

## 7. State - Civil society engagement

Albany has a particularly strong track record working in the area of state and civil society engagement. Specifically within the last three years, the following examples set out the types of activities in the projects, and how the principles of programme management are operationalized for state-civil society engagement.

### **Strengthening Civil Society in Sudan**

Albany is currently conducting an EU-funded project in Sudan which conducts research, civil society mapping, and networking in order to build the capacity of local civil society in Red Sea State, Kassala State, and Khartoum. The key results on the project are as follows:

- Improved knowledge and awareness about CSOs in the target States in areas including youth, migration, gender and human rights;
- Improved operational competencies and skills of the target CSOs, including cooperating with authorities;
- Increased CSOs cooperation and coordination through the development of networks.

The project has delivered an initial phase of mapping, establishment of training needs and gap analysis, followed by the delivery of training in areas including: Leadership and Strategic Management; Programme Management and Quality Control; Accounting and Financial Management; Financial Sustainability; Human and Material Resources; and Communication and Building Relationships with Government and other CSOs. The initial scoping of the project involved the mapping of 100 organisations using a selection tool to ensure fair and consistent criteria were applied. These organisations are now more sustainable, and better enabled to serve their communities and interact with the local authorities. This project is being delivered through an in-country partner and the Albany Sudan office, where it is legally registered and operational. Monthly and interim reporting to the EU ensures that progress is as expected. The logframe is a key document in this project.

At the level of outcome, our MEL demonstrated that at the immediate level of observation, skills and competencies among the target CSOs were improved. Beyond this, three networks of CSOs were set up and registered in Kassala State and Khartoum State, which are the first of their kind, and as such, aligned well to the objectives of the funding instrument which oversaw the programme.

### **Djibouti: Centre of Excellence in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism**

For US Department of State, Albany set up and ran a CVE Centre of Excellence. The purpose of the Centre is to serve as a platform in the region for IGAD, the East Africa sub-regional body, and its member states, to conduct training and other capacity-building programs, as well as research related to CVE (including counter-messaging) for governments (national and sub-national) and civil society. As such, it sits right at the nexus of state and civil society.

The project also provided a platform for delivery of CVE training and capacity-building programs by international and multilateral actors for East African government and civil society organisations in the region. Albany provides dedicated support, research, and initiatives to promote the Centre's role in facilitating and coordinating a range of CVE training and capacity building programs involving civilian government officials and civil society leaders. Specifically, through the Centre Albany empowered civil society organisations to counter violent extremism and promote community resilience, designed and implemented counter-narrative and alternative narrative training activities, and produce P/CVE tool-kits for CSOs. CVE national plans for the IGAD member states were drawn up, as well as a specific campaign called Africa Mojo was run successfully, with particular MEL outcomes captured.

Related to this, through separate funding from the UNDP, Albany developed a mobile app which is essentially a toolkit that enables CSOs to create CVE campaigns based on alternative narratives to the dominant radicalising ones they encounter in their societies. The idea was developed at a workshop of CSOs from across East Africa and the Sahel, and they remained instrumental in the finalisation of the app over the subsequent six months. This is innovation which was made possible by our networks within civil society, including the use of technology to empower lives and build resilience. The outcome has been that the app was taken back to at least eight different Sahelian and West African countries by local CSOs who are trained and bought-in to the project. As such, policy goals of increasing community resilience were made closer.

### **Strengthening the role of the media and universities to hold security services to account**

This project seeks to strengthen the role of media actors as human rights defenders as well as strengthen the legal enabling environment for freedom of speech and expression to promote accountability of the security services. One of the key aims is to build the relationship between journalists and the security forces, while strengthening the role of media in the transition from war to peace and encouraging the enforcement of human rights. In terms of outcomes, our findings have formed the basis for constructive national dialogues

and training sessions between the two sectors, with a strong body of evidence reinforcing new strategic initiatives. Through project research, Albany gained an understanding of the role of different media actors in preventing and or driving violent extremism and how they can, in turn, hold the security services to account. Our research takes the form of a series of empirically grounded research papers and outreach events, which are delivered by Albany's local teams. The research is then used in the service of legitimate institutions to improve their contributions to the people, democracy, and the promotion of civic rights. Research findings then serve as the basis upon which to have a constructive dialogue with all actors involved; and to act as a neutral mediator and advocate for supporting and building a constructive relationship between security forces and the media. Our sensitive and sustained approach is steadily increasing the accountability of state security institutions by repairing the relationship between media and security forces.

