



PROJECT
OPEN

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATION PLAN

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1. CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The current forms of Islamic radicalization are increasingly a social threat not only for the consequences of the phenomena of violence implemented, but also for the impact that these behaviors have in terms of distortion of the image and regression in social relations, internal and external to the same community.

According to the research activity developed during the OPEN project, there are complementary sets of motivations that push people to follow radicals behaviors: individual socio-psychological aspects, social conditions, poor links with the Muslims community, poor level of knowledge about Islam, ideological aspects related to political polarization and the concept of **“Us” against “Them”**. In particular, during the analysis violent **radicalization** resulted to be a combination of individual **experiences and social conditions** that generate social grievances.

In this framework, the **main victims** of this phenomenon and its consequences are **young people**. Indeed, they are the ones most at risk of falling victim to the trap of radicalization fed by social and economic isolation and marginalization. In particular, most of the radicals in Europe belongs to **second generation immigrants** and they are **alien to national Muslim religious circles** and theological doctrines in general. Common characteristics of these individuals are solitary activation, resulting from the interweaving of personal suffering and radicalization, of individuals who are not part of organizations, who have never shown any radical Islamist sympathies.

This means that the **following groups or individuals** are particularly susceptible to possible radicalization:

- Young Muslims, who get their world view, their understanding of Islam mainly through Social Media “education”.
- Young Muslims, who are not educated and not connected to an Islamic community.
- Young Muslims who follow a kind of “hyper morality”, often expressed on social media with a simple friend/enemy discrimination.
- Young Muslims who have an idea that Islam is only politics and have lost the idea of a balanced Islam.
- Young Muslims who are confused what kind of (political) engagement is accepted in Europe,
- Young Muslims who feel not at home in Europe and who are the objects of all kinds of identity politics (like nationalism).
- Young Muslims who live under difficult social circumstances

The role of young people in relation to the phenomenon is also confirmed by the evolution of the forms with which radical propaganda is conveyed. Today It uses

the digital channel as one of the tools on which a narrative and recruitment process is launched.

In this framework, and consistently with European policy guidelines, OPEN intends to contribute to fighting this phenomenon through a communication campaign whose objectives are:

- To **improve the critical capacity of Muslim youth** at risk of radicalization against Islamic extremist online propaganda, and to stimulate a cognitive opening between young radical Muslims
- To **increase awareness** and skill of civil society organizations and grassroots movements linked to the Muslim youth network in using new media communication within the strategy to tackling Islamic extremist propaganda and actively participate in the OPEN plan
- To **sensitize the institutions** on the main characteristics of youth radicalization and on the power of online activism with the prominent role assigned to CSOs

2. TARGET AND STRATEGY

The analysis of the context and objectives unequivocally define **three key elements** of the construction of the communication campaign.

The first concerns the **heterogeneity of the target** which can be divided into three macro groups:

- **Young Muslims**, with particular attention to those most exposed to the risk of radicalization;
- **CSO and grassroots movements** committed to supporting the Islamic community to face the phenomenon of radicalization;
- **Decision-makers** entrusted with the responsibility for governing the phenomenon.

The second concerns the **centrality of the digital and new media dimension** as a privileged channel on which to measure the phenomenon and develop an effective response.

The third concerns a **multiplicity of objectives**, which, although converging in the same direction, impose the design of a strategy which in part envisages a differentiation of the interventions.

Given this premise and the results of the research activity carried out in OPEN project, communication strategy is grounded on a **content marketing approach**, i.e. approach aiming to convey valuable contents to attract the target, create relations and push it to a change.

This approach is declined through two levels: (i) **Non-conventional counter and alternative narratives**, if addressed to youth; (ii) **Relational and informative level** for institutional stakeholders.

In both cases, the communication structure is made up with: (i) **one call to action** declined by a multisubject campaign proposed to the reference youth public thanks to (a) digital banners and (b) project social pages; (ii) **Project website**, especially built for OPEN adult and institutional stakeholders.

