



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.

Conflict and Violence Prevention

Utilizing social and behavior change (SBC) to reduce and prevent violent conflict is a critical approach to countering weaponized, dehumanizing narratives and norms that legitimize violence and spark conflict. SBC and narrative change can also contribute to de-escalation and reconciliation. Effective and resilient narrative change requires understanding local dynamics, dominant narratives, and closely held values. We are innovators in co-creation approaches that engage local knowledge and expertise while building the SBC capacity of our partners. Our diverse experiences have included supporting international negotiations in Syria; leading communications for families of the “disappeared” in Mexico; profiling foreign fighters in Syria and Libya; conducting deep research on drivers of violent extremism; addressing hate speech and other drivers of grievance based violence; and designing numerous analytic and programmatic interventions focused on violence and conflict reduction and prevention.

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, Gender 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

Ford Foundation

In Mexico, ISMG partnered with civil society organizations, policymakers, and influencers to create and apply a groundbreaking SBC initiative 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.

USAID

As part of the Violence and Crime Prevention in Mexico project, we designed an SBC campaign in seven municipalities in as many states to communicate and engage key stakeholders around the Problem-Oriented Policing Approach. In all the municipalities in which it was implemented, there was a decrease in specific violent and non-violent crimes, including residential, commercial and pedestrian robbery, vehicle theft, among others. In 4 of them there was an overall reduction in all crimes at a rate of between 6 and 69%. An important outcome of this project was the improvement in the way government agencies managed and shared information between areas and with other agencies.

MG is currently collaborating on multiple USAID-funded projects, research activities and SBC activities with the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG). Our work with USAID includes a 10-country global scan of narratives that advance authoritarianism and undermine democracy that provide a body of evidence and data for more effective democracy interventions. We have also worked with USAID to design a SBC campaign in Tunisia to support women agriculture workers; an assessment of SBC efficacy to combat corruption; and a SBC toolkit to support women's participation and leadership. Additionally, MG's counterpart in Mexico, ISMG is working with DAI and Chemonics on USAID activities, providing strategic communication and technical assistance on justice and crime prevention projects in Mexico.

Gender Based Violence

[Sin Miedo a Ser](#) is a SBC campaign driven by civil society organizations and collectives led and integrated by women in all their diversities, that aims to build more safe spaces for all. The campaign seeks to recognize, make visible and amplify the struggles of diverse women, where memory, truth, justice and reparation are axes to live free of violence. Through stories of women with diverse identities, coming from different social groups and living in multiple contexts, it shows how by unity, strength, love, joy, determination and hope women can overcome adversities. The campaign included specific behaviors people could take to advance towards an inclusive society. It can be followed on social media with the hashtags #SinMiedoASer #VamosJuntas.



Humanity United

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](#).” In follow-on work, 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.

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—he developed the [Public Will Building](#) model. Eric has worked to counter violent extremism and to reduce hate crimes, including countering militia recruitment by hate groups.



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

Haim works on a global portfolio of strategic communications campaigns with an emphasis on countering authoritarianism. He spent nearly 20 years as a conflict resolution and security researcher and analyst in North Africa and the Middle East before joining MG in 2019. He has conducted research and analysis for numerous U.S. government agencies with a focus on countering violent extremism, ethnic conflict and political violence. At MG he has led work with NASA, Humanity United, and numerous USAID activities.



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

With 20 years of experience, Rodolfo has created SBC 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.



[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, 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. Since joining MG, she has worked with USAID on several SBC activities including anti-corruption and democratic narratives.





Alejandro Vélez Salas—human rights research expert: Ph.D, vice president, 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, democracy strategists and SBC experts; multilingual facilitators; innovators in visual communication; designers 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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GSA Number

GS-07F-0224X

Procurement Designation

Small Business

Schedules

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

NAICS Codes

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

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