

# LA BENEVOLENCIJA

Annenberg-Oxford Media Policy Summer Institute - 24 June- 5 July 2013

Presentation RADIO LA BENEVOLENCIJA HTF 25 June 2013

## Using Media to build resilience to dangerous speech in National Populations

- Normal Journalism training in crisis areas to counteract incitement and Hate speech often has the weakness that, despite the best deontological training to journalists, these, often impoverished media professionals are vulnerable to intimidation and can be forced by negative leaders to take part in inciting the population.
- Radio La Benevolencija Humanitarian Tools Foundation (“La Benevolencija”)'s core work uses another approach- **training the audience** instead of only the journalists. It uses the media, with similar methods to those used by propagandists, to embed the knowledge of how to resist those same propagandists in their audience. In this way, it aims to “inoculate” populations from Hate Speech, Mass hate violence and its consequences

Since 2002, RLBHTF (La Benevolencija) has been carrying out a prototype intervention, broadcasting psychological Behaviour change programs against incitement to Mass Atrocity to National Audiences in Rwanda, the DRC and Burundi. A template for similar interventions around the world has been developed and evaluated with surprisingly positive impact results. The organization is initiating similar interventions in Greece and to empower Europe’s Roma in the face of racist attacks.

### ONGOING PROJECTS

#### Rwanda

Since 2003, a prototype campaign has been running in Rwanda, consisting of the soap opera Musekweya (“New Dawn”), the factual program Kuki (‘Why?’) and a countrywide network of grassroots activities embedding the themes of the broadcasts. The show is one of the most popular shows in Rwanda with a reach of 86 % of the population (last survey conducted 2011)

#### DRC

RLB’s use of the prototype methodology in the DRC (start 2006) aims to contribute to repairing the failed state in general by combating scapegoating and promoting positive action (“attaquez les problemes, pas les personnes”), facilitating inter-communal reconciliation and providing trauma assistance to the population in the Kivus. Survey figures here show a reach of 65% of audiences within broadcast areas

#### Burundi

Beside the use of the methodology against hate incitement, the focus of the intervention in Burundi (start 2007) is to help people come to terms with the past by developing a shared history of what happened in the past, dialogue-based governance, an adequate impunity reduction (transitional justice) program and trauma reduction relating to the country’s past conflicts to prevent future acts of violence. Reach: close to 70%.

Regular Evaluations by independent researchers of Yale University, NYU, The University of Antwerp, UMass Boston have shown measurable impact in all countries of broadcast on attitudes and Norms of the population and are available on request.

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### In Development

#### Africa

South Sudan: Peace and state building campaign (in cooperation with CARE NL start May 2013)

#### Europe

Greece: TV & Schools project against extremism & violence (in development)

Roma: Trans-national Project (in development)

### Communication Strategy

- "Edutainment" (Entertain/Educate) techniques are used to provide people with psycho-education to prevent mass violence, address psychological trauma and foster reconciliation.

### Broadcast Media

- Radio, TV, Internet geared to the media most apt to reach target audiences
- Program formats **targeting potential perpetrators** ("Not preaching only to the converted")

### Program Content

- Research-based knowledge to recognise psychological elements used to incite individuals to become perpetrators;
- Know-how on how to resist these elements;
- Trauma treatment techniques to help survivors and recalcitrant perpetrators.

### Packaged into Media Formats

- Soap Opera Series to reach a general audience;
- Debate Program Series to reach opinion & political leaders;
- Other Formats in development: Social Media, Mobile tools, Serious Games etc.

### "Practice" element for Behaviour Change

- The programs serve as stimulators for Grassroots activities that embed campaign content in the audience & mobilize active bystander action.

### Evaluation, Quality Control, Contextualization

- Continued involvement of a board of academic advisors led by genocide scholar and psychologist Ervin Staub and trauma psychologist Laurie Anne Pearlman to incorporate latest psychological research and monitor content.
- Regular independent surveys to evaluate reach
- Regular independent evaluations by recognized experts to evaluate impact;
- Ongoing audience-writer auto-feedback so that campaign messages are tailored to the needs of the audience at hand, be it listeners with little educational background or the intelligentsia;

### Cost

- Interventions in developing world contexts when using Radio Broadcasts & Grass Roots activities as main Behaviour Change Media can be averaged at ca \$ 800.000,- per year
- Interventions in Developed world contexts using Television, Social Media and Class Room activities as main Behaviour Change Media can be averaged at ca \$ 3 Million.
- **Cost/Effect ratio comparisons between such interventions and military interventions to prevent genocide show the advantages of this sort of intervention if used pre-emptively.**

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### The 'Benevolencija Toolbox':

#### Core Prototype:

- (i) "Anti –propaganda" campaign to inoculate audiences as described above (Rwanda, Burundi and DRC)

#### Special focus programs:

- I. "Early Warning" Audience response programming in Burundi, DRC: A large election "early Warning" media campaign that used Benevolencija's psycho-indicators, and reacted to transgressions with a media synergy that broadcast anti-violence sketches, informative programs and debate programs in response. It was widely considered critical in keeping the population from incitement through rampant Hate speech during the 2010 Burundi electoral campaign. In DRC, a special SMS –based service is installed for hate –speech monitoring purposes.
- II. Trauma healing programs: featuring know-how on how to recognize and treat trauma in all three regions.
- III. Transitional justice programs, intended to help the population and its leaders to implement transitional justice processes in Burundi and in the DRC
- IV. Programs on the importance of Memorialization and the creation of a history incorporating the point of view of both sides in cooperation with impunity watch (Burundi)
- V. Sexual violence programs: Programs targeting both victims and perpetrators of sexual violence with information and attitude change programming.

#### CONTACT:

Radio La Benevolencija Humanitarian Tools Foundation  
Leidsestraat 10, 1017 PG Amsterdam, THE Netherlands

T +3120 616 6599

F +3120 330 8155

E: [info@labenevolencija.org](mailto:info@labenevolencija.org)

W: [www.labenevolencija.org](http://www.labenevolencija.org)