The strategic prerequisite for OPEN success is the ability to create **trust** and **credibility** towards the actors implementing the campaign and towards its contents. To achieve this crucial trustworthiness, the follow in points are important assets:

1. **The campaign is rooted on a set of information able to outline the social context in which the campaign will act.** This will ensure the ideal conditions for a coherent and effective interaction with the target audience
2. Communication action is going to be **focused on five local areas**: Rome, Nice, Strasbourg, Alicante and Berlin. This will enable the communication actors to act in a more targeted and sensitive way to local needs, sentiments and narratives.
3. Production of the contents of the campaign and the animation of its channels is entrusted to **members of the same community as the target group**. One of the main objectives of this communication campaign is to involve and activate society organizations and grassroots movements linked to the Muslim youth network, as well as young influencers and testimonials belonging to the same community. Young members of the local Muslim communities will become protagonists not only as targets in the action of contrasting and preventing the phenomenon of radicalization, but also as a resource to conquer their peers in their community. Young Muslims of the reference areas will be the ones able to push peers and friends to take actions towards social and political demand for rights and needs, without any use of extremism.
4. Actors in charge of the campaign will be provided with **informative support** useful to increase their skills throughout the campaign. Partner organizations will be trained and will in turn guide local youth volunteers in becoming active nodes of a widespread social editorial tasks.

Contents are another additional and crucial aspect of the campaign. In this context, the narrative style and products aims at creating a story that through testimonies, concrete facts, and comparison of ideas is able to give coherent answers to the OPEN keywords:

- Values and pride of the Muslim community
- Muslim community as an active subject in the promotion of values
- rights and democracy
- respect for differences

- participation and social activism against radicalization and extremism
- new media and fake news
- critical knowledge and maturity
- fight against marginalization as an element of collective vindication and not as an act of individual violence

The key to everything is therefore **storytelling**, i.e. the ability to build a story from the same target community, will stimulate a reaction among young people and the entire Muslim civil society to the phenomenon of extremism. In this perspective, there are many supporting elements on which the narrative structure of the OPEN story rests. A combination of creative, technological, strategic and copy factors that carry out a ponderous process of counter-narration against an extremist, radical, intolerant and violent minority. A small violent group that distorts and mortifies the extraordinary values of a community which today represents almost a quarter of the world population and which according to some demographic projections will become almost 10% of the European population in the next 20 years.

Below are the **16 points** on which the **OPEN storytelling** will be developed:

1. OPEN storytelling will firstly **invite the public** (*call to action*) **to protect** the values of the Muslim community from the emergence of extreme behaviours that undermine its credibility.
2. **The members of the community will shape the storytelling of the campaign.** Indeed, they will share their own real stories and in doing so, they will become ambassadors of the values on which membership in the Muslim world rests. In other words, there will be an overlapping between authors and target audience, avoiding any risk that the solution to the problem may come from outside
3. The **call to action** invites to **participate in the story of its community**. It will be organized on two different creative and executive steps: the first is a static multi-subject product; while the second is an unconventional engagement action, i.e. an invitation to take a picture representing his/her own story/Muslim community and where his/her hands form a triangle.
4. **The engagement** will be summarized and stimulated by a call to take a selfie (or taking a photo of a friend or relative) where the hands form **the triangle**. This geometric symbol represents the digital world: on devices and on social networks it means "**take an action** to see / know/ inquire about something, about someone". In this project it assumes the symbolic meaning of the will to become protagonists of an action aimed at defending one's family and the entire Muslim community from the risk of extremism.
5. The **photographic**, as well as the **video, illustration, graphics** and obviously textual means will be elements that can contribute to the story.
6. The approach will be **open** and **democratic** by offering a space for conversation and listening through OPEN