#### **Stabilisation in Somalia (December 2017 – ongoing)**

Also in Somalia, Albany is currently working on the Early Recovery Initiative (ERI) through a CSSF-funded stabilisation project. This is working in the Somali sectors, as part of a broader initiative to stabilise the country, which has been identified as a NSC objective. It is still early stages, but the completion of the inception phase with the usual programming foundational documents has identified it clearly and suggested how it fits in to the rest of the ERI efforts conducted by HMG. In particular, the risk assessment is a key document, as is the results framework, along with conflict and gender sensitivity. We have been able to increase impact and innovation through the access and institutional knowledge we have been able to leverage through our other work, funded through the CSSF and others.

This project is being delivered through a small team of consultants and an in-country partner. Given its position within the Early Recovery Initiative, there is frequent contact with the programme manager to ensure that progress is according to internal documents, but also broader HMG architecture in to which the project slots. It is early days still, but in terms of MEL, gaining access to the hard-to-reach sectors has been achieved, so that the HMG policy level objectives of creating stability across broader swathes of Somalia, rather than just pockets, are closer to being achieved.

#### **Liberia Media Development Programme**

From October 2015 to October 2017, Albany was sub-contracted by Internews Network to strengthen normative-legal environment for free media in a program funded by USAID. Albany fit under the project architecture provided by Internews, and inputs were programmed collaboratively with the Internews programme management team. Specific activities included ensuring all media associations in Liberia were able to resolve industry issues and effectively engage in advocacy and collective action; assist in improving self regulatory mechanisms; provide support to institutions working to defend journalists; build a demand for media reform in Liberia by supporting advocacy efforts through capacity-building; build the Information Commission so that it can enforce, oversee and monitor the implementation of Liberia's Freedom of Information Act and mentor information officers to more effectively interact with colleagues in their ministries to improve responses to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

By the end of the two years, Albany had been instrumental in forming and facilitating a stakeholder working group to establish a new self-regulatory code of ethics and operational framework with the journalists' union; established a new website and internal procedures to improve the efficiency with which the Information Commission processes requests for information; identified and trained a pool of Liberian lawyers to defend journalists' rights; and worked with government and stakeholders to recommend improvements to legislation, including regarding the public serve broadcaster and decriminalising speech.

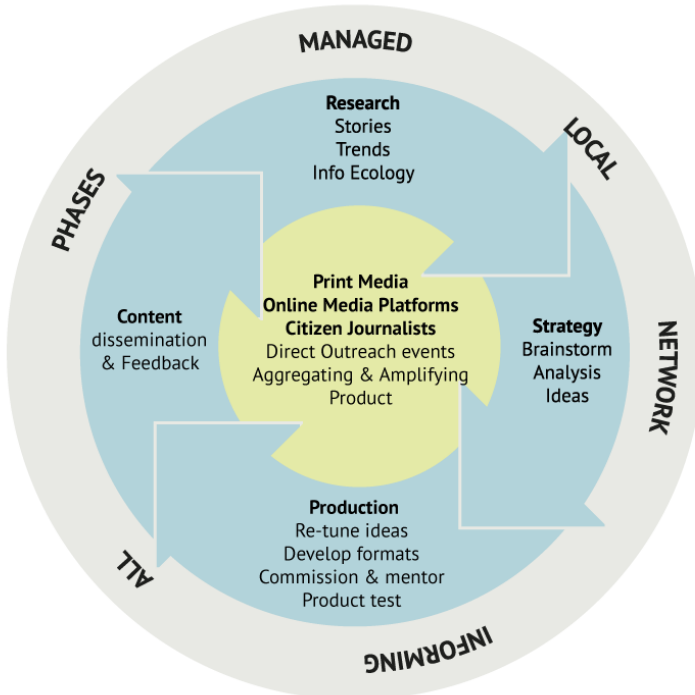
#### **Communications Support to the Somali National Government (January 2013 – March 2018)**

