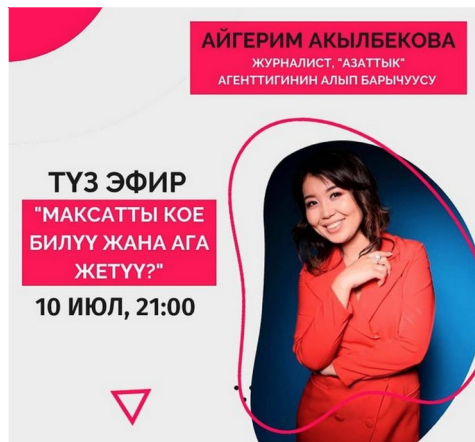


## TaasirLink: Citizen Narrative Campaign

### Overview

Search for Common Ground Kyrgyzstan's [TaasirLink: Citizen Narrative Campaign](#) was a social media and offline campaign which sought to transform mindsets by empowering local communities to engage in learning opportunities. TaasirLink's activities included educational trainings, cultural contests and excursions, sports events, and youth-centric social media to help young people to develop critical thinking and fact checking skills, strengthen the community cohesion, and address youth-specific issues with the intention of reducing the threat of radicalization upon youth. Social media based programming has been instrumental to TaasirLink's success and its resonance amongst youth. TaasirLink's key programmatic feature was its effective use of five thematic campaigns to highlight new skills and important issues such as critical thinking and women's empowerment. By leveraging social media influencers and digital networks, the Citizen Narrative Campaign engaged offline campaign participants while having a much broader impact upon positive mindset change in youth throughout Kyrgyzstan. **You can view TaasirLink's Instagram page [here](#) and final evaluation [here](#).**



### Media Campaigns & Impact

TaasirLink's social media campaign used popular social media platforms, including Instagram, Youtube, Facebook, Whatsapp, and Telegram, to distribute a variety of media content amongst youth through contests, live streams, infographics, and videos.

#### → "I love my village": Improving Sense of Belonging

This campaign highlighted successful people from rural areas of Kyrgyzstan through writing and video contests and posted opportunities for self-development and foster a sense of belonging which resonated well with youth. This campaign successfully reached 71% of the project participants. Influencers, including well-known journalist Aizada Zhamgyrchieva, inspired project beneficiaries by sharing their journeys to success and the importance of contributing to your village.

***One journalist said that they "definitely plan to continue promoting the main ideas of the ongoing media campaign. If they have any videos, I can certainly share them on my pages. On my own behalf, I will also share my opinion; I think that helping people, helping young people, is a good thing."***

#### → "I am Searching. Thinking. Checking": Developing Critical Thinking Skills

Given the role of social media and the internet in the constant distribution of information and news, youth who are actively involved in the digital space have access to an almost infinite amount of information with implications for critical perception and interpretation of the information they access. This campaign emphasized the importance of critical thinking and media literacy in today's world through trainings and workshops in the target communities and the project's social media posts.

***"They explained how a private entrepreneur should run a business, and showed us the direction to take. I use what I've learned in my real life. They told me that you can make money and not just stay home, that you can be equal with men, and that you need to participate in big events. I appreciated it a lot" - Female participant, Saruu.***

→ **“My possibilities are endless”:** Women’s Empowerment

This campaign promoted women’s empowerment by promoting the significant role of women in society and development in the country. This campaign featured well-known women on Instagram to augment development training in business and IT, as well as meetings with influential women from a variety of fields to inspire and motivate women and young girls to pursue their interests.

*“The events helped us understand the youth, understand that women also have many opportunities to improve their knowledge, that they are capable of doing a lot, of being confident in themselves and of succeeding.” - Local influencer, Begabad village.*

→ **“My life is my responsibility”:** Encouraging Proactive Development

This campaign focused primarily on encouraging youth to take proactive action and engage in personal growth. The main feature of this Instagram campaign was a twenty-one-day challenge to encourage positive habit formation like leading a healthy lifestyle and learning languages. Campaign posts promoted opportunities to engage in self-development and motivation with live broadcasts with influencers and in-person motivational meetings with local leaders.

