

## Bell Bajao (India)

### Scope of Good Practice

Men and boys across India have begun to stop violence against women with one simple action: when they hear a violent argument inside a nearby home, they ring the doorbell to interrupt. Where did they get this idea? From Breakthrough ' s multi-award-winning Bell Bajao ( " Ring the Bell " ) campaign, which uses powerful television ads and innovative community education to inspire people to stop violence against women. Bell Bajao has reached over 130 million, trained over 75,000 young women ' s rights leaders, and changed public attitudes toward violence. Bell Bajao is going global, with U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon as its first global champion.

### The Problem Addressed by the Campaign

Home is the most dangerous place for a woman. Violence against women is the most widespread and socially tolerated human rights violation. It threatens the health and development of individuals, families, communities and nations. One in three women globally are beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused. One in seven girls in developing nations is married before age 15. Sixty million missing girls are " missing " due to sex-selective elimination or inadequate care. But when men and boys, bystanders and communities, stand up against violence, we make home safe for women and families everywhere –and help everyone to thrive.

### Background Research

During Bell Bajao ' s formulation, India ' s government adopted the Protection of Women against Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA 2005). Breakthrough determined that it could capitalize on the government ' s formal commitment to reduce violence against women and the new public interest in domestic violence issues. Breakthrough retained the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), a media research organization, to conduct a baseline survey to determine the extent of the public ' s knowledge about the PWDVA 2005. It also asked CMS to research attitudes toward, and responses to, domestic violence. Their findings: very few people take action when they become aware of domestic violence occurring around them. The few who do are typically men. Breakthrough concluded that a single, direct media message to stop domestic violence –with men and boys as key targets –was required. The message was to be grounded in women ' s rights, guided by research, and tied to the political opportunity occasioned by the government ' s commitment to end domestic violence.

### Strategy

Breakthrough determined that the campaign must foreground men and boys as critical partners, actors, and leaders in ending violence against women. Scale was essential; partnerships were critical. Advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather helped create, pro bono, the powerful ad campaign with Breakthrough ' s message frame. The government ' s Ministry of Women and Child Development made investments to broadcast Bell Bajao ads widely on prime time national channels at no cost. Bell Bajao was also taken into communities through video vans, leadership trainings with youth and community leaders, and face to face educational events employing relevant forms of local culture.

### Creative

The campaign ' s media component was its most prominent feature –a series of television, radio, and print ads created pro bono by Ogilvy & Mather. The first series of television ads show a man or a boy who hears a woman being beaten behind the closed door of her home. After a moment of deliberation, the man or boy rings the doorbell of the home. When the abuser comes to the door, the man or boy asks to borrow a cup of milk, use the phone, or to retrieve a lost cricket ball. From the ads, it is clear that the bell ringer is making the request as a pretext. The

man who intervenes does not confront the abuser; he puts him notice that the violence will not be tolerated. The second series of ads showed similar situations but were based on true stories of men and boys who had been inspired by Bell Bajao to interrupt violence. The campaign has reached over 130 million people in India and has won multiple awards, including the prestigious Silver Lion at the 2010 Cannes International Advertising Festival.

## Media

A dual approach —mass media outreach along with community mobilization—is what made Bell Bajao’s impact so strong. To achieve scale, a mix of traditional and new media tools were used for dissemination. Television proved most effective; a partnership with the India’s government enabled Bell Bajao ads in multiple languages to broadcast widely on prime time national channels with approximately \$5 million USD of donated media time. India’s “Who Wants To Be a Millionaire” featured Bell Bajao! and popular soap operas included storylines with the campaign message. High-profile actors, artists and fashion designers joined the campaign as well. BellBajao.org has seen over one million visits, with engagement and dialogue generated through the blog, social media, and a Google map displaying service providers. On the ground, video vans carried the campaign message into rural India and advocates used street theater, puppetry, and games to engage directly with individuals about women’s rights. These operated alongside Breakthrough’s Rights Advocates program, providing training and community education on women’s rights to stakeholders including police, service providers, government actors, community-based organizations and university students.

## Impact

Bell Bajao has put the power to stop violence in millions of hands across India, with more than 130 million people reached via television and mass media and 7.5 million people reached through video vans traveling over 15,000 miles. Through deeply transformative education and trainings, more than 75,000 youth, community leaders, non-profit groups, and government actors have become agents of change and promoters of human rights in their homes, neighborhoods and beyond.

Bell Bajao has also been thoroughly evaluated and monitored using state-of-the-art tools and techniques. Baseline and endline studies show that Bell Bajao has achieved an 11.5 percent increase in awareness about India’s Protection of Women Against Domestic Violence Act and a 15 percent increase in requests for services for women. In employing The Most Significant Change Technique, which uses collection of stories from the community to indicate behavior change, it has also measured an increase in the number of people ringing the bell against violence.

Given the campaign’s success, President Clinton joined Breakthrough in announcing, at the Clinton Global Initiative, that Bell Bajao would go global. The television ads have been adapted in China, Vietnam, Pakistan, and Canada; Breakthrough has partnered with organizations in Nepal and Bangladesh to launch anti-violence education campaigns in the media and on the ground. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has joined the campaign as its first global champion.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Breakthrough’s goal is to inspire individuals to bring human rights into the world around them. With Bell Bajao, we have taken significant steps toward this goal. Bell Bajao uses media to reach mass audiences and challenge norms; trains new generations of leaders and community engagement to ignite change; capitalizes on strategic partnerships with communities, government and entertainment leaders to reach scale and impact; and measures impact and shares these lesson with the world. These strategies have been crucial to its scale and impact, and will be expanded as the campaign goes global.