



Case Study: Breakthrough campaign Bell Bajao!

Breakthrough is an India and U.S.-based international human rights organization that mainstreams discussions about violence against women and girls, and its relationship to HIV/AIDS, by harnessing the power of pop culture, media and community mobilization to inspire people. Breakthrough's campaigns use popular multimedia message formats including billboards, music videos, print ads, radio spots, Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and internet channels such as blogs and online video games.

In 2000, in just its first year of existence, Breakthrough released a music album with music videos – *Mann ke Manjeere: An Album of Women's Dreams* – that was highly acclaimed and remained on India's top ten charts for six months. The album explored a mother and daughter's escape from domestic violence (DV) and other themes that challenged cultural taboos and stereotypes. Its popularity demonstrated that a mass audience could, and would, embrace music with a social change, human rights message.

Following the album's success, Breakthrough launched two campaigns – *What kind of man are you?* (2005) and *Is this Justice?* (2007) – on domestic violence and HIV/AIDS respectively. The multimedia campaigns focused public attention on the connection between violence and HIV/AIDS, and the stigma and discrimination faced by women living with HIV. They also promoted male responsibility and condom use to prevent the spread of HIV, spotlighting the fact that out of the 2 million women in India infected with HIV/AIDS, most contracted it from their husbands. Communications tools used included print ads, radio spots, in-theatre PSAs and billboards, all of which have since been translated into seven languages. The campaigns reached 75 million people and prompted more than 8,000 text messages and other inquiries to Breakthrough's anonymous query hotline.

Access the "*What kind of man are you?*" multimedia [campaign](#).

See the "*Is this Justice?*" multimedia campaign against HIV discrimination [evaluation](#).

Bell Bajao! – Ring the bell!

Breakthrough launched its Bell Bajao! campaign in 2008 to call on men and boys across India to take a stand against DV, by performing a simple bystander intervention – ringing the door bell when they witnessed DV taking place. The campaign's integrated cultural, organizing and media strategy sought to make the issue part of mainstream conversation; increase knowledge about and change community attitudes towards DV and towards HIV-positive women; and alter individual behaviour. By the end of the three-year campaign, through their PSAs on television, radio and print, their online multimedia campaign, educational materials and travelling video vans, over 130 million people had been reached. In addition, more than 75,000 rights advocates were trained to become agents of change – their combined efforts resulted in a 49 percent increase in the number of people aware of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act in India, and a 15 percent increase in access to services for survivors.

At the 2010 [Clinton Global Initiative](#) annual meeting, a commitment was announced to expand Bell Bajao on a global scale in 2011. In addition, as part of the UNiTE Campaign to End VAW, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has [publicly endorsed Bell Bajao](#).

Access the [Bell Bajao/Ring the Bell](#) Campaign.

A multi-pronged campaign approach

Bell Bajao's campaign approach integrated the use of mass media, with community mobilization tools and leadership development training. These activities often occurred in tandem or overlapped, helping to reinforce their effectiveness and solidify the campaign message in people's minds.

While the campaign's mass media strategy focused on initiating community action and responsibility by "interrupting" DV, the grass roots community mobilization component emphasized the right to negotiate for safer sex, the right to residence, the Protection of Women Against Domestic Violence Act of 2005, access for women to health and legal services, and increased dialogue and participation within the community, especially among men, on preventing violence, stigma and discrimination faced by women living with HIV/AIDS (WLHAs).

The following were key components of the campaign's overall approach:

- **Message development:** (*using formative research and learning from past campaigns*)
The campaign's core message was conceptualized out of extensive formative research, and from learning gained in previous campaigns. For example, while men were featured mainly as perpetrators of violence in previous campaigns, the emphasis in Bell Bajao was to highlight their role also as thought leaders, partners and an integral part of the solution to reduce violence. In addition, evaluations of previous campaigns found that Breakthrough's nuanced messaging (combining HIV/AIDS and VAW) was too complex to be absorbed by mass audiences. Instead, a broad and easily understood message about domestic violence should be the focus, while other nuances could be secondary and woven into community training activities. Further research, including through a baseline survey of public attitudes towards DV, showed that people rarely took action when they noticed DV occurring, and that both men and women equally, were likely to take action, while men tended to take the lead in intervening if they did take action. This helped refine the campaign messaging even more, resulting finally in the simple, direct message '*Bring domestic violence to a halt. Ring the Bell.*', with a key target audience being men and boys.
- **Strong media partner support:**
Breakthrough was successful in obtaining pro-bono services from a leading global ad agency – Ogilvy and Mather – which was responsible for producing all the creative communications products in different media formats for the entire campaign. The partnership with the agency was a win-win situation in several ways: it helped to significantly defray campaign communications costs, while also meeting the agency's corporate social responsibility mandate, and allowing Breakthrough to educate its personnel on VAW issues.
- **Wide range of communications tools and techniques:**
 - **Message testing:** The campaign message was tested among three different socio-economic categories of people in New Delhi, based on occupation status and education. Positive feedback was received regarding the efficacy of the "ring the bell" message, especially from low- and middle-income viewers. Unlike the upper-middle income segment, both these groups said they would be more open to intervening in cases of domestic violence. Given this mostly positive feedback, and taking note of the types of viewers who would possibly "ring the bell," Breakthrough moved ahead with the ad concepts for the campaign.
 - **Clear dissemination strategy:** The dissemination strategy for Bell Bajao was determined after examining media viewership and the base line survey. Using the opinion-research data, Breakthrough determined that the best platforms and channels for the campaign would be news channels, sports channels, general entertainment channels, as well as Doordarshan, the government-owned national television network.