7. The public will be invited to **participate through concrete, clear and real facts**, trying to create balance rationality and emotion
8. While looking to a wider audience, the focus will be mainly on the local communities selected by the OPEN project, trying to capitalize on all the advantages of a **proximity marketing** approach. It reduces the risk of misalignment and/ or dispersion. of the communication action
9. A **key node** to guide and compose the story will be a **selected group of testimonials**, influencers and opinion leaders who have gained credibility and trust within the community
10. To face and **guide with awareness** and **credibility** the delicate topic of radicalization and the serious impact that extreme behaviours have on the same community, its own member will be called to offer their testimony to people who have directly experienced radicalization process
11. The **social network** channels will be the privileged media to convey the story and involve young people, to which street meetings and Small labs in schools and Youth Centres activity will be developed
12. OPEN communication path will be guided by **local editorial staff**. Each area will have one team devoted to social media activities and one central coordination point for the entire duration of the campaign. This, in addition to local testimonials and opinion leaders, will reduce the risk of going off topic or creating an ineffective communication contents
13. The storytelling communication approach will unfold in a dynamic path lasting 18 months. In this path, **social PR activities will act synergistically with ADV activities**. Indeed, first of all, ADV and PR activities will identify the OPEN public, paying particular attention to the identification of the operators, influencers, testimonials and opinion leaders who will represent the fundamental junction for building a trusting contact with that cohort of young people whose social profile frames them between those at risk. To achieve this, a two-level online direct marketing strategy will be activated: (i) Muslim communities will be reached through the use of the basic tools of geolocation and demographic profiling. Project's partners will identify neighborhoods and places where there is an high concentration of Muslims population. The public will be consequently addressed setting the targeting by location and work sector (e.g. Community and social services Life sciences, physical sciences and social sciences); (ii) The second level of actions will be more defined thanks to a series of advanced tools made available by the platform. Indeed, the implementation on OPEN's website of the "Facebook pixel" tool (ie. a control code of the activities carried out by the user within a website), it will be possible to enables to build a solid "core audience" of people whose interest in the topics covered by the website is mirrored by the time spent on the site monitored by the code. So, this function allows to define the actual display of the website and the time spent by the user, which becomes the "target" of the adv campaign, makes it possible to

reach a higher and more defined profiling level of audience of interest. After this step, the core audience will be improved through another additional advertising tool (i.e. a Facebook proprietary algorithm) that allows to detect the group of people whose online behaviors and profile characteristics are similar to the target already detected. This expanded public will act as a multiplier tool increasing the public awareness concerning the campaign, and will represent a solid base next to the other profiling campaign. Twitter, which will be used mainly as a channel for institutional stakeholders, thanks to its particular advertising platform, will also have the function of intercepting the public of young people interested in certain topics and who follow key people and influencers linked to the Muslim world.

14. A path aiming to strengthening the values of the community and increasing awareness about the contradictions and dangers of radicalism will be planned also through **video interviews**. These videos will decline thematic insights that have emerged as being of particular interest within the local communities. This activity will involve local editors who will collaborate with a team of professionals (operator, photographer, director) to produce a series of 15 video interviews that will be launched online during OPEN campaign.
15. The **cross-media approach** is also used for public of operators and political decision-makers. In this case, the training material and all the production of content will be conveyed online through a web portal and offline through the workshop and conference tool.
16. The "story" that will target operators and political decision-makers will aim to **offer the information and tools** useful to use the new media more effectively to counter extremism behaviours. In this perspective, training materials and narratives of OPEN in the main strategic choices, outputs and results achieved will take on particular importance.

3. FOCUS ON THE CALL TO ACTION

The call to action is based on a *human touch creative approach* and on some key words that form a strong, engaging and memorable campaign *concept*.

The verbs *Stay/ Come/ Live/ Act/ Talk (with us)* invite to participate in a positive destiny for the Muslim community, to share values and stories. To be on the right side. The portraits tell the heterogeneity of the various social and cultural profiles, and enhance their variety and beauty. There is no place or space for radical and violent gestures. Stay with us, to demonstrate to the world, but above all to ourselves, the positive values of the Muslim community and to condemn violence.