This project places consultants at the highest levels of Somali government – in the Office of President, and in the Office of Prime Minister. The types of activities in this project include strategic communications (high level advice, messages), media / journalism (monitoring and relations, digital communications outreach and training and capacity building. While it was important that a base level of capacity building was implemented, another key element was improving the way in which the organs of state connected with and responded to the people of Somalia, not least through the conduits of civil society.

This project was delivered through a small team of consultants, who travelled in-country on 6/2 rotation, who were lodged locally and provided with the necessary duty of care. Given the security situation in Somalia, careful management of the duty of care elements was required, and given the prioritisation of Somalia in HMG, very regular meetings took place between British Embassy Mogadishu and programme management teams to review progress against project documents etc. The outcomes and impacts have been taken through monthly report and annual review in line with the British Embassy, and through cooperation with HMG policy level auditors.

## 9. Strategic Communication and Outreach

Albany has a particularly strong track record working in the area of strategic communication and outreach, having established itself in 2004 with strategic communications as its core capability. Since then, we have served a wide range of donors across multiple geographical contexts, including the UN, DoS, EU in MENA region, East and West Africa, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Central Asia. Specifically within the last three years, we can point to the following projects that are relevant. The following diagram sets out the key principles of strategic communication and outreach as we deliver our interventions, while after that comes practical examples of how implementation demonstrates integration of values and principles, and MEL results management.



### Youth Engagement Programme, Sudan – Reducing Vulnerability to Extremism and Migration (May 2016 – March 2017)

This was a strategic communication project seeking to deliver engagement with youth to provide them with alternatives to radicalisation, such as entrepreneurship skills, and or clearer instruction in religious moderation. The project established a management unit, which then created and delivered downstream mini projects to deliver the various outputs set out in the theory of change / results framework.

Each downstream project was proposed with a separate theory of change and assessment of risk, and then selected by a panel within the Embassy in Khartoum. Regular contact with the project officer ensured close adherence to the aims of the project, and ensured that delivering value for money was underpinned. The project was delivered through a country office, and local consultants. Albany management travelled in-country periodically, lodged locally and were provided with the necessary duty of care.

programme was delivered in two parts.

1. Training programme consisting of 300 Imams attending a three-day training workshop, held 6-8 February 2017. Its success can be asserted against in-depth interviews by way of M&E which relate firstly the relevance of the curriculum (set against the absence of anything else like it), and secondly, the positivity and sustainable networking created by bring imams together to share experience. A speaking tour at universities and other venues in Khartoum was also conducted. While the events garnered media coverage, from a programmatic level, the outcome was positive as we inserted our moderating discourse in some of the more radical locations that had been on the target list of BE Khartoum – including Africa University and UMST.
2. Part two consisted of conducting a further two outreach events, one in Khartoum and one in Port Sudan. Through the agency of a well-known and respected moderate Sufi scholar who was brought to Sudan for the purposes, the two events staged attracted in excess of 10,000 people. These events also garnered media coverage, and demonstrated also the ability to reach the Syrian immigrant population in Sudan, which is large and a relative unknown of interest to HMG and other donors.

The project's programmatic outcome, then, was to reach target areas which had been identified for accessing, and conduct activities which moderate the discourse among youth in Sudan, which were the target group identified at the policy level by the funder. Having robust project documentation relating to programme management no doubt facilitated the results management of this project. Finally, the project demonstrated Albany's ability for innovation, with the imams' training being the first project of its kind in Sudan. Conducting outreach in Sudan's more radical universities was also new, and was facilitated by Albany's local knowledge, networks, and patient relationship building. Mapping these processes over time was facilitated by the logframe and risk matrix in particular – remaining on top of Do No Harm and conflict sensitivity principles was essential. Gender was programmed in at the planning stage also, as much as M&E and conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm.

