How to involve victims of terrorism in a prevention campaign

Introduction

When setting up a prevention and countering of violent extremism communications campaign, one usually starts with identifying the Goal and target Audience, following the **GAMMMA+ model**. However, when including **victims of terrorism in a P/CVE campaign** – whose voices are a powerful alternative to the extremist narrative – the Message and Messenger are often already established. This means the GAMMMA+ model needs to be adapted to support the way in which victims of terrorism share their stories. This will help them **strengthen their efforts** and make an impact through their stories. This infographic contains tips and tricks for victims of terrorism on how to share their narrative and aims to help practitioners setting up a P/CVE campaign successfully and respectfully embed victims' voices in their campaigns.

GAMMMA+

Follow the GAMMMA+ model when setting up a communications campaign

G	A	M	M	M	A
Goal	Audience	Message	Messenger	Medium	Action

+ Evaluation

The **GAMMMA+** model addresses all elements that need to be taken into account by providing questions one has to answer when setting up a communications campaign. This tool can help victims to ensure their communications efforts are attractive to the target audience and effective in reaching its goals. The key questions per element are addressed below, more information on the model can be found here [link to C&N ex post on improving the GAMMMA+ model].

Goal And Theory Of Change
What do you really want to achieve? What are your objectives? What is your intervention plan? Why should your target audience change their minds due to your intervention?

Audience
What are the key characteristics of your audience? What are they thinking and how do they behave? In what context are they living? What language do they use? Why would they interact with you?
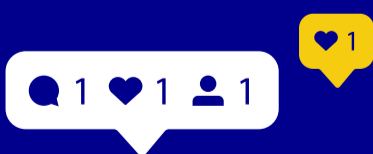
Message
How do you ensure that your target audience adheres to your message?

Messenger
Who are the Messengers that are credible to the target audience?

Medium
What Media does your target audience get their information from?

Call To Action
How could online communication efforts supplement offline work? What is needed for an effective call to action? How to get people to act?

How can you measure this and establish that your intervention has made impact? How to best monitor the effect of the call to action of your campaign?

Monitoring & Evaluation

Tips and tricks
For victims sharing their narratives

A relatable story

Help the Audience relate to your story by making it personal and sharing details that they can identify with, which creates more impact. Supporting your story with (non-graphic) photographs or videos can make it feel even more personal and therefore more relatable.

Don't foster polarisation

Try to avoid explicit Messages if your Audience is not yet convinced of your Message. Otherwise you might create a 'backfire effect', strengthening your Audience's convictions. If you use implicit, non-confrontational Messages instead, you avoid giving others the possibility to misuse your campaign and you protect the people involved in the campaign.

Learn from the Audience

Interact with your Audience and learn from their (implicit and explicit) feedback about what does and doesn't resonate with them in the way you tell your story.

Building a distinguished label

Work together with established organisations where possible (to build on their experience and network) but build your own label where necessary (if an existing label brings too many pre-existing ideas with it).

For practitioners setting up a P/CVE campaign

Reversed GAMMMA+

When setting up a communications campaign, one usually starts with defining the Goal and the target Audience before assessing the relevant Message, Messenger, Medium and call to Action. P/CVE campaigns that include the voices of victims of terrorism, however, often already know who the Messenger is and what their Message will be before assessing the Goal and Audience. In this way, they make use of a reversed approach to the GAMMMA+ model. However, ensuring that the Messengers and Message adhere to the Audience and Goal is key for a successful communications effort. Take a critical look at your campaign and decide whether the stories of victims suit your Audience and Goal and therefore are best suited for your campaign.

Authenticity

Providing a constant stream of authentic content (which does not even need to be of high quality) can help to increase the impact of the communications effort. Always be critical whether the story (Message) of victims aligns with your desired Goal and the target Audience of your campaign. If it does not align, do not alter the story in order to fit the campaign, but redefine your Goal, Audience, Message or Messenger.

Social media

Be conscientious about their use, as online campaigns can backfire and lead to secondary victimisation. Plus, securitise your pages; look into the security options of each platform.

Victims as Messengers

Victims can be powerful Messengers in a P/CVE campaign but there are some things to keep in mind so as to avoid revictimisation.

· Advise victims to become Messengers only if they are capable of enduring situations which could lead to additional trauma.

· Position victims as survivors instead of as ('weak') victims.

· Allow victims to change their mind about participating in the campaign.

· Provide sufficient support for victims sharing their story.

For both victims and practitioners

Your target Audience

When assessing your target Audience, the following overview can help you to learn who they are and what they adhere to. It can help you to prepare for your intervention by not only looking at the statistical elements of your campaign but to look more specifically into their needs, behaviour, influencers and beliefs.

General

Vital Statistics

How many people are like this? Trends? Indices and comparisons?

Who they are

Key economic or demographic characteristics (individuals age, sex, etc.)

General Lifestyle

How they live.

