COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: UZBEKISTAN

These recommendations are designed to deliver communication campaigns by mass media, non-governmental organizations, government agencies and religious leaders to prevent violent extremism among the population of Uzbekistan with an emphasis on youth.

The Team at The Centre for Social and Cultural Design "Gonzo-Design" developed this Strategy at the request of the Centre for Religious Studies within the scope of the Internews implemented Project "Strengthening Resilience to Radicalization and Disinformation in Central Asia" with the financial support of the European Union.

This communication strategy was produced based on study performed by the Center for Religious Studies from March to December 2020. The study included the content analysis of online platforms in six languages (Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen) and the field studies in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, which interviewed 4,005 respondents, aged 18-35 to identify the value orientations of Central Asian youth and their media preferences.

2021

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

This communication strategy document represents a system of applied recommendations to deliver media campaigns aimed at PVE among the population of Uzbekistan with an emphasis on youth. The strategy includes eight sections covering all aspects of communication process:

1. goal setting,
2. understanding the audience,
3. formation of messages,
4. understanding stakeholders,
5. review of effective channels and formats,
6. specifics of the context,
7. evaluation of communication efficiency,
8. presentation of potential risks.

The strategy provides an overview of messages, tools, approaches, and contextual specifics for applied work among four stakeholder groups: government agencies, NGOs, media and religious leaders. Each group was reviewed based on regional characteristics and analysis of their current activities.

HOW TO USE THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY:

The communication strategy structure is based on fundamental principles of communication model, which can be represented through the following definition:

Communication is the process of transferring information from sender to receiver through an environment in which both parties equally understand the information transmitted. A significant portion of information is called content and the outcome of transmission process is a message.

Therefore, this communication strategy includes the description of all participants, conditions, and mechanisms of communication. We answer the questions: what is required to broadcast? to whom? under which conditions? and how to achieve the desired effect.

MISSION OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Goals, objectives, and impact

This section describes the motives and prerequisites for developing a strategy, including the description of expectations from its results. What kind of desired effects we wanted to achieve and what goals we set? What must happen if all the recommendations described in the strategy will be effectively implemented?

Goal

Strengthening the resilience among youth to radicalization and misinformation leading to violent extremism by supporting the media, civil society, government institutions, religious leaders and active citizens in Uzbekistan. This goal seeks to strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation.

Main drivers of PVE:

1. Improving education of the population.

2. Reducing fragmentation in society.

3. Improving social infrastructure.

4. Developing interaction between the State and citizens.

Objectives:

1. Creating and promoting alternative narratives among groups vulnerable to radicalization.
2. Strengthening the system of cooperation between local and global stakeholders.
3. Increasing the level of media literacy and critical thinking among TA.
4. Developing communities and strengthening the group identity of TA based on humanitarian values.
5. Reducing the level of disunity on national, religious and ethnic grounds due to developed alternative factors to improve the internal ties among TA groups.
6. Popularizing humanitarian values and culture.
7. Promoting social and cultural values for systemic formation of personal identity of TA.
8. Developing family values and strengthening intra-family ties.

Long-term impact:

This strategy contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by reducing the factors that contribute to VE for the next 15-20 years:

1. increasing the level and quality of life.
2. ensuring access to education for all segments of the population.
3. developing gender education.
4. promoting the processes of self-development and increasing professional competencies and enhancing social activities.
5. reducing the level of inequality within and among countries.
6. ensuring cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
7. promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development.

SECTION 2

TARGET AUDIENCE

Who we address the communication?

Hereinafter target audience is referred to as TA.

Understanding the project TA will help:

1. use a suitable channel to communicate with the TA,

2. choose an effective genre and communication style,

3. plan and calculate communication effects and risks,

4. organize relevant promotion mechanisms.

The section addresses:

1. patterns of information perception among the ta,

2. important mechanisms of information consumption for the TA,

3. TA value system,

4. key factors in building credibility to information among the TA,

Specifics of information flows for TA in Uzbekistan on PVE

● Exposure to the influence of state channels due to an almost complete absence of independent channels – there is restriction in accessing alternative sources of information.

● There is an insufficient number of counter-narratives in the information field due to generally applied national policy.

● Lack of loyalty to Government due to the low level of social infrastructure.

● Low level of religious literacy. Clergymen are under pressure by the Government, and they lack opportunities to receive theological education.

● The population lacks access to quality sources of religious education.

● Access to quality sources of religious teaching is open; however, they are not widespread in popular information channels.

SECTION 3

CONTENT

WHAT DO WE BROADCAST TO THE AUDIENCE TO ACHIEVE THE PLANNED EFFECTS?

Using content guidelines will allow one to:

1. build an effective dialogue with the TA,

2. evoke the desired response from the TA,

3. qualitatively influence the level of awareness and education of the TA,

4. motivate the TA to make positive changes in habits, mind-sets, and actions.

The section addresses:

1. on which key senses we must build communication,

2. which messages to use and which to avoid,

3. which emotional messages and intonations to apply in communication,

4. how to choose communication stylistics.

MESSAGES

CATEGORIES OF DIRECT MESSAGES BY SEMANTIC GROUPS:

1. **POLITICAL**

1.1. Responding to violence and its propaganda

To formulate and promote rebuttals to violent campaigns. It is necessary to create an absolute, clear attitude among the TA in relation to the issue of the illegality of violence.

