

Lone Actor Terrorism Communication Framework

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Brooke Rogers, Julia Pearce and David Parker (King's College London)

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1.

1.1 Introduction

This Lone Actor Terrorism Communication Framework is a tool for planning organisation-specific communication targeted at preventing, interdicting, and mitigating lone actor extremist events. This framework will enable you to communicate more effectively with relevant audiences¹ including:

Prevention: 1) Internal staff; 2) Schools and other public institutions; 3) Vulnerable or radicalised individuals; 4) Affected communities; 5) Private sector; and 6) Media

Interdiction: 1) General public; 2) Internal staff and partner agencies; 3) Affected communities; 4) Radicalised individuals; 5) Businesses; and 6) Media

Mitigation: 1) Individuals directly affected by the event; 2) Wider interested public; 3) Internal and emergency response stakeholders; 4) Affected communities; 5) Private Businesses; and 6) Media

This framework is designed to help you to adapt the more detailed information contained in the *D8.1 Communication Measures Review Report* and *D8.2 Communication Requirements Report* (both available at <http://www.fp7-prime.eu/deliverables>) to the needs of your organisation. Overall, it will support your decision-making, enable you to anticipate interdependencies or interference between communication measures to be anticipated, and allow contextual factors to be taken into account when selecting communication measures. It will guide and facilitate the selection, design, adoption, and implementation of communication measures across contexts and recommend criteria for evaluation of the measure's impact. This framework is designed to be used in conjunction with the detailed descriptions of communication requirements for

These include legal, cultural, social, political, and operational constraints that must be kept in mind when identifying stakeholders and outlining a communication strategy. Additionally, the *D8.1 Communication Measures Review Report* identified distinct messaging and communication audience categories for preventing, interdicting, and mitigating lone actor terrorism, and survey research conducted for the *D8.2 Communication Requirements Report* identified public perceptions and attitudes, as well as intended behaviours in response to counter-terrorism messaging.

PRIME research informed the development of this communication framework in other ways, too. Linton (n.d.) argues that adopting a systematic approach to communication should enable you to find out more about the actual attitudes of each communication target group before comparing the results with your communication target. Research reported in the *D8.1 Communication Measures Review Report* provided information on the attitudes and practices of stakeholders with responsibility for the commission, design or implementation of preventions, interdiction or mitigation communication related to extremist events. Additionally, the results of three large national surveys with members of the public in the UK and Denmark, which were conducted to test the impact of existing communication measures for the *D8.2 Communication Requirements Report*, provided insight into public attitudes and intended behaviours in response to communication about terrorist events. While it is more challenging to assess the attitudes of vulnerable or radicalised individuals when designing a communication framework, interviews with stakeholders with experience in the area of preventing violent radicalisation, and a well-established grounding in the academic literature of violent radicalisation go some way to addressing this challenge.

Finally, this framework proposes a systematic approach to the development of prevention, interdiction or mitigation communications about lone actor terrorism. Irrespective of the phase of lone actor terrorism that communicators wish to engage in (i.e. Prevent, Interdict, or Mitigate), there are a number of steps involved in developing an effective communication framework

prevention programmes, encouraging specific action targeted at preventing radicalisation; dissuading specific actions with the potential to lead to greater vulnerability; condemnation of terrorist acts and extremist groups; and encouraging critical thinking from potentially vulnerable individuals (See Table 3.1 in Section 3). Organisations might address a single aspect of these communication categories, though many of the categories could be useful when used together in a statement of purpose. For example, the HM Government (2015) statement of purpose related to the Channel Guidance in the UK explains that:

Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by:

- a. identifying individuals at risk;*
- b. assessing the nature and extent of that risk; and*
- c. developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned"*

This statement is targeted at informing audiences about what the Channel Programme does and how the programme accomplishes its objectives. The Channel Guidance goes on to state:

"Success of the programme is very much dependent on the co-operation and co-ordinated activity of partners. It works best when the individuals and their families fully engage with the programme and are supported in a consistent manner" (p5)

This part of the statement of purpose is targeted at improving understanding of the way in which Channel works, whilst identifying the significant roles played by partners.

Analysis and statement of your current situation:

Second, this stage of the planning process is a useful place to briefly outline what your organisation does, why, with whom, where, and when (NCVO, n.d.). It is important to identify your communication and operational successes, as well as aspects of communication and engagement that have been less successful in the past. A number of tools are

understanding the threat, vigilance, deterring and disrupting threat, and encouraging specific action) with a new branding platform called ACT: Action Counters Terrorism (see <https://act.campaign.gov.uk/>). ACT was designed to address the increasingly complex nature of the threat of terrorism and the need to inform and increase community and public engagement in stopping acts of terrorism. This campaign recognises and attempts to address some of the obstacles and barriers to members of the public reporting suspicious behaviour. In doing so, the Counter Terror Police hope to increase public engagement and reporting of suspicious behaviour by clearly identifying the types of behaviours of concern, clarifying the reporting and investigation process, and providing clear examples of instances where actions taken by members of the public resulted in a successful counter terror outcome: no attack. One example of communication from the ACT Campaign can be found in Appendix 2. The 'At a Glance' Co{of)-1mdlea