- **Television, radio and print ads:** PSAs (inspired by true stories) depict men and boys who hear men shouting, women crying and objects falling – indicating incidence of domestic violence. They find an excuse to interrupt the violence by ringing the doorbell and asking the abuser who appears in the doorway for a small, unrelated and unnecessary service. It is clear to the audience that the bell-ringer is just doing it as an ‘excuse’ to intervene, to halt the violence. See [PSA “software engineer”](#).
 - **Video Vans:** Mobile vans broadcasting the campaign PSAs allowed youth advocates to engage directly with individuals and encourage community involvement and participation through games, puppetry, street theater and quizzes.
 - **“Earned” media coverage:** This was an important element of the communications plan to generate greater exposure and impact for the campaign in local and national media sources. Breakthrough hired a small PR agency to pitch editorials about VAW and the campaign, and actively solicit media outlets to cover campaign activities.
 - **Celebrities:** The support of several high-profile celebrities was obtained to endorse and generate publicity for the campaign. These included Boman Irani (actor), Javed Akhtar (lyricist) and Akki Narula (fashion designer) among others. See [video of Boman Irani](#), ambassador of the campaign, calling for action.
 - **Interactive website:** <http://bellbajao.org/> provides a platform for the campaign audience to dialogue about domestic violence. Resources include information for violence survivors and a toolkit for community mobilization with videos, campaign posters and step-by-step guidance on training others on preventing domestic violence. A Google map feature also provides information about national, regional and local service providers.
 - **Online presence:** Besides its website, Breakthrough also worked with internet partners to develop an online platform that included a blog, pages on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, video feeds through YouTube, and an interactive 3-D game.
- **Community mobilization:**
Education and training tools and community activities were developed simultaneously with the media outreach strategy. A Rights Advocates Programme (RAP), an intensive leadership development and capacity building initiative (targeted at young people) was rolled out in 14 districts in Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka, alongside training activities on community education and women’s rights. Breakthrough also identified community partner organizations who would perform outreach and mobilization to deepen the reach of the campaign and cultivate a sense of ownership of the campaign at the grassroots level.
Advocates were trained to perform street theatre, hold public discussions and lead other activities to attract crowds of people.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

A range of M&E techniques was used in the Bell Bajao campaign to assess the extent to which the campaign met its goals to change individual behaviour, initiate public dialogue about the issue of VAW, and change the ways in which the issue is framed in broader society. Regular feedback through M&E activities helped to further refine and sharpen the campaign, and provide organizational learning.

Breakthrough drew on both in-house and external evaluators to monitor and evaluate Bell Bajao. Quantitative tools best captured the media impact of the campaign – for example, numbers of audience members reached, which type of media message and platform were most effective, what shifts in knowledge happened as a result of the campaign. Qualitative techniques were devised to capture deeper knowledge about attitude and behavior change.

A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework, composed of three main components, was used:

- **Formative research:**

A baseline survey was conducted to gather state-specific information on gender-based violence, domestic violence, women's rights and related legal provisions (Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005). In addition, the baseline recorded the target audience's media habits, and the information sources they used and preferred. Secondary data sources were also used eg. from the WHO and the National Family Health Survey in India.

[Download the Baseline Survey on Domestic Violence and HIV/AIDS.](#)

- **Monitoring:**

The indicators or 'markers' measured at the baseline were used to create a benchmark, monitored at an interval after the launch of the campaign and then again at the end to gauge the impact of the campaign as a whole. Concurrent monitoring involved both quantitative and qualitative tools. For e.g., a rapid assessment survey was applied in two waves (after each media burst) measuring exposure to and impact of campaign messages in terms of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. The 'Most Significant Change Technique' (MSCT) was used to collect stories to indicate behaviour change resulting from particular interventions. In-depth interviews were conducted with partners to assess the extent of their ownership of the campaign and the issue of VAW. In addition, an attempt was made to examine the differential impact of education and media interventions through a control group technique – two districts were picked for comparison, one that had both media and education components, and the other with only media.