1.2. Developing and promoting political literacy

Accessibility and clear understanding of the global political situation will create the grounds for appropriate understanding and interpretation of real relations and priorities on the world stage.

1.3. Promoting the values of multiculturalism

Coverage of global social processes and achievements (scientific, cultural, social, humanitarian) will enable one to undermine many hostile views about the West, Canada, and China and, as a result, to eliminate destructive and aggressive sentiments towards other states and cultures.

1.4. Promoting the values of ethnic diversity

Strengthening the ideas aimed at acceptance and understanding of other nationalities, peoples and classes will reduce the level of fragmentation and potential for confrontations with other ethnic groups.

2. SOCIAL

2.1. Popularizing the factors of high living standards and measures to achieve them

Actions and ideas aimed at improving the quality of life: building roads, providing humanitarian aid, fighting corruption, etc

2.2. Developing unity and continuity

2.3. Developing community and mutual assistance

2.4. Developing group identity

To promote the ideas and values aimed at unification through joint creation, creativity, education, volunteering, lifestyle, and culture. Refutation of the possibility to achieve group identity based on religion and any militant images: a winner, group force, weapons, manifestation of power.

2.5. Promoting and building community

To bring together the TA based on the ideas of brotherhood through positive constructive practices, common everyday interests, and mutual assistance.

2.6. Popularizing the idea of a free, healthy society

To create positive images through the topics of self-development, equality, and justice.

2.7. Popularizing the role of civic initiatives and personal self-development

It is important to build an extensive system of drivers that affect the quality of life and problem solving among the TA. It is necessary to shift the focus from religion as the main driver for addressing all challenges.

2.8. Developing and strengthening ties within the community of labor migrants

2.9. Developing the initiatives aimed at integration of labor migrants in host countries

To identify the potential of interaction between local population and community of labor migrants: intercultural exchange.

> **Example**
>
> **1. Project: detipeterburga.ru**
>
> **2. Project to help refugees and migrants.**

2.10. Promoting national culture and identity

2.11. Working on negative stereotypes associated with class and economic inequalities

It is necessary to rebuild the established connotations in society which state that wealth is negative, and the poor are deprived. It is important to initiate and maintain a dialogue built on the ideas of achieving success and its components, personal values, and the potential to influencing a prosperous future.

3. RELIGIOUS

3.1. Disseminating basic terms and information about Islam

To deliver theological education in accessible, understandable, and easy formats and to preserve the integrity and stability of religious ideology and peaceful mission of Islam.

3.2. Promoting multi-confessional and religious tolerance

Denial of discrediting other groups based on religion.

3.3. Disseminating and promoting educational content

To advance the qualification of religious leaders in the regions so they can play an important role and equipping them with new information about trends and challenges (related to religion) and new knowledge in PVE.

3.4. Promoting the personality image through true values and good intentions

3.5. Promoting the importance of family values and ties

The presence of strong tangible intra-family ties reduces the feelings of depression and loneliness, and increases responsibility and consistency in actions and decision-making.

3.6 Developing the image of home

To interpret and develop the concept of "home," is of importance in Islam, as a territory to preserve the love, peace, and well-being of family members.

3.7 Developing and strengthening the image of respected theologians

It is necessary to create an environment from among authoritative leaders with strong religious expertise to increase the importance of their opinion on religion-related decision-making.

4. HUMANISTIC

4.1. Developing the principles of mutual help, empathy, and charity

To develop the community principles through humanitarian values.

4.2. Promoting the moral obligations and true values in a positive context

4.3. Promoting humanitarian and human rights values

To prevent prosecuting others and justifying violence and aggression against people who violate social and/or cultural norms.

INDIRECT MESSAGES BASED ON TA PRIORITY VALUES:

Based on the TA study, we identified the topics that are of particular interest to citizens of Uzbekistan in labor migration in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, South Korea, Bulgaria, and other countries.

- Popular and classical Uzbek music.
- Expert advice when obtaining patents.
- Russian language classes (especially important for those migrants who are preparing for exams in the Russian Federation).
- Information about legal jobs in the Russian Federation.
- Professional advice of the migrants themselves who have official status in host countries.
- Legal counselling on common difficult situations in which migrants find themselves.

Key values are combined into logical groups according to the principle of commonality of messages aimed at implementing TA relevant values.

1. FUTURE, SUCCESS, RESPONSIBILITY

- strong financial position for loved ones (firstly) and for yourself (secondly),
- make a mark on the world,
- personal self-development.

1.1. Stress reducing due to financial instability

It is obvious that the situation with education and employment requires effective decisions and reforms at the State level. However, the objectives of communication include creating an effective emotional background among the TA and increasing the level of optimism in society. Only in an emotionally favorable environment, we may count on the emergence of civic initiatives, aspiration for self-development and mutual assistance, as well as the motivation to improve skills and knowledge.

1.2. Anxiety reducing due to responsibility for financial well-being in the family

Despite the fact that family support and responsibility is an important cultural basis, it is necessary to work with the negative consequences arising among the TA

connected with this responsibility: alienation, powerlessness, feeling of not being good enough and successful, etc.

1.3. Escalation and transparency of topics of the future, its presentation, and components

Many ideas linked to well-being and successful future are formed among the TA due to stereotypes imposed by the cultural and social environment, in addition to unconsciously copying the practices that are constantly visible (TV, mass culture, YouTube). It is paramount to make the process of forming values and ideas as conscious and independent as possible. Questions and discussions addressed to TA will help raise the agenda of personal self-determination and reduce the level of stereotypes when developing values. Discussion formats among the TA about the future will also enable maintaining links with youth and strengthening inter-generational ties.

