

As part of its Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programming, ARK designed a research-informed strategy to build confidence within communities, remind Syrians of the choices they need to make and draw attention to ISIL's lack of legitimacy, with the objective of building confidence among civilian populations that they can have a future without extremism. This in turn aimed to boost a feeling of collective agency and effect a change in civilian choices and behaviours. Campaign production included a heavy focus on print media to reach grassroots communities; thousands of posters were distributed to ensure visibility, particularly in ISIL-held areas such as Raqqa. Feedback indicates that local communities saw these products and were impacted by them; ARK's M&E indicates that civilians went through various stages of change, as one would expect to see with an increase in confidence. Examples ranged from a Syrian woman bravely spraying unity messages on ISIL property to a group of civilians initiating their own online campaign, entitled "Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently", encouraging other Syrians to post pictures of ISIL's crimes, undermining its claim to legitimacy. Local people co-opted ARK's messages as their own to further shared objectives, indicating the strong resonance of the products.

Nationally, ARK has managed several campaigns to effect positive social change, augment public safety measures, and promote nascent security and justice institutions in liberated areas on behalf of the UK, US, and Danish governments. National chemical weapons poster campaigns were particularly resonant, with mass scale distribution to educate people about the best ways to respond to chemical weapons attacks. Activists even contributed their own money to expand print runs. Feedback from M&E interviews conducted in-country indicated that these kinds of products were particularly salient within communities across Syria which lack information, such as in besieged areas. Similarly, ARK has run both local and national multimedia campaigns in support of the Aleppo Free Police (AFP) and Civil Defence (CD), designed at a local level to build confidence in institutional development and promote a viable alternative to extremists and the regime. Local products included print media, code of conduct cards and radio jingles, as well as video reports aired on pan-Arab media. The AFP reported a 20% increase in recruitment to the force after reports were seen on Al Jazeera.

Regionally, messages are frequently distributed in Arabic across pan-Arab TV, with many targeted specifically at a wider Middle Eastern / Gulf audience to draw attention to the Syrian crisis and to galvanise to action Arab governments. Notably, Basma ran a multi-media women's rights campaign to promote the role of women in the Syrian revolution. It aimed to inspire women's increased participation in the development of liberated areas' administrative structures as well as encourage men's support for such participation. As a consequence of this campaign, a major Egyptian TV channel, ONTV, dedicated a day's coverage to women's rights issues and in doing so broadcast numerous Basma campaign products.

As part of its programming to build a CD capability in Syria, ARK also developed an internationally-focused communications campaign designed to raise global awareness of the teams and their life saving work. As a key part of this campaign, ARK created and continues to run a Twitter feed and Facebook page on behalf of the Syrian Civil Defence teams, posting photos and updates on their activities in English throughout the day. This has received high profile recognition from international websites and commentators, resulting in a number of international TV features and articles on civil defence activities. New York-based advocacy group The Syria Campaign (TSC) reached out to the civil defenders through the Twitter feed, and following subsequent discussions with ARK and the teams, selected civil defence to front its campaign to keep Syria in the news. With ARK's guidance, TSC also attended ARK's civil defence training sessions to create media content for its #WhiteHelmets campaign which launched in August 2014 and has since gone viral. As a result of this campaign and HMG support, two civil defenders have been invited to form part of the Syrian opposition delegation to the UN General Assembly in September 2014.