Development of relevant messages:

Fourth, you must break down your objectives into relevant messages for each of our chosen audiences. Ensure that messages link back to your core organisational objectives in order to ensure that your audience understand

This led to a range of engagement tools tailored to the needs and interests of their stakeholders and audiences. For example, schools have received teacher training and classroom resources such as lesson plans, parents have received parenting courses, and Madrasahs have received safeguarding toolkits and training targeted at keeping students safe from radicalisation. In summary, the identification of tailored messages often relies on the identification of the unique interests, needs, and concerns of particular audiences. Identifying these interests, needs, and concerns prior to launching a communication framework will enable your organisation to be more flexible in your communication and practical approaches to partnership and engagement.

Identification of the most appropriate channels for communicating with each audience:

The fifth step on the development of a communication framework entails the identification of the most appropriate channels for communicating with your previously identified audiences. Some of these choices will, of course, be dictated by the level of skill, needs, and resources within your organisation. This is fortunate, as each audience is likely to have multiple appropriate communication channels. Once you have identified the channels that you have at your disposal, *'(..) you can begin to construct your communications plan, linking audiences, messages and channels*

advice, changes in behaviour, and more). However it also poses unique challenges for those

The Lone Actor Terrorism Communication Framework

Statement of Purpose

Why have you developed this communication framework?
 What do you hope to achieve with it?
 What are your short-term objectives (e.g. 1-2 yrs.)?
 What are your long-term goals (e.g. 5-10 years)?
 Does your statement of purpose reflect your organisational objectives and goals?
 ○ If not, how will you reflect your objectives and goals in your communications?

E.g. This communication framework will demonstrate how we can more effectively: 1) Communicate internally; 2) Engage with stakeholders; 3) Ensure that different audiences understand what we do; 4) Ensure that different audiences understand why we do what we do; and 5) Change behaviours and attitudes or perceptions where necessary³.

Current Behaviour of Your Organisation

What does your organisation do? (e.g. with whom, where, how, when?)
 What aspect of your work has been successful in the past? Why?
 What aspect of your work has been less successful in the past? Why?
 What has had negative impacts in the past? What were those impacts?
 What has had positive impacts in the past? What were those impacts?
 Can you generate positive case studies?
 Can you generate negative case studies?

Desired Behaviour of Your Organisation

Can you identify practices that need to be reinforced?
 What can you do differently?
 ○ More transparently?
 ○ More efficiently?
 ○ More effectively?
 What can you do in order to address some of the challenges identified in the Current Behaviour block (to the left)?
 ○ E.g. Engage with stakeholders further upstream; design and test pre-event communication and share with stakeholders prior to an event taking place; lobby for a policy change; establish formal s?s? design event policy char

Developing Relevant Messages

Current Behaviour of Target Audience	Desired Response of Target Audience (e.g.)
<p>What services are you offering that might be of interest to your target audience?</p> <p>Is your audience aware of the services that you provide?</p> <p>Does your audience understand your role and your methods?</p> <p>Is your audience using the services that you provide?</p> <p>Is your audience providing the services that you need?</p> <p>Does your audience trust you?</p> <p>Do you understand the aspects of your organisation and services that your audience is interested in?</p> <p>Do you understand the aspects of your organisation and services that make your audience comfortable?</p> <p>Do you understand the aspects of your organisation and services that make your audience uncomfortable?</p> <p>Have your methods, aims and objectives changed? Why?</p> <p>Does your audience believe that you are effective?</p>	<p>Awareness of and uptake of your services</p> <p>Improved understanding of your role and your methods</p> <p>Improved understanding of changes to your role and methods</p> <p>Willingness to share information (i.e. services) or resources</p> <p>Improved trust in your organisation</p> <p>Increased interest in your organisation and services</p> <p>Increased willingness to lobby on your behalf</p> <p>Increased willingness to influence/building bridges on your behalf</p> <p>Positive changes in perception</p> <p>Positive changes in behaviour (e.g. engagement)</p> <p>Increased dialogue and feedback</p> <p>Increased awareness of positive case studies to illustrate effectiveness</p>

Communication Categories & Development of Relevant Messages

Current Media Channels Used by Target Communication Audience(s)

Identify the current media preferences of your communication group. (e.g. Leaflets, posters, radio, television, billboards (electronic and static), E-bulletins, regular meetings with stakeholders, targeted publications, media training for spokespeople, positive press coverage, working groups, training courses, and more)⁵.

Are your messages similar to partner organisations? If so, are you able to pool resources and share platforms in order to expand the reach and improve the impact of your messages?

Are you able to access less traditional channels of communication? (e.g. Peers promoting your messages (Industry expert to Industry expert; Community group to Community Group)

Are there certain times of year where communication is more relevant? (e.g. Consider unique placements of communication during holidays, festivals, and more).