1.4. Developing small-scale and light educational formats

It is necessary to build a system of accessible and resource-intensive educational tools. This will fill the gap between not always available fundamental long expensive education and complete absence of any quick, simple, and applied tools for personal and professional development.

2. FEELING NEEDED, VALUABLE AND LOVED:

- building your own family,
- make a mark on the world,
- personal self-development.

2.1. Developing the culture of volunteering and civic social initiatives

Participation in social activities and opportunities to be engaged into practicing charity and social activity will significantly develop values that are important for youth communities: mutual assistance, a sense of community and unity (as opposed to a sense of alienation and loneliness), sharing challenges, an awareness and realization of one's own strength and capabilities.

2.2. Popularizing the DIY concept (Do It Yourself)

'Do It Yourself' is a concept that promotes the possibility and feasibility of private initiatives and self-development. The post-Soviet environment and current national agenda, as well as cultural traditions have significant impact on the assessment of personality in isolation from society, family, and country. It prevents developing the ideas on the true value of each person and the importance of small deeds. Such practices can be safe while contributing to a more efficient and active society.

2.3. Broadening the understanding of development tools

Employment and income challenges can be partially addressed if the TA is more aware of potential ways of acquiring professional skills and self-promotion.

2.4. Promoting mentorship, motivation, and leadership

The resources designed for Implementation can significantly be reduced by using existing content on these topics. Costs will thus be limited to translation from foreign languages and distribution.

2.5. Promoting beauty and health topics

Popularizing sporty active lifestyles and involvement of the TA in the agenda of careful attitude towards themselves, not only in terms of aesthetics, but also in terms of investments in their future.

3. STARTING A FAMILY:

- creating your own family,
- sense of duty.

3.1. Developing sexual education

Despite the limitations associated with peculiarities of country context, it is important to look for alternative sources to identify the topics on gender and relations: sports, beauty, health, culture, communication, and self-development.

> **EXAMPLE**
>
> **1. «What Would You Do If You Had No More Limits?»**
>
> A social video on menstruation in developing countries, women's access to education, and their opportunities.
>
> **2. Sexual education under "Poplars" Project**
>
> Media project about sex education in Uzbekistan.

3.2. Developing the culture of cross-gender communication

The availability of clear and visual tools for maintaining connections in society, searching for common ideas and interests, co-creation and like-mindedness will play an important role in the natural process of conscious choice of a partner, and will increase the potential of community for the TA as a whole.

4. GROUP AND PERSONAL IDENTITY:

4.1. Popularizing ethnographic and craft traditions

This will create a wider field to search for personal identity and sense of connection with culture, country, history, and people. It is important to provide the TA with a wide variety of cultural and historical events and images.

4.2. Popularizing fairy-tale and mythological, poetic characters

To explore the topic of heroification through positive and peaceful images.

4.3. Revitalizing and popularizing crafts and related technologies and practices

In addition to the ethnographic component, which is revealed in traditional crafts, these types of creative practices serve as a good driver for developing communities based on common interests and tourist attraction destinations, emerging small private entrepreneurship by involving young people in rethinking and creating new creative areas.

4.4. Developing and motivating collective initiatives

EMOTIONS AND INTONATIONS

As part of the TA field interviews, we identified the gradations in the TA's emotional-sensitive perception of information. In particular, what sensations and emotions certain types of media products evoke, how they affect the distribution of attention, perception, and motivation to any action.

Emotional guidelines based on the study of the TA value priorities:

1. Sense of community, non-loneliness, confidence in the future

Recommended intonation tags are calmness, moderate dynamism, cohesion, and compatibility.

Not recommended intonation tags are anxiety, linearity, melancholy, aggressiveness, excessive emotionality, violence, and apathy.

Values:
- adherence to a group,
- happy family,
- striving for peaceful social interactions,
- approval of others.

2. Stability, optimism

Recommended intonation tags are dreaminess, romance, poetry, and determination.

Not recommended intonation tags are manufacturability, haste, variability, fragmentation.

Values:
- preservation of national traditions,
- make the world better and right.

Self-confidence, feeling important

Recommended intonation tags are admiration, imagination, dreaminess, activity.

Not recommended intonation tags are envy, haste, comparability.

Values:

• self-determination (professional, religious, social),

4. Security

Recommended intonation tags are ease, leisurely, family.

Not recommended intonation tags are immensity, suppression.

Values:
• state, financial, and social stability,
• peaceful and humanitarian values,
• safety,
• safety and integration of labor migrants in foreign territory,
• striving for peaceful social interactions.

5. Well-being, success

Recommended intonation tags are spirituality, calmness, naturalness, authenticity.

Not recommended intonation tags are envy, haste, comparability.

Values:
• strong financial position for yourself,
• strong financial position for loved ones.

RELATED LINKS AND MATERIALS:

«Тренды веб-дизайна 2020: модное и значимое» (web-design trends 2020: fashionable and meaningful)

«Обзор глобальных трендов 2020 от Ford» (Ford Releases 2020 Global Trend Report)

«Pantone представляет цвет 2020 года» (Pantone Color of the Year 2020 Introduction | PANTONE 19-4052 Classic Blue)

«Тренды и тенденции 2020 года: метаанализ» (trends and tendencies 2020: meta-analysis)

«Руководство по созданию доступных продуктов» (Vox Product Accessibility Guidelines).