This initial phase of the campaign aims to inform about an important initiative that will concern the target of the cities involved through a process of participation, of involvement, of actions aimed at contrasting the phenomenon of radicalization, pushing people to act thanks to the strength of the story and the experiences.

The *call to action* is completed with the invitation to join a sort of virtual flash mob that takes the form of a photo where the hands form a triangle. The triangle created with both hands will become an iconic sign (I am against violence and act accordingly to fight it) able to make the participatory path recognizable, original, relevant and viral.

4. MEDIA CHANNELS

As already mentioned in the previous pages, the different levels on which the campaign operates require a cross-media approach,. Similarly, the context in which it fits and its primary objective, give new media channels, and especially to social platforms, a pre-eminent role.

In this regard, the dense analysis developed before the preparation of this communication plan has guided the choice of Facebook and YouTube as privileged channels for young target. The relationship with operators and political decision-makers will also be animated through twitter.

The website will be the second pillar of online communication. It will be primarily dedicated to operators and policy makers, with the aim of creating a functional space for both dissemination and training activities, thus offering the possibility of accessing all OPEN outputs.

As for the **offline media channels**, the levels on which the OPEN action will be organized are 6:

- **Mutual Learning e training event:** The aim of this task is to train selected staff belonging to OPEN partners on how to carry out activities foreseen in the communication plan
- **5 Workshops for CSOs in Rome, Nice, Strasburg, Alicante and Weimer:** 8 hours of training and about 50 people in each workshop. The workshop will address diverse categories of CSOs and grass root movements with the common power to be online multipliers and credible voices
- **Street education and outreach events:** a series of 3 street meeting events in each city neighborhoods involved in the project where there is a high presence of people with risks of isolation and radicalization or already radicalized. Informal street events are entrusted to each local CSO partner. Locations will be selected by local CSOs partners on the basis of the target audience and the territory. In any case, in these events partners will use face-to-face marketing techniques and informal teaching methods (e.g. games, roleplaying) tested by partners in other successful projects.
- **Small labs in schools and Youth Centers:** This intervention can be classified as “up-stream”, trying to raise awareness and/or influence groups and individuals who are not yet radicalized or at risk at the moment, but could be in the near future. 2 laboratories (3 hours each) will be implemented in each local area, in

schools/youth centers with a good amount of children coming from families at risk of radicalization....

- **Participation to local events:** each local partner will leverage 2 events organized in nearby areas/cities/provinces and able to gather relevant public.
- **Final conference:** a Final conference will be held in Rome, involving representatives from institutions competent for youth, multiculturalism, social integration policies, civil society organizations active in the field of integration and active citizenship, media and representative of the Muslim community. The aim will be to present the main results of the project activities and to promote the sustainability of activities and replicate the use of project's outputs.

5. PRODUCTS

Production of creative material for project identity

- Brand
- Letterhead
- Folder

Production of creative material for ADV campaign

- Creative development - visual and copy - of the communication campaign
- Production of the different formats on which the campaign will be implemented: banners, infographics, memes and electronic-cards
- Creative material for the final conference

Production of storytelling video

- a series of 15 videos interviews

Production of editorial material for off-line activity

- Training material for mutual learning and training event
- Training toolkit for workshops
- Training material supporting the activity in labs
- Informative editorial material to distribute during events: leaflets, Layman's report
- Kit for the preparation of the events: posters, roll-ups, invitation
- Short report in e-book format and 3 infographics to tell the project and its results
- Newsletter
- Press release

Production of web site and social pages

6. EXPECTED RESULTS

A set of quantitative indicators has been developed to monitor the progress of the activities and the achievement of the objectives planned in the OPEN proposal. These indicators have been selected taking into account a set of decisive information: i.e. the expected results described in the proposal, the strategic communication choices outlined so far and the framework emerged in the analysis related to WP2.

