

1. Capability and capacity

Experience in the delivery of strategic communications projects in Lebanon and the MENA region: ARK has substantial experience in managing and delivering all aspects of strategic communications campaigns for CSSF (including target audience analysis, segmentation, campaign strategy, design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation) in highly-politicised and fragile environments in the MENA region, including Lebanon. We have delivered multi-year, multi-million-pound communications projects for a range of government clients including HMG (MoD, Conflict Pool, CSSF, DFID, JICTU, RICU and the Home Office); the Global Coalition Against Daesh; Global Affairs Canada; the State Department's Bureaus of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, Near East Affairs and the Global Engagement Center; the governments of Denmark and the Netherlands; Japan (JICA) and the CVE Centre in the Australian Department of Home Affairs.

We have delivered local and national-level strategic communications programming in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Jordan, Somalia, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Netherlands, the UK and Indonesia, working with local partners across a range of issues, from preventing and countering violent extremism and increasing social stability in conflict-affected areas to discouraging irregular migration and providing life-saving UXO information to civilians. As demonstrated in our methodology, we take a highly-localised approach to partner-attributed communications campaigns, engaging specific target audiences at grassroots, national, regional and international levels. We focus on creating compelling, resonant content, with positive messaging and credible, authentic stories of individual and community resilience, sharing and amplifying these on a network of locally-focused online and offline platforms.

Content production: ARK has a production hub in Lebanon (supported by a further one in London), and generates content to support projects that is disseminated on a wide variety of platforms, from websites and social media channels to local television news and regional satellite channels. Using footage from its stringer networks, ARK's teams have placed thousands of pieces of content on national and regional pan-Arab broadcasters since 2012. We have supported the creation of eleven radio stations, developing hundreds of hours of content, and set up 14 magazines, most recently in Raqqa, Syria in 2017 and in Mosul and Anbar, Iraq in 2018. We have also set up more than 30 targeted Facebook pages, working with and through local partners, placing an average of five pieces of original content per day on each of these. Our approach generates high levels of reach and engagement. In Lebanon, for example, one of our Facebook platforms reaches 45% of the country. In 2018, ARK worked with twenty local partners to deliver online and offline content. Online, in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, TSN's Facebook pages achieved the following:

- Average reach of over **10 million people a month** across all online platforms;
- An average of almost **1.5 million female users a month**;
- **Pages posted almost 5000 times**, gaining over **2 million reactions**;
- Video content on ARK's platforms was **viewed over 31 million times**;
- The **average engagement rate for ARK's platforms is 2.19%**, which is deemed 'excellent', according to industry standards.

Experience in and understanding of the communications sector in Lebanon: Members of ARK's dedicated production team have been delivering strategic communications on behalf of ARK since 2015. Each team member came to ARK after decades of working in the communications sector in Lebanon, bringing with them a broad network of connections and in-depth understanding of audience preferences and opportunities and constraints in delivering strategic communications. On each project, ARK's production team works closely with the research and analysis and monitoring and analysis departments to develop content and communications strategies that will effectively reach and engage target audiences.

Ana Hon: A significant portion of ARK's strategic communications work focuses on increasing social cohesion and individual and community resilience, in which we frequently focus on youth as one of the most vulnerable demographics. Our Canadian-funded Youth Empowerment Project in Lebanon used strategic communications to enhance social stability in the troubled areas of Tripoli, Saida, and Central Bekaa, building the communications and mobilisation capacities of young people to identify and promote positive stories from their communities and peer group. We then provided training and mentoring on media production and content generation so the team could develop compelling social media coverage of these activities. This was shared on a Facebook page the team developed called "Ana Hon" (I am here) which promoted positive local initiatives and encouraged their peer groups to participate in or replicate the activities. Six months into the project in September 2018, the total reach for the page was 16.3 million people, with a monthly average reach of 1 million, including an estimated 37% of the Tripoli population and 27% of Saida's population. Three-quarters of page followers are between 18 and 35, and the audience almost achieves gender parity, with 47% women and 53% men, significantly higher than the regional average which is typically around 30% female followership for any page.

