

ROconnect: Covid Awareness Fund Case Study

- **Changing minds through building trust**
- **Using the right communication channel for our audience**
- **Resilience through negativity**

Roconnect are a support group for the Romanian community in times of crisis. Through the Covid Awareness Fund they have successfully co-ordinated and managed a social media campaign reaching audiences of over 4,000.

Distrust & Scandals

Early into the pandemic Roconnect helped to co-ordinate information, crisis relief and activities working with faith institutions, non-profit organisations and the Romanian embassy. Dealing with over 1000 humanitarian cases they gained trust within the Romanian community for the wonderful work they were doing.

They saw the Romanian community seemed to be reacting negatively after the introduction of the Covid vaccines and more quarantine measures. For a lot of Romanians work is extremely important to them and something in which they take pride in. The pandemic restrictions were impeding their abilities to work, in some cases, creating difficult home situations and experiencing significant financial distress.

Roconnect also observed an increased distrust in authorities and governments, partly due to experiences back in Romania of Romanian dictatorship and communism. The feeling for many in the Romanian community Roconnect serve is one of being unwelcome. Unwelcome in their homeland of Romania and unwelcome in the UK due to Brexit. This feeling of social and economic isolation increases the spiral and levels of distrust.

The Bubble of Social Media

Roconnect wanted to help their community adopt safer practices and support the community getting protected through the vaccine. To do this their solution was simple but effective. They mobilised in a manner suited for their community focusing primarily on social media where there was a large following of Romanians.

Using a factual and scientific message they created a series of videos and webinars to help combat misinformation, inform the public and increase vaccine trust. They utilized their connections within faith institutions, non-profits and the Romanian embassy to amplify these communications.

Whilst they received backlash, even death threats for their work, they were resilient in promoting and communicating the messages. Managing the social media outcry in a uniform and confident manner. Their professionalism and quality of their communication tools were instrumental in changing people's minds, helping people understand guidance, getting local leaders (at least 32) vaccinated and co-ordinating networks to encourage others.

Improved Quality, Increased Engagement

With the help of the Covid Awareness Fund, Roconnect were able to boost engagement with the funding through quality content. Purchasing better microphones, camera and production software and increasing skills in editing and promoting helped to increase their impact as their community was more likely to listen and take it seriously.