

# Community Radio Station Challenges Extremism



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## Challenge

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Living under extremist control, residents of a major city found themselves terrorised and silenced. Widespread propaganda and brutal intimidation campaigns quashed dissent and sowed discord by capitalising on long-standing grievances. A media blackout left locals powerless, uninformed and vulnerable to a violent ideology. After extremists were driven out, the city faced the daunting task of rebuilding not only infrastructure and institutions, but the community as a whole.

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## Solution

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IN2 supported a community radio station that gave trapped residents a voice and a line to the outside world. In stark contrast to violent rhetoric from extremist media — which had sole control of the airwaves — the station provided listeners with credible information and entertainment programming which had been banned. Run by a small team of local activists, the station broadcast ‘citizen reporting’ from brave locals and phone-in shows that allowed residents to freely discuss their grievances.

Years later, the station and its digital platforms are the community’s most trusted source of news and information. Civic engagement drives programming, which tackles issues such as community rebuilding, reconstruction and humanitarian challenges. Government officials respond to community concerns and engage directly with citizens live on air — a rarity in the region. The station is a ‘go to’ resource for live coverage of major events, including eyewitness accounts from callers. Coverage of grassroots initiatives amplify resilience efforts, whilst media awareness campaigns with government and international partners educate the public.

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## Results

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- The radio station is the most recognised among listeners and has the most loyal audiences, an independent international survey of audiences found.
- Over 90% of respondents said they trust the station.
- Hundreds of locals call or text the station daily.
- 1 million+ social media audience.
- Live-streaming online reports draw audiences of up to 20,000.
- Youth audiences, the largest demographic in the region, have the highest participation rates.
- The radio station, which has been broadcasting for nearly five years, is a key pillar in society, connecting, informing, entertaining and educating its listeners. It currently employs approximately 30 staff in a region where unemployment is rife, and where the population is in desperate need of credible and trustworthy media that represents their views.
- The station receives support from volunteers, as well as funding from a number of international and local NGOs and the local community. It also generates its own advertising revenue.

