



THE POWER OF VOICE

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Metropolitan Group crafts strategic and creative services to amplify the power of voice of change agents in building a just and sustainable world.

Our Anti-Corruption Approach

Utilizing social and behavior change (SBC) to counter corruption is a critical approach that can shift enablers and drivers of corruption and impunity; and change the attitudes and beliefs that reinforce corrupt practices and behaviors. Metropolitan Group is working to build a body of evidence that highlights the potential of SBC approaches to more effectively counter various forms of corruption worldwide. Our work requires understanding local trends and dynamics that are culturally and politically specific. We are innovators in co-creation approaches that engage local knowledge and expertise while building the SBC capacity of our local partners. Our diverse experiences have included assessing the use of SBC in anti-corruption initiatives in Guatemala, Malawi, Mexico, Moldova, and Tanzania; addressing systems of impunity related to violent crime and human-rights abuses in Mexico; and conducting deep research into corruption-related narratives that bolster authoritarianism.

About Metropolitan Group/Impacto Social Metropolitan Group

[Metropolitan Group \(MG\)](#) is a global small business and a [Certified B Corp](#) that specializes in narrative change and strategic communication to create lasting and sustainable impact for people and communities. At MG, we design and implement social and behavior change (SBC) initiatives, work to shift narratives, build capacity of local partners, and conduct and disseminate actionable research. Since 1989, we've worked to directly impact social change in two core ways: 1) by creating strategic campaigns and initiatives that change enabling environments—including attitudes, behaviors, practices, policies, and mindsets/expectations and 2) by building the capacity and resilience of institutions and organizations that drive social change. MG and its Mexico City-based sister company, [Impacto Social Metropolitan Group \(ISMG\)](#), work with national, state, and local governments, foundations, NGOs, and private sector partners.

We have worked in more than 30 countries on five continents, including Africa, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and Southeast Asia. Our in-house staff in Mexico and the U.S. includes multiple bilingual speakers (English and Spanish), as well as staff who are professionally proficient in French, Portuguese, and Swahili.

MG began working with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2021 as a subcontractor to multiple prime contractors for activities related to SBC, strategic communication, and narrative and message creation, as well as direct technical assistance and capacity building for partners across multiple regions. Throughout our activities, we prioritize our commitment to localization as a critical force for creating resilient change.

We offer a range of services within three integrated practices:

- **Strategic Communication and SBC**—SBC strategy development and implementation; narrative and strategic messaging design and testing; stakeholder mapping and engagement; formative research; audience research; policy and public sector transformation initiatives, social marketing campaigns; branding, digital strategy, and human-centered design; SBC training and technical assistance
- **Intercultural Engagement and Social Inclusion**—creation of strategies and tools designed with cultural context, language nuance, and appropriate literacy levels; stakeholder assessments; equity, diversity, and inclusion-facilitated training; co-creation and nontraditional/locally centered evaluation and assessments
- **Organizational Strategy and Innovation**—change management; strategic planning; capacity building; training; leadership development; and technical assistance

Local capacity building is integrated across all three of our practice areas to ensure increased resiliency of the changes achieved, increased opportunity for scaling and replication, and supported localization.

SBC Experience and Methodologies

MG/ISMG is an innovator in designing and piloting SBC activities and social and behavior change communication (SBCC) related to democracy, human rights, and gender equality, as well as in sustainable development/climate mitigation and global health. SBC methodologies and tools are critical in reshaping the enabling environments that can advance policy, institutional, cultural, and individual changes. MG specializes in SBC at the structural levels and integrates individual behavior change to advancing systemic change. Our approach includes developing, testing, and applying narratives and messaging that aligns with people's closely held values to create long-term shifts in mindsets and social norms. Our expertise in [public will building](#) and [narrative change](#) methodologies and locally driven approach are highly effective in shifting deeply entrenched behaviors that are related to social norms, beliefs, and values. MG is deeply versed in all stages of SBC research, analysis, assessment, design, iterative implementation, and learning capture and dissemination.

Client Examples

USAID

MG was commissioned by the USAID Anti-Corruption Task Force (ACTF) to conduct research on the use of SBC approaches to address social norms and behaviors related to corruption, and develop recommendations on how SBC approaches might be used to improve current and future anti-corruption activities. Our final report, [Countering Corruption Through Social and Behavior Change](#), presents the findings identified through a review of five anti-corruption initiative case studies that utilized some SBC approaches or elements. MG found that the use of SBC to change behaviors, attitudes, and norms related to corruption is still a nascent approach and is often poorly understood and underutilized. There is an opportunity to demystify this approach among anti-corruption implementers and partners to help them identify where they are already utilizing SBC elements, where more robust elements and approaches may be appropriate or useful, and how to analyze these impacts on key norms and behaviors.

MG has also collaborated on multiple additional USAID-funded projects, research activities, and SBC activities with the Bureau for **Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG)**, including:

- Developing **strategic messaging for democratic values**, including a multi-country global scan of narratives that either legitimize authoritarianism or advance democracy and the development testing and refinement of effective, evidence-based pro-democracy narratives and messaging.
- Designing, building capacity for, and launching a comprehensive **SBC campaign and new narrative to advance the rights of women agriculture workers** in Tunisia.
- Supporting **strategic communication and messaging for Exploratory Programs and Innovation Competitions (EPIC) and Development Innovation Ventures (DIV)**.
- Supporting **strategic communication capacity building for Defending Civic Space in Mexico (under LACLEARN)**.
- Supporting **learning workshops and Technical Assistance (TA) on democratic narratives** in Latin America.
- Providing **strategic communication on justice reform** as part of ConJusticia with the Mexico Mission (alongside ISMG).

