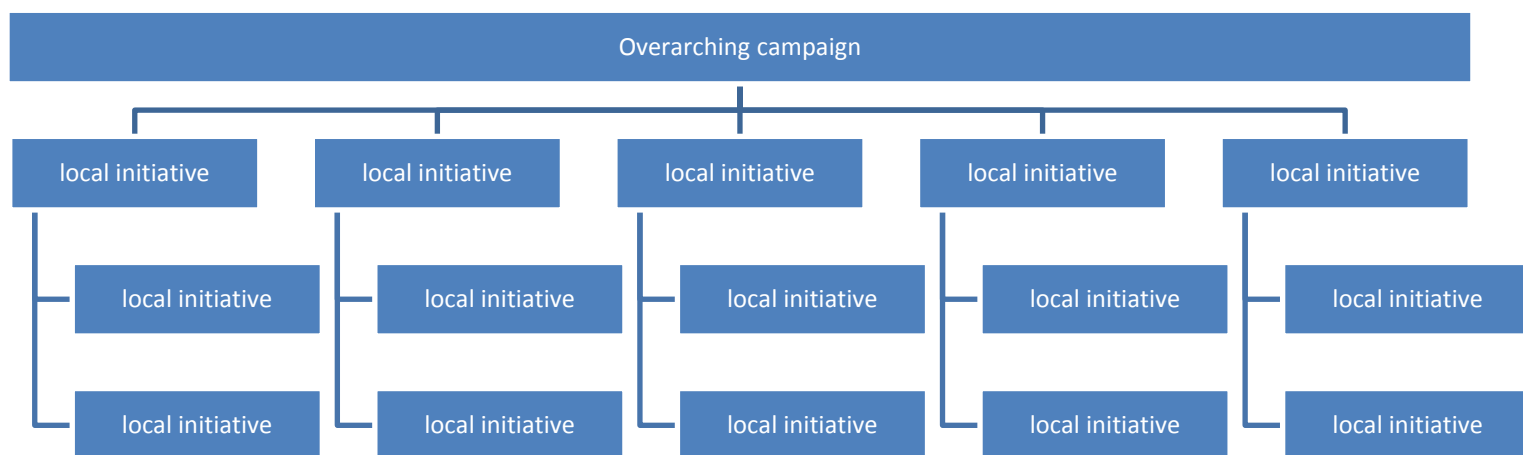
In four breakout groups participants came up with their own ideas for a CVE campaign.
1.   App called "hijack hate", suggesting a humourful tweet of the day with push notification, for example to disrupt ISIS hashtags.
2.   #EuropeUnited, in the run up to the European Championship in France. Youngsters (12-16 year olds) can compose their dream team. The campaign will foster debate online and offline, showcase diversity and lead into the respect campaign of the UEFA[1].
3.   "Humans of terrorism" (similar to Humans of New York), peer to peer, youngsters promote critical thinking, positive citizenship, different voices but everyone is effected.
4.   Platform to promote Europe's unity and diversity; the many faces of Europe. Map all online and offline initiatives in Europe. Also acknowledge its imperfections/ challenges.

 In the first week of February 2016, the next RAN C&N meeting is foreseen in London. The goal of this meeting is to further develop the overarching campaign and prepare for its launch in March. A campaign team will be installed, the theme/ key message / target group, etc. of the umbrella campaign will be set, how to best reach out to local campaigns will be discussed and who is doing what will be agreed on.

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[1] A campaign plan is attached as annex.