*Amongst surveyed youth, 90% said that they applied the knowledge gained through the campaigns in practice with 55% also indicating that they pursued studied additional material on self-development and similar campaign topics independently.*

→ **“We are one”:** Community Cohesion and Unity

This campaign enjoyed relatively more success through offline events such as sporting events compared to other social media campaigns in TaasirLink reaching fewer participants and had lower engagement. However, this theme appealed to the influencers involved in the project due to its relevance and focus on unity. Especially, as 86% of surveyed participants considered the campaign highly relevant. More than 90% of the participants of the “We are one” media campaign claimed they strongly support its idea and consider that every person should live in unity and strength with their community.

*“I think we need to provide education, to increase understanding on what are the consequences of radicalism. I believe that we should openly discuss this with children. We need to discuss this issue in public, it shouldn’t be hidden.” - Online influencer, rapper.*

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## BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

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### 1. Empowering Influencers & Community Leaders

TaasirLink’s active engagement and production of content with trusted influencers such as journalists, singers, rappers, and community helped build intercommunal trust and solidarity both in-person and in the digital space. **Data from our final evaluation also shows that 86% of the respondents agreed that key influencers had the greatest impact on promotion of the media campaigns in the media.** By leveraging embedded actors, Search effectively engaged youth to participate in the project through a variety of events and interactive social media content. Participants emphasized that the inclusion of local and guest celebrities influenced their willingness to participate in the project and opportunities to interact with influencers had a positive impact on youth regarding broadening attitudes, increased awareness of opportunities, and encouraging positive lifestyle changes.

### 2. Establishing Sustained Engagement

While TaasirLink’s media campaigns were effective in promoting themes amongst project participants, ensuring participants were encouraged to subscribe and actively engage with social media content through targeted advertisement, comments, shares, subscribes, poll features, etc. was important in increasing the campaign’s outreach and further developing relationships with youth. This was critical to

maintaining sustained engagement throughout the campaign. **Consistent engagement can be increased by linking platforms and media such as Youtube and Facebook within innovative Instagram content. Influencers also highlighted that content be posted on platforms such as TikTok given its popularity amongst youth.**

### 3. Encouraging Changes in Attitudes and Beliefs

TaasirLink's campaigns were effective in facilitating positive changes amongst participants particularly in social cohesion, motivation, development of proactivity, changing opinions regarding the role of women in the community and the family, and critical thinking skills. Youth indicated that they now have a better view of the role of youth in society and their development. The campaign events had a strong impact on promoting social cohesion. **Most significantly, 81% of the participants in the final evaluation indicated that they put in practice the acquired knowledge from the campaigns, which indicates the campaign's medium and content were highly effective.** For example, several participants continue to organize competitions with neighboring villages. Others noted that they were inspired to further develop themselves such as writing personal business plans or by pursuing higher education.

### 4. Countering Radicalization Amongst Youth

Influencers noted that although the intention of the project was to promote programming which counters radicalization through positive attitude change, this was not as explicit in the actual messaging. While there are benefits to more implicit messaging, some influencers noted that more open discussions, especially on religion and avoiding radical narratives would be useful to pursue in the future. **Influencers highlighted that there could be changes made to thematic content to effectively counter-radicalization such as: youth migration to other countries; uncertainty for the future after schooling; violence and low awareness of how and where to seek help; and the impacts of culture and upbringing on youth behavior.**

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## OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

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TaasirLink's dual approach, using offline events and online social media campaigns, effectively promoted positive attitude and behavioral change and is replicable for future programming. Based upon social media analysis and feedback, Search identified that future campaigns should expand programming along the following themes of (1) gender empowerment, (2) social cohesion and proactiveness, and (3) critical thinking and fact checking. Although TaasirLink's critical thinking campaign had lower engagement, the **greatest opportunity for future programming lies in developing innovative content in conjunction with media literacy programs.**

**Building upon the innovative content made in partnership with influencers during TaasirLink, expanding programming to increase the role of influencers and integrating them high-demand self-development courses can further increase youth engagement and learning.** Young adults were especially responsive to events and social media content which promoted development and learning through relevant skills such as IT training. Expanding this type of content also increases program sustainability as the events and content served not only as a vehicle for personal development, but also for shared community development as they shared skills with others in their community.

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## QUESTIONS?

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**TaasirLink: Citizen Narrative Campaign**

For more information, please visit:  
[www.sfcg.org](http://www.sfcg.org)

[DMEforPeace.org](http://DMEforPeace.org)