

ARK is approaching its fourth year of delivering grassroots strategic communications projects in Syria on behalf of HMG, reflecting ARK's unique Syrian expertise, network, and the strength of its established Syrian communications team in Turkey/Syria.

**Broadcast.** ARK products promoting HMG priorities by fostering attitudinal and behavioural change are broadcast almost every day on pan-Arab channels. In 2014, 20 branded and unbranded Syria reports were produced on average by ARK each month and broadcast on major pan-Arab television channels such as Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera, and Orient TV. ARK's products, from voxpops to animations, electronic news gatherings, public service announcements and other formats, demonstrate unique access in Syria and consistent quality. ARK has built a reputation for accurate and trustworthy reporting. ARK has also broadcast longer documentaries on pan-Arab television: for example, Orient TV repeatedly broadcast ARK's 2014 'Digging for Life', a documentary on Syrian Civil Defence, which additionally received over 200,000 YouTube views. Examples of the impact of ARK's pan-Arab reports include the eruption of anti-regime protests in Saraqeb, Idlib, in 2013, after an ARK report on the indefatigable spirit of a struggling female protestor; protestors chanted her name. ARK has almost daily conversations with channels and weekly meetings to engage and understand editorial preferences. Products are placed at no cost to HMG, while retaining control of content; ARK has even placed other HMG implementers' documentaries on pan-Arab channels. Through this engagement and its Syria media usage surveys (see 2.3.6), ARK has an understanding of channels' editorial preferences and audience, enabling optimal product placement. Subject to donor conditions, paying for broadcast can guarantee optimal placement; some stations have even reversed this relationship and paid 'Basma', an ARK grassroots communications project, for footage. ARK can also target specific audiences through local TV stations. ARK also engages pan-Arab newspapers and websites such as Al Hayat and Asharq Al-Awsat, contributing 10 articles per month, in line with HMG priorities.

**Awareness.** ARK often uses its trusted relationships with broadcasters to bring issues to pan-Arab news agencies' attention, increasing audience awareness of issues of strategic interest to HMG. As one example, ARK-provided footage of ISIL atrocities in Aleppo, in January 2014, was used extensively on Al Arabiya to contextualise panel discussions on the ISIL threat. An extensive network of Syrian grassroots partnerships (see 2.2.13) means that ARK has unique knowledge and in-country access, often connecting international and pan-Arab journalists to grassroots activists and issues in line with HMG priorities.

**Syrian external opposition and grassroots media.** ARK has also used its networks to facilitate links between the Syrian political opposition and grassroots media, building the connectivity and understanding that has been lacking between external representatives and internal constituencies. This has been achieved in a variety of ways: both Basma and Baytna, an ARK civil society project, have organised and hosted meetings between the Interim Government (IG) and grassroots media, a notable example being a conference to discuss Geneva II. Basma has profiled National Coalition (NC) figures, created secure online groups for communication, and raised awareness of opposition press conferences and statements amongst grassroots media, recording and passing on footage where possible.

**Syrian opposition and international media.** ARK has also facilitated contact between the Syrian opposition and international media, seeking to address the perception of an uncoordinated opposition by fostering the image of a united front. Basma's political liaison officer frequently directs and connects international journalists to appropriate opposition figures, while Basma has recorded the activities of both the external opposition and internal political organisations and passed the footage to international media. Examples include the NC's united condemnation of the al-Ghouta chemical weapons attack, and localised governance success stories. The NC Press Office and IG Prime Minister have formally thanked Basma for its contribution, and Basma is regularly invited to film exclusives.