[Download the Rapid Audience Assessment Survey Report.](#)

[Download the Most Significant Change Stories Report.](#)

- **Evaluation:**

Breakthrough's evaluation study focused on two districts in each of the designated intervention states of Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. 1590 men and women (from a target audience of 15-49 years of age) were surveyed at the conclusion of the campaign to identify changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors as a result of it. A case group consisted of those who experienced both the educational and media components of the campaign, and a control group of those who experienced only the campaign's media components.

To conduct the campaign evaluation, data gathered at the outset of the campaign, and then at intervals as it progressed, was used together with the endline assessment. In addition, Breakthrough also used 'audience reach' measurement tools to identify the numbers and demographic information of people reached. These tools included data provided by Television Audience Measurement (TAM), the National Readership Survey, Nielson ratings, as well as Google Analytics and Google Adwords to assess website viewership. Audience reach was also measured via the depth and breadth of online participation on blogs, social networking sites, and through the number of campaign materials (media and curriculum products) distributed and downloaded, and used by others such as civil society groups, educational institutions and government agencies.

Important findings from the evaluation:

- 97% of survey participants reported an awareness of domestic violence. Specifically, 99.5% of those who experienced the educational and media aspects of the campaign (case group) reported an awareness, compared to 94.5% of those only exposed to the media aspects (control group).
- At baseline, only 3% of those surveyed were aware of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act. At endline this number increased to 21% in the case group, and 8% in the control group.
- At endline a significantly higher proportion of respondents reported understanding that emotional abuse, threats, economic deprivation and sexual abuse are also forms of DV. Further, a significantly lower proportion of respondents identified DV as dowry-related harassment.

- There was a marked decrease (9%) in respondents who felt that women should remain silent when experiencing domestic violence. Correspondingly, there was also an increase in responses suggesting that women should take legal action (90%), and a decrease in responses suggesting that women just live with it or commit suicide.
- There was a significant increase in discussion of issues such as DV, rights of HIV-positive people, the right to residence, safe sex, and the stigma and discrimination experienced by HIV-positive people.
- Case group respondents were more likely to report coming across cases of DV (47%), especially among female respondents (69%). This could possibly be because they are more aware of what DV is and can therefore more easily identify such incidents. Interventions to stop domestic violence recorded at endline were restricted to counseling (51%), speaking to both parties involved (51%), speaking to the aggressor (46%) and to the survivor individually (39%).
- Television proved to be the most effective and far-reaching dissemination tool, with radio and print ads being effective only in certain areas; video vans were enthusiastically received by the public, and a good means of involving young people, and sustaining community engagement over a two year period.
- The most common learning from the television ads was that “one can stop domestic violence without saying anything to the aggressor” and that “one should make efforts to stop domestic violence”. What was considered an eye-opener for many was that a person could interrupt DV “giving any trivial reason” – this concept of ‘interrupting’ DV resonated loudly with the target audience in general.
- The campaign website reached millions of people judging by hits, comments, downloads and other interactions.
- At endline, about 17% of survey participants knew about Breakthrough as an organization compared to only 0.2% at the beginning of the campaign.
- Importantly, evidence that the campaign began to resonate in popular culture mediums was shown when it was featured on a popular television soap opera series, and as a question and answer on India’s ‘Who wants to be a millionaire?’ television game show.

Lessons learned

- **Resource mobilization:** The depth and breadth of the campaign, and its heavy focus on communications meant that raising sufficient resources was a challenge. During the economic downturn in 2009, it proved especially difficult – e.g. television channels were reluctant to give discounts, and free airtime was hard to secure. In addition, the many languages spoken throughout India required translation of the communications materials which increased production and dissemination costs. The campaign was also labour-intensive – interactive platforms such as video vans and the campaign’s online presence required significant staff time to manage, as did the extensive planning and logistics necessary to coordinate large numbers of campaign stakeholders and target audiences.
- **Defining roles and responsibilities of partners:** Breakthrough used Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to clearly spell out the terms of its collaboration with partners, and ensure their buy-in to the overall campaign. The MOUs used were ‘long-term contracts’ to ensure that the campaign’s efforts would be sustained over a considerable period of time.
- **Community mobilization:** Effective engagement of the community requires at least two to three years of sustained effort – knowledge and skills may be built more rapidly, but behaviour and attitudinal change requires time. Community mobilization activities also needed significant financial and human resources, which were a challenge to raise. Promoting the concept of voluntarism and building ownership, especially without providing any monetary support to local groups or community members, was difficult, particularly since people viewed Breakthrough as an outsider that was well resourced.

Comprehensive information on the campaign, including a [downloadable toolkit](#) for campaigners, is available on the [website](#). See also the campaign [videos](#).