STAKEHOLDERS

Who are the senders of messages?

In this section, we take a close look at four key categories of stakeholders involved in communication. Each stakeholder has its own limitations and potentials. We will identify the approaches, tools, and resources that are appropriate for each category.

Understanding the specifics of potentials and limitations of the project stakeholders will enable to:

1. Create brand new communication products,
2. Rationally use the resources for their creation,
3. Build partnerships and scale up the communication effects.

The section addresses:

1. How to scale up the lessons learned.
2. How to benefit from existing restrictions.
3. What new approaches and principles can be applied in working with the topic.

MASS MEDIA

TYPICAL FEATURES OF MASS MEDIA IN UZBEKISTAN:

- Mass media are divided into public and non-public media. State media mainly represents the official position and views.

- The news agenda of digital media is almost identical since they use the same sources of information.

- There is a visible lack of exclusive content.

- It lacks the system of criteria to evaluate the content value. The main relevant criteria are still the speed of planting false stories into the information space;

- Innovations in choosing topics, unpopular decisions, and visual approaches generate resistance and rejection (challenges in perceiving the materials by audience that are different from habitual).

- The religious topic in official media is not allowed since Uzbekistan positions itself as a secular state. At the same time, there is a free space on social networks for alternative narratives.

> ## EXAMPLE
>
> When they started using feminine gender-specific job titles in reposts, it resulted in a wave of commotion and indignation by the professional community.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MASS MEDIA IN UZBEKISTAN

1. To develop experimental formats for presenting information that are not usual for the TA and creating a contrast in a variety of topics, genres and expertise.

2. Along with fast and short genres, it is important to develop long and deep formats. Improving the quality of content and depth of discussion of topics can be an important competitive advantage in media market.

3. To develop alternative ways of broadcasting the news agenda and identify not only the key focus of the current channel, but also linked topics. It should focus less on momentary coverage of certain events, but on the creation of continuous informational and panoramic context about the news.

4. Developing modern print media with narrowly focused public scientific and cultural topics can have a high potential.

5. To develop interdisciplinary and experimental formats by involving professionals from different industries.

6. Religious education projects can develop subject to innovative positioning – by using modern media technologies to create content and engage the audience.

7. To create and promote political literacy courses to form an adequate critical view about the political situation.

> ## Example
>
> The magazine "Anatomika" had a good resonance due to systemic promotion and content to which the TA responded.

NGOS

EXISTING DIFFICULTIES IN WORKING WITH PVE FOR NGOS IN UZBEKISTAN:

- Lack of sufficient research expertise on extremism and radicalization.

- An insufficient level of expertise in understanding the potential risk factors of exposure to VE.

- Lack of experience on PVE: the skills needed for effective and collaborative design and implementation of integrated and interdisciplinary PVE programs.

- Low level of awareness of civil society VE issues.

- Low level of awareness of civil society on activities and tasks of existing NGOs.

At the same time, NGOs are widely represented in Uzbekistan, both in terms of types of social problems they focus on and the variety of specialists and experts involved.

SPECIALIZATION OF NGOS IN UZBEKISTAN:

- Countering human trafficking and violent extremism (NGO Istikbolli Avlod).

- Environmental focus is closely related to social infrastructure because it deals with challenges related to water deficiency.

- Supporting the improvement of the socio-economic situation of vulnerable population groups, enhancing their civic position, and developing abilities and opportunities through the introduction of social innovations based on democratic values and social partnership.

- Social programs aimed at building local development centers (LDCs).

- Microfinance program to support socially vulnerable population groups.

- Providing psychological, social, legal, and medical aid to women and children in crisis situations in the format of field meetings with the population, personal consultations, and helplines.

- Improving professional skills of women from vulnerable groups.

- Implementing a microloan program for low-income population groups.

- Preparing publications and teaching aids to improve media literacy.

- Conducting information and educational events (trainings, forums, round tables, or media campaigns).

- Improving well-being and ensuring long-term food security and environmental stability in rural areas through Support Services of the agricultural sector. "KRASS" Khorezm Agro-Consultative Center is a self-governing independent non-governmental non-profit and non-political organization based on voluntary participation of scientists and researchers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NGOS IN UZBEKISTAN:

1. Developing and promoting advanced innovative ideas to improve the country's social and economic infrastructure by bringing together entrepreneurs, academics, civil society institutions, international organizations and the active community.

2. Conducting research, debates and discussions by inviting experts and activists of different disciplines: science, business, sociology and culture.

3. Creating collaboration projects with journalists and bloggers.

4. Developing cooperation with religious organizations and communities.

5. Ensuring system content and promoting thematic resources, publics and accounts on social networks.

7. Supporting activities combined with marketing and PR-campaigns, which will improve awareness not only about activities, but also promote the mission of NGOs as an ideological field for TA.

8. To actively interacting with government agencies and their press services. Joint coverage and activities on PVE.

9. Developing modern light and emotional formats when working with sensitive topics. To implement such projects, partnerships with representatives of creative and digital industries can be of effective and decisive.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:

1. Developing and promoting information openness and transparency principles. It is necessary to shift the emphasis from formal news and to initiate discussions and events that resonate with the TA. It will also contribute to building reputation and establishing partnerships with existing NGOs and media.

