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## BBC Media Action: Subversion From Broadcasting House To Kazakhstan



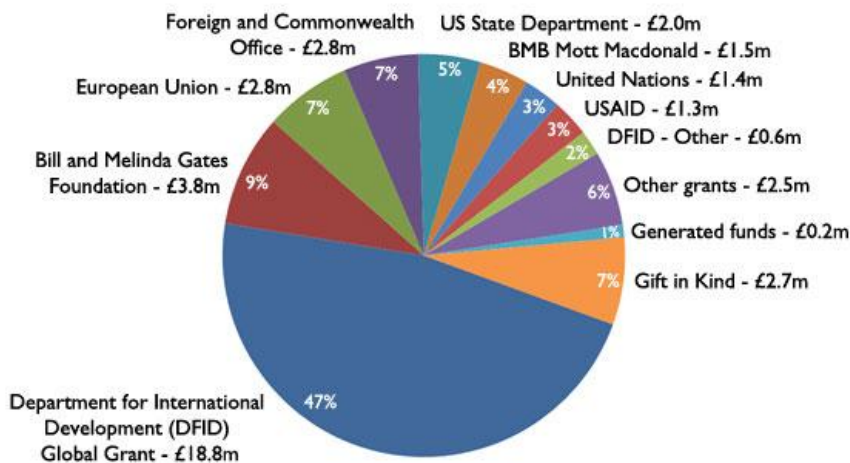
by Brian Gerrish

Tuesday, 1st July 2014

"Our mission is to inform, connect and empower people around the world." These are mighty words from BBC Media Action, a charitable offshoot of the BBC funded to £29.5m in 2012 - most of it from the British Government, EU, US State Department, UN and Dutch government. Most of the British public and indeed most of the BBC's licence payers will have never heard of BBC Media Action let alone understand what this BBC charity really is.

An innocent BBC charity deserving our support and money, or a dangerous subversive organisation? We overwhelmingly think the latter.

The Media Action mission statement says much and nothing at the same time. Much in that they are to inform, connect and empower people worldwide, nothing in that the precise meaning of these words is unclear. Just what is BBC Media Action really doing and why?



BBC Media Action funding.

### BBC Media Action Lies From The Start

As with the political charity Common Purpose, BBC Media Action quickly seeks to justify its actions as benevolent - we are a charity and therefore we must be good. Let's look at the lies. Claiming to be legally, financially and operationally independent of the BBC, Media Action was actually funded by the BBC to the tune of £840,000 in 2012, and uses BBC pension funds and BBC Office space. The majority of the 15 BBC Media Action Board Members are nominated by the BBC, and Peter Horrocks Director of the BBC World Service

Group, is Chair of Trustees. He is independent of course, as he directs 2,500 journalists and support staff embedded in 113 countries. A vast propaganda machine and some.

Media Action builds on the 'fundamental' values of the BBC and claims that accuracy, trust and reliability are amongst these - the 500 victims of BBC paedophile Jimmy Savile suggest otherwise. A cheap shot? Stay with us as we unpick this pernicious subversive BBC organisation.

According to Media Action they operate 100 researchers providing data, evaluation and insight in 24 countries. They 'surveyed' 60,000 people in 11 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East to 'inform our health, governance and resilience projects.' The immediate question is what projects and what are they for? At this point we highlight that Media Action boasts its part in projects funded by the Department for International Development. So is this the BBC or the government at work?

Consider then that BBC Media Action is also funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as part of the Arab Partnership Peace Fund formed as a result of the Arab Spring unrest. Media Action is used here to improve 'opportunities for political, social and economic participation.' We ask again - a charity or the British government at work?

Media Action's self praise continues - "Our work is valued by the development community and by media organisations contributing to development and better standards of governance in developing countries." So the BBC which specialises in politically biased news, dark drama, foul language, violence, pro Eu reporting, skewed docudramas and explicit sex, is supposedly the appropriate source vehicle to tell other societies how to govern themselves. The arrogance might be amusing if it were not for much deeper and dirtier layers of their work.

## 'Governance and Rights' BBC Media Action Style

At this stage we will say it is just a coincidence that BBC Media Action is active in unstable countries worldwide. Media Action specialises in 'governance and rights' and operates in the Middle East, former Soviet Union and Europe. It sustained and expanded Radio Al Mirbad's programming in Iraq funded by the US Department of State. Not bad for a charity.

In Afghanistan they established an 'independent' Afghan organisation staffed by former BBC Media Action employees. In Asia and Cambodia Media Action has pumped out Loy9 videos and boasts of capturing 100,000 views in 8 weeks in a country of under 15 million people. Significant views in poor countries unable to defend against western politically correct culture and BBC 'propaganda'. Unfair? Then let's ask why Media Action is integrating with BBC World Service and BBC Global News. Is the BBC's own brand of news essential for nations to govern themselves. How did Asia manage without the BBC over the last thousand years?