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Get Out The Vote Campaign/Take Action: Through 2017 and 2018, ARK's Lebanon team ran a multimedia 'Get Out the Vote' (GOTV) electoral communications campaign, funded by the British Embassy, to motivate first time voters to engage with the democratic process. The team worked with four local partners to create and disseminate compelling campaign content which was placed on social media, local broadcast channels, in print media and on billboards around the country. GOTV's successor project in 2018-2019, Take Action, featured campaign activities that were covered by local journalists and influencers. The team also ran a series of events including mock elections in universities, flash mobs and rock concerts, and as a result, regularly trended on social media. In large-scale surveying, Take Action billboards were second in recognition levels, significantly ahead of political entities and beer company advertising (used as a control group), with 30% of first-time voters having engaged with the campaign's multi-media activities in some way.

Nastopia: Through its programming in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, ARK works with a youth-led team to produce an online magazine which provides coverage of positive initiatives taking place in the camps and raises awareness of community-based solutions to perennial issues. In FY 18/19 the platform reached at least 35 per cent of Palestinian youth in Lebanon through its online activities. The 263 posts on the page in Q4 reached around 3.5 million users and garnered 37,535 reactions. The average engagement rate for the fourth quarter remained high, at above 3 per cent.

Research-based approach to social stability in Lebanon: ARK has extensive research experience in Lebanon, having previously carried out pan-Lebanon attitude and perception surveys, Target Audience Analyses and Conflict and Gender Analyses, annual large sample surveys and multiple perception surveys on sensitive topics. ARK has a demonstrated ability to work across Lebanon and extensive experience in research-based assessment of community cohesion and social tensions. Research findings are used to inform the design and implementation of all other ARK programming to ensure conflict sensitivity and maximise VfM and impact.

Perception Surveys on Social Tensions: In 2017-2018, ARK implemented four waves of the UNDP's Regular Perception Surveys on Social Tensions throughout Lebanon, with each wave including approximately 5,000 respondents. UNDP subsequently re-contracted ARK to implement an additional six waves of surveys from 2019-2021. Surveys seek to assess public perceptions of UN interventions and assistance for Syrian refugees in the country and Lebanese host communities. The results of these surveys have been used to inform recent updates to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), and results of the surveys have been briefed to the UN Social Stability Working Group, the Inter-Agency Working Group, the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs, and other concerned stakeholders. The results are made available to the public through UNHCR's Inter-Agency Information Sharing Web Portal.

Target Audience Analyses: In 2016 and 2018/19, ARK carried out nationwide Tier-1 Target Audience Analyses (TAA) surveys in Lebanon on behalf of the UK government. This quantitative and qualitative research explored a number of social, political, and economic issues to support the British Embassy's programming in Lebanon. Surveys queried sensitive topics, including exposure to armed violence, support for armed violence, political ideology, media and communication habits and support for governmental and non-governmental institutions and organisations.

Experience managing strategic communications projects of a significant value and scale.

CLIENT	CONTRACT DESCRIPTION	PERIOD	VALUE
The Conflict Stability and Security Fund	Syria CVE Strategic Communications Programme	Apr-18 Mar-19	£ 3,350,506.00
The Conflict Stability and Security Fund	"Get Out The Vote" Lebanon	Feb 17 – May 18	£ 1,050,026.00
The Conflict Stability and Security Fund	Support to Grassroots Media in Syria	May 12 – Aug 17	£ 10,879,806.56
Conflict Stability and Security Fund, HMG	Strategic Communications and Media Operations in Syria (CVE)	Apr-16 Mar-18	£7,167,619.61
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, Canada	Counter-Violent Extremism Rebuttal Unit (Iraq and Syria)	Mar-17 Mar-18	CAD 1,481,957.71