2. Interacting with the media community. This will expand the pool of topics and promotion tools to increase the loyalty of the TA.

3. Initiating collaboration programs and development of partnerships and ties between socially oriented and educational institutions.

4. Strengthening the image, publicity, and popularity of positive and active leaders from the field of culture, business, and education. This will enable to build an authority hierarchy among TA and influence their motivation in forming value guidelines.

5. Developing a person-cantered image. Using accessible language and emotional imagery to advance development strategies and socially important goals.

6. Reorganizing the performance of press services. Interactions must be more dynamic, diversified, and active such as support for initiatives, cross-publishing and participation in socially significant initiatives and small-scale projects.

7. Developing the integrity and continuity. It is necessary to combine tasks and projects into unified strategies and establish logical connections between them.

8. Maintaining ecosystems of social initiatives. It is necessary to find common thematic fields and organize joint events, actions, and campaigns with youth organizations and cultural institutions.

9. Promoting ideas and activities. There is a need to draw the TA's attention to the essence of targeted goals, news, and reforms in a relevant and effective format. There is a gap between the information field and communication, which leads to insufficient loyalty and awareness among the TA.

10. Supporting local research activities and creating interdisciplinary groups on religion and Islamic studies.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS:

1. Working on their image and reputation.

2. Delivering advanced trainings for regional spiritual leaders.

3. Facilitating the activities in alternative media channels that are relevant to the TA.

4. Cooperating with other stakeholders to educate and form value priorities.

5. Searching for alternative keys to develop religious literacy: education, family values, self-development, and humanistic values.

CHANNELS AND FORMATS

How are messages delivered?

Panorama of current channels and formats will help:

1. Deliver messages to end TA.
2. Develop cross-platform and interdisciplinary communication.
3. Track and count the effectiveness of communication.
4. Maintain long-term relationships with TA.

This section addresses:

1. What genres and formats are relevant to the TA?
2. How is the information is perceived depending on the product and placement?
3. What stylistic foundations are relevant to the TA?
4. How priorities of attention and confidence are formed with the TA?
5. How to manage the motivation of the TA?

Example

Let's assume that the project targets the elderly people living in a rural area. In such case, the suitable channel would be, for example, a series of short documentaries on TV. However, an interactive application for mobile devices would be a completely inappropriate format.

The channels relevant to TA in each country context are very specific and may not fit into the general logic of the media market. It is very important to take into account the local characteristics of the priority channels of Uzbekistan.

Communication preferences are made up of several key factors:

1. internet speed and access,
2. formats and topics of priority content,
3. availability of existing sources of information,
4. established traditions of trusting sources.

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS DIFFER BY NATURE OF THE TA INTERACTING WITH THEIR CONTENT:

1. STREAMING CHANNELS

Streaming - these are channels in which information is delivered to a user without special demand; a user does not control the information, which is received in a dynamic mode and uncontrolled stream.

Pros: constant reflexiveness, easy and quick access, it does not require special entry and decision-making

Cons: without immersion, it is impossible to calculate and predict the stop of attention; it is difficult to achieve deep involvement, it has an unstable level of trust.

Examples: all social media lines, television, outdoor advertising.

Drivers of attracting attention in streaming channels:

- bright contrasting emotions, both positive and negative,
- unequivocal intersection with personal values and interests of the TA,
- unpredictable and unexpected content,
- cognitive content: what the TA itself defines as useful knowledge or skill and understands how it can be used.

Streaming channels that are relevant for TA in Uzbekistan:

Social networks: OK, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter.com, VK, Facebook

Characteristic features of social media in Uzbekistan:

- In recent years (2018-2019), the level of the TA's network involvement has grown significantly (up by 300%) due to reforms affecting access to previously closed Internet resources.

- Insufficient traffic and/or lack of access to the Internet limits the use of long, voluminous, and deep forms of communication products. Complex interactive formats, multimedia long reads, and other modern forms of online promotion appear to be ineffective here, since the TA may not pay attention to them.

- Control and censorship of content by state agencies subject to compliance with national policy of a secular state imposes restrictions against official media outlets on both the stylistics and approaches in terms of covering sensitive topics, especially those related to religion.

- The focus of attention and trust in the content among the TA in social networks are linked to topics of entertainment and personal communication, and to a lesser extent, education, culture, and Islamic art.

- OK is the most popular social network:
  1. Most users are labor migrants and people who are not engaged in intellectual work. Interaction with content can be considered rather passive and one-sided.
  2. State agencies or their various affiliated institutions are not represented in this social network.
  3. It lacks an audience with quite progressive views and high level of education; the OK audience is not motivated and has no capacity to participate in open discussions and conscious interpretation of messages created.

- The blogosphere is an essential segment of the media market, and popular bloggers become opinion leaders: they influence the formation of values and trends, the emergence or elimination of information agenda.

- Blogging today is not the only method of self-realization, but it becomes a stable income for many people.

- Many groups and influencers' public pages are open to cooperating and willing to share and distribute content on all available social media.

- Personalized channels become the primary source of important news and form news feeds.

- There have been instances of publications on acute political and socio-economic topics that resonate among the elites and at the state level. There are several cases when bloggers' speeches influenced decision-making on corruption, abuse of power, arbitrariness of officials, and illegal actions of law enforcement agencies. It is bloggers who often raise "unpleasant topics" that the media do not dare to discuss.