Are you able to create dual communication strategies (e.g. Deter attacks whilst reassuring the public that the area is secure)

Do you have the skills and expertise needed to sustain social media engagement?

Potential Challenges & Solutions

Problems, Limitations and Challenges

Potential Solutions

The D2.6 Context Analysis Report⁶ provides insight into the legal, cultural, social, political, technological, and operational challenges

Evaluating Impacts and Effectiveness⁷

What will you evaluate?

Why are you communicating? (e.g. behaviour change, policy change, repositioning, etc.)

What is your goal (end aim of your effort)? (i.e. 5-10 years)

Identify your objectives (benchmarks/intermediate goals)? (i.e. 1-2 years)

Identify your audience

Establish your baseline (initial data)

Pose your evaluation questions. The answers to these questions should reveal strengths and weaknesses.

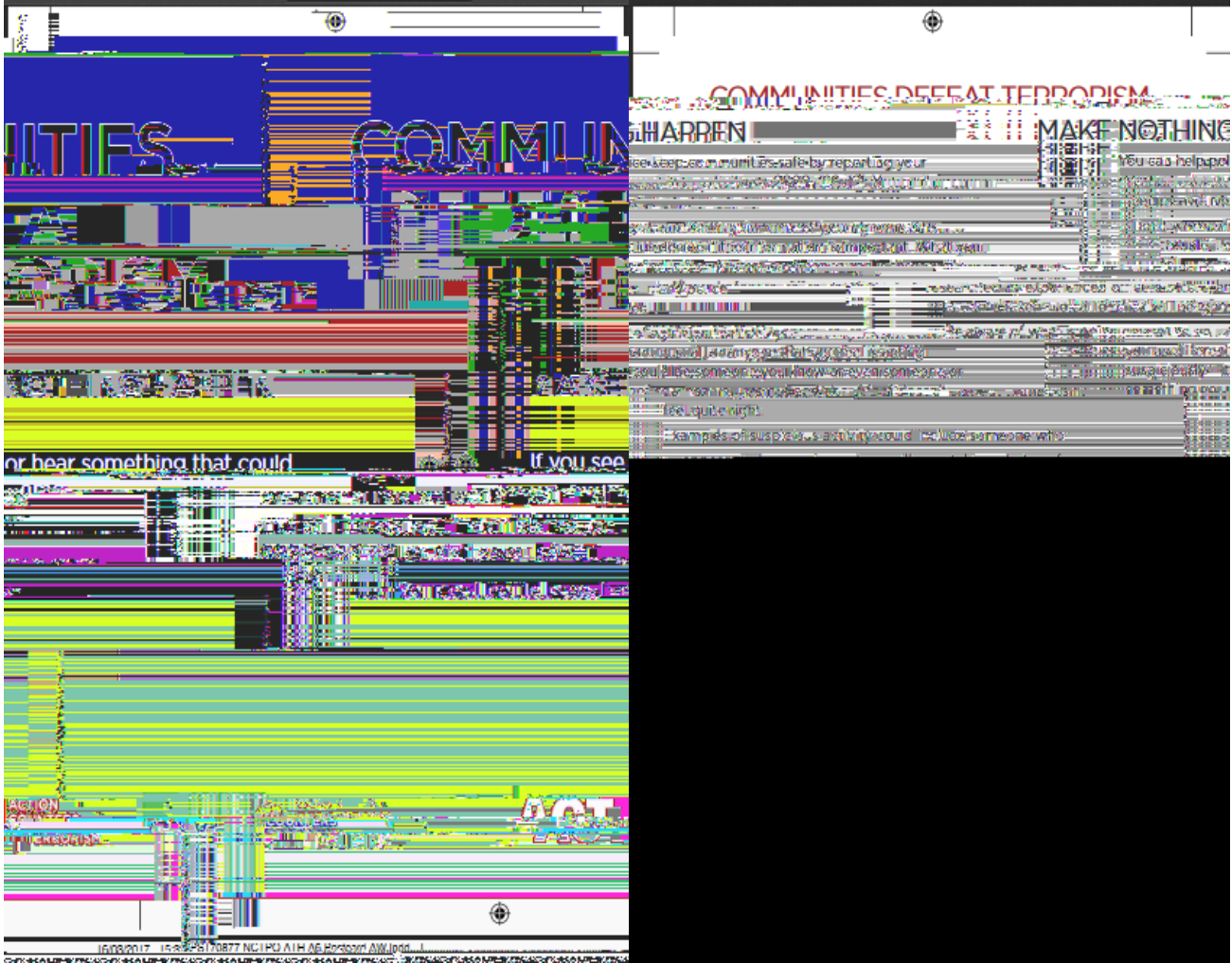
Which measurements will you use?

How will you evaluate the success of your campaign? (e.g. interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc.)

How much budget do you have for this evaluation?

Can you identify potential unintended impacts?

⁷ Adapted from Aisbey et al (2008)



⁸ Retrieved from:
<http://www.npcc.police.uk/ACT%20Campaign/MPS170877%20NCTPO%20ATH%20A6%20Postcard%20AW.pdf>