Ford Foundation

In Mexico, ISMG partnered with civil society organizations, policymakers, and influencers to create and apply a groundbreaking SBC initiative to counter corruption and impunity. It focused on addressing severe human rights abuses, including forced disappearances, femicide, murder of journalists, and state-sanctioned torture. Through innovative stakeholder mapping and deconstruction of dominant narratives that advance impunity, ISMG designed a new metanarrative that activates core values and engages citizens as part of an effort to build a more trusted judicial system. The initiative has engaged millions and mobilized thousands through activities that counter disinformation and corruption and promote justice, the rule of law, and civil



society activism. National polling has indicated growing alignment with the new narrative and indicator shifts on the issue of human rights.

Humanity United

We worked with a consortium of research partners to map salient migration narratives across five country case studies and published our findings in a report titled [“How We Talk About Migration: The Link Between Migration Narratives, Policy, and Power.”](#) The research mapped and analyzed similarities in migration narratives in very different political and cultural contexts, and highlighted how migration narratives are increasingly weaponized to advance a range of anti-immigration political agendas. In follow-on work, we examined root causes of migration, including the impact of violence and conflict on communities in Central America, and we published [“Migration Narratives in Northern Central America: How Competing Stories Shape Policy and Public Opinion in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.”](#)

Key Team



[Eric Friedenwald-Fishman](#)—SBC innovator: creative director/CEO/founder, MG/ISMG

As creative director, Eric drives strategy development for MG/ISMG. He is an innovator in using values-based SBC methodologies to create resilient changes in social norms, policies, practices, and behaviors. He is an expert in analyzing and developing narratives. In addition, he developed the [Public Will Building](#) model. Eric has worked to counter corruption and impunity, address hyperpolarization, strengthen democratic institutions and good governance, counter violent extremism, and reduce hate crimes. Clients include USAID, NASA, U.S. Forest Service, Ford Foundation, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



[Haim Malka](#)—international policy expert: executive vice president, MG

Haim works on a global portfolio of behavior change and strategic communications campaigns, with an emphasis on countering authoritarianism. He spent nearly 20 years as a nonpartisan international affairs researcher and analyst focused on the intersection of political, economic, and security trends in North Africa and the Middle East before joining MG in 2019. During that time he examined numerous issues, including the impact of corruption, environmental changes, and other understudied trends on social cohesion and political stability. At MG, he has led work with NASA, Humanity United, and numerous USAID activities focused on how narratives shape the information ecosystem and perceptions of democracy.



[Rodolfo Córdoba Alcaraz](#)—social justice co-lead: executive vice president, ISMG

With 20 years of experience, Rodolfo has created social and behavioral change initiatives and strategies to advance democracy, civic space, good governance, and human rights in the Americas, Europe, and Africa by applying a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens. He leads the efforts in Latin America. Before joining ISMG, he served in numerous strategic leadership positions, including deputy director at the Foundation of Justice and Rule of Law in Mexico. He has served as senior consultant for the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the UN Migration.



[Erin Bloom](#)—anti-corruption expert: senior director, MG

Erin is an international legal and policy expert with experience in peace negotiations, fragile and transitional states, systems of corruption and accountability, and public safety and security. Prior to joining MG, Erin served as a technical legal advisor to the Syrian opposition delegation for the 2016 and 2017 Geneva peace talks. She has also worked extensively on crime and gun violence reduction efforts in multiple U.S. cities and is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. She has worked with USAID on several SBC activities, including anti-corruption and democratic narratives.





Alejandro Vélez Salas, Ph.D.—human rights research expert: vice president and Mexico City lead, ISMG

Alejandro leads stakeholder research and mapping, technical assistance, peer-learning design, and social media listening programs, with a focus on anti-impunity and corruption and rule of law. Prior to joining MG, Alejandro edited the website of Nuestra Aparente Rendición, a CSO that works to understand and counter state-sanctioned violence in Mexico. He has studied forced disappearances; edited the book, “Tú y Yo Coincidimos en la Noche Terrible,” which compiled the life stories of murdered and disappeared journalists in Mexico; and works as a partner for relatives of missing persons in Mexico.

MG/ISMG has a [full team of 50-plus](#) experts and practitioners that includes communication and policy specialists; researchers; narrative change, anti-corruption, and SBC experts; gender equity and inclusion leaders; multilingual facilitators; innovators in visual communication; design and digital strategists, etc.

Contract Vehicles

We hold the General Services Administration (GSA) Professional Services Schedule, and are a leading partner with The Cloudburst Group under USAID’s Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Bureau’s Learning, Evaluation, and Research III Task Order. We are a resource partner on USAID’s Digital APEX mechanism, managed by Vistant. We have joined teams on Analytical Services IV for LACLEARN and SEGA tasking, and we are a subcontractor to DAI for Mexico’s ConJusticia contract.

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Schedules

541-2: Public Relations Services
541-4a: Market Research and Analysis
874-1: Integrated Consulting Services

Contact

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GSA Number

GS-07F-0224X

NAICS Codes

541430, 541611, 541613, 541618, 541720,
541810, 541820, 541830, 541840, 541890,
541910, 541990

Procurement Designation

Small Business