- Traditional media remain quite conservative due to the lack of dynamics in personnel management

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE USE OF RELEVANT SOCIAL NETWORKS IN UZBEKISTAN:

1) Creating and promoting educational formats.

Simple, playful, short educational genres: cards, tests, and stories. It is important to broadcast informative context in an accessible way and thereby make them competitive with entertainment genres. Simplifying educational content will raise awareness about the risks associated with VE activities and make the agenda more mainstreamed and cited.

Example

"Feminism" flash mob

The girls posted photos on social networks in which they hold cardboard boxes with inscriptions. "I am not an incubator," "Being a Russian does not mean a whore," "Kelinka (daughter-in-law) is not a slave," "My body is my business.

Pros:
- Photos quickly spread on social networks: Instagram, Tic-toc, Facebook.
- Flash mob triggered an active discussion.

Cons:
- Spontaneity and lack of verified campaign style.
- Image and status gap between the authors and audience to which the campaign was targeted to and which led to a decrease in trust and response among the TA.
- Failed to obtain wider public support.

2) Developing discussion formats.

To initiate active participation of TA to talk about neutral, but at the same time, valuable topics from their perspectives: news, interpersonal communications, traditional culture, art, music, foreign languages. Engagement of different TAs in terms of their educational level and progressiveness into joint discussions will reduce the gap between various layers of audience and will create a common information field. This will reduce the level of isolation of vulnerable TA groups and help bridge their gap with progressive representatives of society.

3) Community building

Intensive promotion of topics relevant to TA will contribute to creating an online-friendly environment in which participants will benefit from a platform to form and exchange common interests. The development of online communities will improve the quality of remote communication in society and increase the level of motivation, curiosity, and empathy.

4) Developing collaboration formats with opinion makers and celebrities

According to research outcomes, music and lifestyle content is the most popular among the TA. Engagement of musicians and media environment actors to promote positive narratives and value-forming discussions with TA will help to increase the interest to such topics and create an alternative environment for such a difficult topic as VE through the promotion of important aspects of life

5) Expending the presence of non-governmental organizations, experts in Islamic studies, and independent activists in social networks

To popularize the positive narratives and attitudes through personal accounts and public pages of authoritative and progressive public figures and educators. It will maintain a competent information field and stay in contact with the audience. Active social networking will help to not only expand the field of informational impact and be in emotional contact with the TA, but also to announce educational events and organize live broadcasts.

TV AND RADIO

Characteristic features of TV channels in Uzbekistan:

- TV is subject to both government censorship and self-censorship by journalists.

- A small number of private TV channels may raise sensitive topics.

- TV content is mainly composed of neutral topics and entertainment programs. Sensitive topics are not reflected.

- Independent media are limited in their technical capabilities. Their content mainly has entertainment programs. Thus, there is no competitive TV channel with differentiated content, which could meet the interests of the audience.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO USE TV CHANNELS IN UZBEKISTAN:

1) Introducing programs aimed at opposing VE in TV and radio broadcasting

Given the dependence of TV and radio broadcasting, it is necessary to develop alternative ways of covering topics and agenda concept. It is important to integrate formats that are organic for these channels and, at the same time, demanded for audience: talk shows and serials.

One of the presentation formats could be a talk show by involving independent experts, theologians respected in society, NGOs representatives and independent journalists. It is necessary to introduce formats of feedback with viewers, who could receive answers live. Ensuring the participation of respected people into the community and providing opportunities to communicate with them, which will contribute to a positive perception.

2) Synthesis of topics in TV programs

Due to the sensitivity of the topic and almost complete absence of religious agenda on TV, it is advisable to synthesize indirect topics (see the section on Content) by integrating them into the format of programs, films, serials, and entertainment shows.

3) Popularizing progressive figures

It is important to make visible representatives from among young people and active citizens who deal with addressing social challenges. Such practices will have a positive impact on the motivation and inspiration of the TA and will make visible private civic initiatives for independent scaling up.

4) Increasing in the share of youth topics and formats

It is necessary to build a better match for the content designed for a youth audience. Expansion of youth-interested topics and formats in broadcasting, among other things, will reduce the intergenerational gap.

5) Developing the plots reflecting the lifestyle

Light and dynamic lifestyle formats that reveal the topics of development, self-determination, and identity will help reduce the general level of depression and provide tools for self-realization and personal development.

6) Promoting youth-relevant values related to well-being through educational programs

In particular, the promotion of topics of economic growth, professional development and scientific progress through game, entertainment, and educational formats will meet the needs of TA in terms of value priorities, and at the same time educate the TA on issues essential for planning gender relations.

7) Implementing mentorship and motivation formats

Sharing successful stories of active and progressive representatives of the TA and popularizing personal examples. Such formats will encourage self-development, shift the focus of attention from the global agenda to a personal one, motivate a healthy lifestyle, and inspire active social activities.

2. SPECIAL CHANNELS

Special channels are the channels that gather an audience on a central meaning or idea. It can be an interest, activity, hobby, or goal. The audience appeals to these channels with the intention to receive specific content.

Pros: there is an intention and motivation at the entry point, it has a permanent audience, certain level of confidence based on commonality after entry; they scale well subject to high-quality and long-term content saturation.

Cons: narrow focus, require follow-up

Examples: professional communities and groups, YouTube channels, newspapers, and magazines.