What they like doing.

Priorities

Aspirations

Consumers trends

Attitudes to government/ life in general

This area / issue

Needs, benefits & motivations

Rational needs, emotional or hidden needs. What motivates them?

Behaviour – What they do

What drives and triggers action?

Where do they do what they do?

How frequently?

Barriers to doing / thinking?

Key words/language used?

Influencers

Who or what influences them?

Why?
(See also 'media' below)

Beliefs and attitudes

Thoughts, beliefs, attitudes to this?

What values do they hold that relate to the issue?

What makes them feel good? Bad? Why?

Media

Getting information and messages

Place, time and how they get info

How much info they want/need

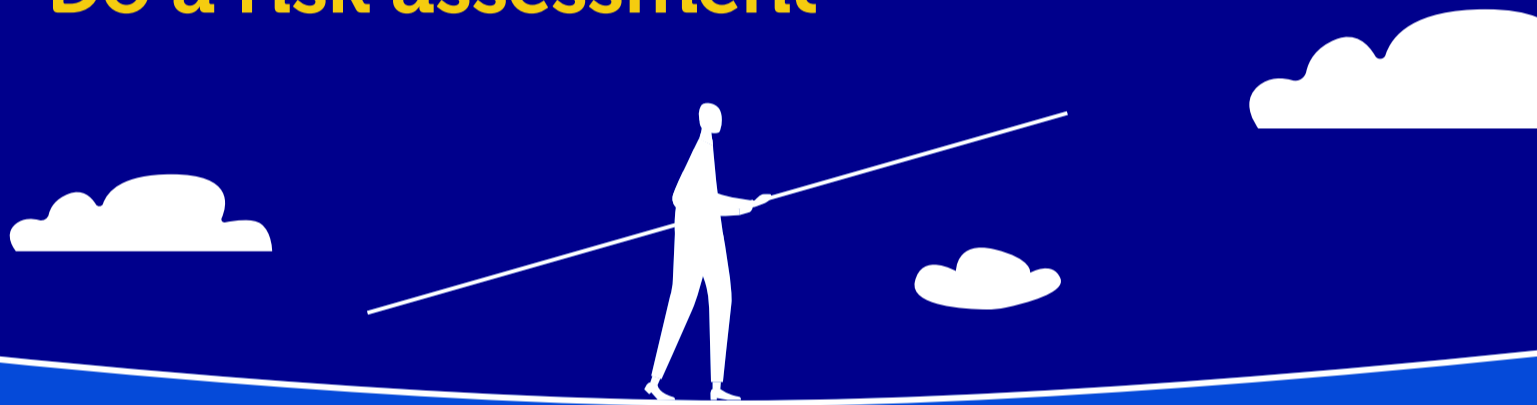Where they get it from – media used

Where and when they're most receptive

Who influences them

Who they do / don't listen to and respect

Who delivers for them? In contact with?

Do a risk assessment

Prepare for failure but also for (big) success. Your story and campaign may resonate with a lot of people or trigger the interest of the media, for which you need to be prepared. Take into consideration all potential risks for your organisation and for the Messengers that publicity entails.

Evaluation

When evaluating your programme or the impact of your story, keep in mind that the long-term effects can only be evaluated after several months. A follow-up questionnaire could build upon a first questionnaire which has been distributed directly after the session.

Inspiring practices

For one of their campaigns, the French Association of Victims of Terrorism (AfVT) interviewed 20 victims of terror attacks. They talked about their definition of resilience and how they became resilient themselves. The video with the interviews is published online and shown at schools, after which pupils get the opportunity to discuss the video.

The Fernando Buesa Foundation developed the Concordia Bloggers games: five video games related to human rights. One of the games is focused on the deligitimisation of violent extremism. It is centered around Iker, a fictitious person who shares his testimony. Through the game, the Fernando Buesa Foundation aims to make talking about the Basque country's violent past no longer a taboo.
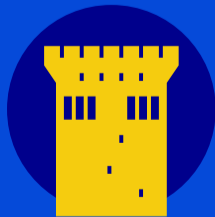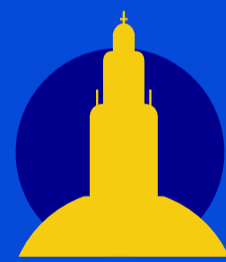
The Truth and Reconciliation Platform (TaRP) was established to give victims, regardless of their political, religious or cultural background, an opportunity to speak for themselves in their own words, so that the terrible consequences of violence will never be forgotten and the mistakes of the past will never be repeated.

Additional reading

RAN C&N ex post paper 'Effective Narratives: Updating the GAMMMA+ model' — 2019

RAN VVT Handbook: 'Voices of Victims of Terrorism' — 2016

RAN RVT Checklist: 'Shaping your testimonial as a Victim of Terrorism' — 2018

Radicalisation Awareness Network

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