A scheduled assessment of the data and a constant comparison between the parties will enable the identification of critical issues and constant updates of the communication strategy.

Below are 10 indicators that will be updated on quarterly basis for the entire course of the communication campaign and the tentative targets that will be confirmed in the monitoring and evaluation preliminary document.

Indicators	Base line	Target	Results achieved (aggregated data)						target rate
			1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter	4 th quarter	5 th quarter	6 th quarter	
N. of Muslim youth at risk of radicalization reached by the OPEN social page	0	20.000							
% Muslim youth which interacted with the campaign	0	30-50%							
N. of post in OPEN social pages	0	150							
N. of unique website visitors	0	200							
N. of website pages visited	0	150							
N. of down load of editorial information and training products	0	2.500-5.000							
N. of member CSOs and grass root movements reached by dissemination;	0	5.000							
N. of CSOs who declare that they are interested in actively participating in Open activities	0	30%							
N. of influencers and testimonials involved in the OPEN campaign	0	15							
N. of institutional stakeholders reached by dissemination;	0	600							
N. of institutional stakeholders interested in actively participating in Open activities	0	20%							
N. views of OPEN video interviews	0	2.000							

6. ORGANIZATION AND WORKTEAM

In the framework of this complex and integrated strategy developed in 4 countries, a manifold set of professionals will be mobilized. The communication activity will be based on an organizational model made of a network of local editorial boards (Rome, Nice, Strasbourg, Berlin, Elche) that will be coordinated by a central editorial board (provided by Ares 2.0).

The **central editorial board** will be represented by the social media strategist, 1 editor and 1 content specialist, 1 advertiser, 1 graphic designer, 1 web developer and 1 social media analyst. They will develop the major communication line that local partner will be able to use as inspiration and adapt to their local needs. Similarly, they will guide and monitor the activity of the local editorial boards, making sure that the editorial line they follow is the most effective measure in light of the most recent responses from the target.

The **local editorial board** will be represented by at least an editor, a communication manager and a group of 5 volunteers/social activists. Overall, each local editorial board will guarantee a social network through at least 3 weekly posts that will increase during the most important moments of the project.

The communication manager will be responsible for the communication at a more local coordination level and will be the contact of the social media strategist of the central editorial board.

The editor will create the editorial plan and single communication contents, He/She will work in constant cooperation with the local communication manager and will create and enhance his/her posts through links with pages, influencers, events and coherent tags. The editor will also guide the activity of the group of volunteers that will support his/her daily work.

The group of volunteers will support the activity of the editor, implementing social media PR in all its diverse forms to disseminate the spirit of the project (e.g. taking pictures for the engagement campaign, moderating the conversations and comments on the social media channels, producing positive networks between the project communication and local leaders or influencers and other coherent communication campaigns).

The local editorial boards will operate in constant synergy under the guidance of the central editorial board. This integration is substantially achieved through a coordination system of between the editorial boards implemented through constant quick messaging and quarterly remote meetings. Each local communication manager will take part in this meeting to report to the central board strategist the results and possibly update the strategy when some difficulties could compromise the achievement of the objectives.

The activity of the editors will be accompanied by the profile of the advertiser (provided at central level) who – using the adv tools - will support the social activity through a sponsorship of selected posts.

Structure of the working teams

Central Editorial Board	
SOCIAL-WEB TEAM	TECHNICAL TEAM
Social media manager Editor Advertiser Social media analyst	Web developer Graphic designer

Local Editorial Board				
ROME	ELCHE	BERLIN	STRASBOURG	NICE
Communication manager Editor 5 volunteers /social activists	Communication manager Editor 5 volunteers /social activists	Communication manager Editor 5 volunteers /social activists	Communication manager Editor 5 volunteers/ social activists	Communication manager Editor 5 volunteers/ social activists