Special channels are powerful tools for building communities. They help scale ideas, narrow the gaps between social strata, and give a sense of oneness, which in turn can resist artificially created or negative unions such as VEs.

Current special channels in Uzbekistan:

Online: YouTube channels, online TV channels, vlogs, and thematic groups in social networks

Characteristic features of special online channels in Uzbekistan:

- Videos are the most popular online content format. Considering that Internet in Uzbekistan is very expensive, to save money, preference is given to short stories.

- The TA is especially interested in music videos.
- Online media is more open for discussions and raising sensitive social topics.
- Low level of interaction of journalists with colleagues from other countries.
- Insufficient number of collaboration projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO USE SPECIAL ONLINE CHANNELS:

1. **Engaging and creating user content**

2. **Developing experimental formats at the interface with science and art**

3. **Collaborating with musicians**

    Due to the high adherence of the TA to musical culture, performers can become key opinion makers and broadcast their views and assessment of VE, both in the lyrics and in open accompanying discussions and interviews.

4. **Developing discussion formats**

    To deliver in genres of talk shows and lifestyle stories by inviting experts from the field of culture, history, and traditions, who may indirectly impact the topic of positive narratives and values.

5. **Promoting young and active people**

    Popularizing and strengthening the image of established, but not very well-known young active citizens from the regions of the country.

6. **Developing educational channels and communities**

    Re-broadcasting educational content from West-originated sources with educational content aimed at developing skills in digital professions and creative industries.

7. **Popularizing the DIY (Do It Yourself) concept through regional and foreign bloggers**

8. **Developing and promoting the podcast culture genre**

    Light in terms of traffic and genre close to usual audio content and quite popular radio has high potential for mass targeted message delivery.

9. **Using figurative and non-documentary formats**

    Use comics and animations to cover real stories on VE. Various visual techniques and mixed techniques reduce the risk for characters and at the same time helps to deliver the content to the TA in the friendliest way.

1. **Internet programs and talk shows where participants from "vulnerable groups" are invited to talk about their difficulties, experiences, and stories.**

Talk-show "Labor migrants talk about work, difficulties, and life in Russia".

YouTube program "Tajik migrants: to Russia for the future of children" - BBC Russian

2. **"Children of migrants"**

Cross-country project implemented by the Tilda Team from three countries. It includes documentary stories illustrated by the author's drawings by Sasha Ivanyuzhenko. The project uses custom content.

Pros:
- A new storytelling format for Uzbekistan at that time.
- Simple, laconic language with bright emotional illustrations.
- It was distributed within bloggers' channels, so it had a wide reach.
- The use of user-generated content piqued interest and engaged the audience in dialogue.
- It was translated into several languages: Russian, Uzbek, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz.
- The lack of emphasis on nationality or citizenship of heroes brought them closer to the audience of all countries, and at the same time making it possible to show the differences in challenges faced by children of migrants.

Cons:
- Lack of expressiveness of texts.
- Lack of a promotion strategy, which significantly reduced the potential outreach.

OFFLINE: NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

RECOMMENDATIONS TO WORK WITH SPECIAL OFFLINE CHANNELS:

1. **Expanding geography and multiculturalism**

To produce cross and collaborate on materials with similar media in countries of outflow of migrants. To implement interregional joint projects and initiatives.

2. **Segmenting rubrics and audience types**

This will help increase both the audience and its potential interest in new topics. If the TA is involved in one rubric, it starts showing interest in other topics, since print media have a linear structure. Adaptation of rubrics for different types of audience.

3. **Introducing personal stories and examples**

4. **Introducing the formats and headings for interaction with the audience**

   To organize polls, contests, publication of letters and stories from the TA. This will allow them not only to see a section of the TA and keep in touch with the TA but will also increase the level of self-confidence and significance.

5. **Promoting materials in easy and accessible formats in social networks:**

   Stories, igtv, photo series.

6. **Strengthening the reputation and image of specific authors**

   It will increase trust in the content and create a more personal attitude towards the conveyed meanings

7. **Introducing educational rubrics**

8. **Introducing sections with applied benefit for the TA**

   Employment, self-development, and social activity.

9. **Developing the image and modern stylistic techniques and formats**

   To use contemporary illustrations and photographs in partnership with universities and young artists.

Example

Gradarak

The non-profit organization "GRADARAK" creates modern libraries to spark new knowledge among the younger generation and equip them with interesting and cognitive leisure. "Our primary goal is to build libraries in remote villages of Armenia to improve the level of education and broaden the horizons of residents from these regions. Libraries and educational institutions can create collections and sections on exciting topics, invite experts, and attract young people by establishing safer environment for them.

Article on project

3. PERSONAL CHANNELS

Personal channels are the channels in which we receive information from people who we know directly, and our perception depends on the quality of our relations with them.

Pros: Communication participants know each other, they communicate directly, it does not require special inclusion and participation from the TA, it has a high level of trust and emotional attachment, higher degree of involvement and responsiveness, where reputation plays a role.

Cons: It requires point of contact, interaction, and constant support.

Examples: Chats, instant messengers, chat bots, and professional groups.

Personal channels that are relevant for TA in Uzbekistan:
Chats, groups, and channels in Viber, WhatsApp, and Telegram

Characteristic features of personal channels in Uzbekistan:

- According to our research, the TA receives most information about news and global situation from relatives and friends, therefore the personal communication channels must be a priority for effective work.