### Russian language strategic communication: people-to-people in the Baltic States (May 2016 – January 17)

On a CSSF-funded strategic communications and outreach project in 2016/17, Albany were engaged to conduct a range of people-to-people activities which would develop greater affinity among Russian-speakers with the European values and key concepts such as social cohesion and critical thinking. The activities brought together groups within smaller communities around inclusive activities to enable moderated discussion of key topics of interest to the funder.

The delivery of the outreach and engagement



Young Russian speakers were employed as levers to influence their parents' and grandparents' generations and amplify a distinct "Euro-Baltic" identity through family-centred direct outreach events. While valuable in and of themselves, the reach and impact of these events were enhanced through the application of Albany's offline/online connectivity skills. Combining the base outreach element with the strategic communication amplification through social and other media greatly enhances measureable reach.

During the course of around 60 activities, Albany directly engaged approximately 4000 Russian-speakers in both youth and 40+ age groups in 15 locations. Then, employing the project's social and digital media component, the reach and impact among Russian speaking populations across the region was enhanced.

The challenges presented by this project were numerous: firstly, no platform existed, so we needed to set one up. Secondly, it was a new area of interest to HMG, and so flexibility in programming was essential. This was programmed in by ensuring that our risks assessment was up-to-date for a changing environment, channels of communication with the client were regularly used, and that frequent calibration points were instituted to assess milestone achievement.

However, because working in the Baltics was a new area, the achievements and types of innovation were several: many links with new target audiences and civil society organisations were made, and the amount of learning about working with Russian-speaking communities was impressive: the CSSF were left with a handy and cost-effective toolkit for future programming.

### **Ukraine: Communicating the EU to Ukraine (July 17 – present)**

In Ukraine, Albany has been running an EU-funded two-year strategic communications project since July 2017 which is:

- running six campaigns to raise awareness and generate support for democratic reforms; and
- putting in place mechanisms of public relations and media support to the existing project communication infrastructure to strengthen the overall environment which seeks also to generate momentum for the democratic reforms.

This is a large-scale project which delivers at both pace and scale, with a team of 15 people. There are many distinct strands of work for this project, and our communications are delivered in the following mix of ways:

TV, radio, digital, print media, public advertising, training to EU-funded project communicators, Press visits, Public communications events.

This project platform was set up working alongside a local partner, and together we selected an office and conducted the necessary local legal administrative requirements to begin work. The inception period covered the gathering of baseline data and the M&E plan, a clear understanding of the risks, and a weekly schedule of reporting to the client was agreed. Albany management ensured that the gender balance of the team was appropriate.

Each type of communication is measured in a different way, with targets pre-agreed with the client before each campaign is rolled out. These ways, for quantitative measurement, include:

GRP number; TRP number; Coverage of target audience in % Reach; Coverage of target audience in % for national print; Estimated coverage of target audience in % for national radio stations; Number of people attended, and Number of people covered by posts or comments in media after events (public/open events only).

For qualitative measurement, baseline, midline and endlines are taken through polling and focus grouping. Then, it is possible to discern and capture changes in awareness and attitude among the target audiences that were identified during the target audience analysis stage.

As part of the work relates to the East of Ukraine, it was also important for us to focus on conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm principles, which were discussed in detail with the client, with the EU's EHCO representative present to offer comment and advice. The particulars of the conflict in the East are complicated, and so it was essential we leveraged our teams' experience not as Ukrainians, but as professional communicators in Ukraine who are used to operating in that environment, with the nuances involved. At the outset of the project, Albany's partners sub-contractors were selected on the basis of the range of skills they possessed, among which Do No Harm, conflict sensitivity, gender and MEL were key.