- Personal communication is complicated by the fact that most families are divided due to labor migration.

- Blocking the Internet and social networks breaks the connection with loved ones.

- Personal channels allow transmitting small-size data streams, which would increase their potential impact in the face of problems with traffic and access to high-speed Internet.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO USE OF PERSONAL CHANNELS IN UZBEKISTAN AND RUSSIA:

1. **Creating various forms and communication products aimed at maintaining communication between labor migrants and their families and loved ones.**

   Game formats, messengers that unite friends and relatives on common issues, and relevant topics. Bringing migrant workers and their families together into sprawling and strong communities is critical. Building communities with online tools to strengthen family ties regardless of geographic location.

2. **Creating local social public pages and services in instant messengers for communities of labor migrants.**

   Products that address day-to-day social routine problems and serve the purpose of maintaining community connectivity and continuous awareness. Thematic functional areas can include medical consulting and information, consulting, and assistance to maintain health and personal safety, legal and migration support. There is the possibility to promote the product through private channels and bloggers.

Example

1. **Workeen**

   Workeen is an app designed help refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants navigate on the European labor market. The app developers claim that it can help them understand bureaucracy and prepare for interviews.

2. **The service takes care of you**

   This map application is designed to search for free medical examination facilities. Its objective is to make sure that migrants understand the importance of cancer screening.

3. **News applications or public posts on social networks on topics connecting family members and beloved ones in the context of internal and external migration.**

4. DEDICATED CHANNELS

Dedicated channels are the isolated stand-alone channels not linked to existing platforms and media.

Pros: There is the potential to build a community with strong ties; they respond to the request of the TA to create independent channels.

Cons: There is no ready audience, it must be created, and they require significant promotion.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREATING DEDICATED CHANNELS:

1. **Creating educational channels on digital communication and skills topics.** It is important to combine educational content with applied lessons and materials aimed at developing professional skills and potential employment.

2. **Developing thematic event formats to exchange views and participatory design.** This will create an opportunity for youth to emerge outside the institutional arrangements and engage in dialogue with decision-makers at all levels.

3. **Expanding online and offline platforms for TA to engage into social and economic activities,** such as promoting internships and learning opportunities through supervising the work of professionals, developing mentoring programs, improving career guidance and counselling in schools and Universities, expanding opportunities for volunteerism and summer programs.

4. **Establishing youth solidarity funds,** including small grant systems, to help promote PVE initiatives at the community, local, or grassroots level.

5. **Developing the mobile games industry to educate and raise awareness about radicalization and its consequences.**

6. **Developing and promoting accessible services on migration policy and social applied tools for labor migrants in host countries.** To integrate religious education and theology into the platform of such services (in a simple accessible format - audio and video).

Example

"Civic Assistance"

The team of the Civic Assistance Committee consists of consultants on migration issues, lawyers, translators, coordinators of assistance programs, physicians, psychologists, teachers of Russian as foreign language, etc.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL TYPES OF CHANNELS:

1. **Cross-platform**

   Cross-platform communication broadcasts one system of messages with a unique idea in the format of different products: on several channels and genres. In this way, an ecosystem is built with common messages and values, but it has different means of dissemination and promotion.

   What does it provide?
   - increases coverage,
   - increases recognition and, as a result, trust,
   - provokes citation,
   - provides a graded system for content engagement,
   - covers different layers of the TA

   It is noteworthy that along with homogeneity and integrity of the system of effective messages and favorable narratives, there can be a high variability of genres and communication conditions. A single idea can be embodied in various forms: digital product and events, video and poster, message and lecture.

2. **Partnership**

   To achieve effective communication, it is necessary to build models and forms of cooperation both between stakeholders and with other potential partners. By expanding the network of potential alliances, we can increase the impact and spread favorable messages.

3. **Multiculturalism**

   In conditions when most vulnerable groups of the TA are outside the country such as in labor migration, the cooperation with other countries and international projects is critical. Despite restrictions imposed on interaction with Western organizations, alternative indirect thematic fields can be used to expand the outreach and impact on labor migrants.

   The high potential for effectiveness will be revealed in interaction and joint work with the media in Russia and Turkey, including with cultural educational organizations and mass media. Due to high cultural and informational gap, many projects implemented in outflow countries and aimed at integrating migrants become ineffective, since they largely influence the local audience. If projects and initiatives are created on bilateral partnership, their effectiveness will increase significantly. The potential for trust among migrant community in such sources will be higher; the presence of expertise, support and participation will increase the strength of impact and can significantly affect the existing risks of radicalization in Russia.

Example

"Don't be silent"

The project aims to address violence domestically, which is indirectly related to the topic of radicalization. It includes anonymous stories from readers, describes incidents of violence, and statistics, advice from psychologists and expertise on the topic.

Pros:
- private story can inspire other people to overcome the challenge.
- creating an environment for communication, mutual assistance and problem sharing with other victims.
- presence of user-generated content has attracted increased attention of the audience.
- gained greater outreach due to applied tips and tools.
- contributed to an open discussion, which resulted in eliminating most negative stereotypes.

Cons: It has no demonstration of positive outcomes.

ANNEX 1

This annex represents the theoretical material for understanding the practical recommendations made to each section in the main communication strategy document. Each section of the annex refers to the corresponding section of the main document and contains the theoretical evidence, goals, and objectives, of Sections 2, 3 and 5, the country context, performance evaluation and risks, and glossary.