Following the money quickly reveals more of BBC Media Action's real identity. Enter two subsidiary companies - The Marshall Plan of the Mind Trust (not trading) and BBC World Service Trust. We will focus on the Marshall Plan of the Mind later, but before doing so, let's take a look at BBC Media Action's staff. CEO Caroline Nursey is an ex Director Oxfam and former teacher. Communications and branding Director Kirsty Cockburn is ex BBC, Sightsavers and the Overseas Development Institute, where she learned that compelling story-telling is at the heart of the complex world of international development. James Dean is Director of Policy and Learning, having spent 20 years at Panos, Earthscan and International Institute for Environment and Development. The pattern is clear - charity academics and quasi government organisations, with no practical life experience, but a supreme confidence they can change the world using media and education. Media and education with the BBC's own values and agendas of course.

Take Kenya. Sema Kenya is a BBC Media Action and TV programme which provides a 'constructive' platform for Kenyans to challenge their politicians and public officials. Yes, the BBC which cannot properly investigate paedophiles or financial fraud in its own organisation is helping Kenyans learn how to challenge the corrupt political elite. Yes really.

## New BBC Mindsets For Kenya

The plot thickens when we examine Sema Kenya and BBC Media Action's role around the Kenyan Westgate shopping Mall massacre. Sema Kenya programmers report they were uncertain as to how to report events around the Mall massacre. They state "our outgoing Country Director Judy Houston, her replacement Andrew Ilves who has recently joined from the BBC Somali Service and Africa Editor Solomon Mugeru coolly steered the [Sema Kenya] team towards a new mindset." Mr Ilves was head of BBC World Service responsible for radio and online output in Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan and the border areas of Pakistan. He is also Head of Development for BBC Global News - the private BBC company with £90million in sales. BBC Media Action is independent of course.

It could not be clearer that the BBC is directing the mindset of Kenyan reporting. To what aim?

In Serbia BBC Media Action has been funded by the EU to oversee the EU Media Fund and has been working with local film makers on docudramas to tackle human trafficking. At first glance this sounds benign, but lets consider what is being produced is not truth and fact, but 'docudrama' to drive Serbian mindsets where the BBC thinks they should go. As in UK the BBC's truth is usually contaminated with misleading fiction.

In Palestine, according to BBC Media Action, the multiplatform debate show 'Aswat Min Filesteen' (Voices from Palestine), meets a growing need in the Palestinian Territories for trustworthy programming covering local issues. The quarterly TV show is produced by BBC Media Action in partnership with Palestinian Public Broadcasting Corporation and is co-hosted by BBC Arabic's Nur Zorgui and PBC's Huda Kadoumi. Aside from the oxymoron of the BBC and 'trustworthy' programming, how many people in UK realise that the BBC is creating its own news in Palestine.

## BBC Destabilising Syria

BBC Media Action has also been meddling in Syria. Cruising on the post Arab Spring climate in Syria Media Action has been at work to undermine the authority and control of the Assad government, assisting people in Syria and those dispersed overseas to challenge their national government and stating that "given the sensitive and restrictive media environment, much of the work that is carried out is either under the radar or focused on less contentious development themes.." This devious action must surely be considered subversion within a Nation State. BBC Media Action admit that both the UN and the EU have been funding 'fifth column' media activities in Syria.

BBC Media Action is so arrogant and sure of itself that they even tell us what they are doing. Juliette Harkin, former BBC Media Action Project Manager and an expert on Syria states.."we [BBC Media Action] worked in 2004 with individuals within the [Syrian] ministry who wanted change and tried to get them to be the drivers of that. All media development work that has been done within Syria has, in my

opinion, been predicated upon this idea that there can be change from within - you have an authoritarian regime and you find who the reformers are within that [regime] and work with them”

In their own words Media Action is a trojan horse which works against governments of independent nation states - who are they to decide which regimes are acceptable and which not? Did the BBC create chemical weapons reports to suit UK, US and EU political agendas to oust President Assad? Many think so.

## BBC fingers in the Ukrainian pie

As we have watched the tragedy of the unfolding violence and destabilisation in Ukraine, we should not be surprised to see BBC Media Action at work. In 2003 BBC Media Action set up Top Media in Odessa - a media support project to offer legal advice and training. Tony Hewson Senior Trainer BBC Media Action is married to a Ukrainian wife. He publicly states that he has watched Ukrainian TV channels to see how some of the journalists he had worked with were coping. Did he help train these ‘independent’ reporters? Hewson boasts ...”Back in the current crisis, Andriy Kulykov, another trainer we worked with, a former BBC journalist and now one of Ukraine’s leading talk-show presenters, has also been at the heart of events. He took a brave step of broadcasting his programme Svoboda Slova (Freedom of Speech) not in Ukrainian, but in Russian – an attempt to reach out to all sides. He has also used his BBC journalism training and experience as a trainer with Media Action, to maintain balance during his on air interviewing..” BBC balance? Does that mean challenging and undermining the established government? Did Freedom of Speech pacify a volatile Ukrainian society or inflame it?

A ‘David’ posted a comment on Mr Hewson’s section of the BBC Media Action website on 19th March 2014 - 10:44. He remarked...”The next question is how free are journalists in the Ukraine now. Is the ‘new government’ of Kiev oligarchs allowing press freedom and non-partisan reports? The BBC could certainly do with some lessons on the ‘non-partisan’ bit. The reports on the Ukraine and Crimea are extremely unbalanced!” David seems to also sense a BBC rat.

## BBC Marshall Plan of the Mind

If we are lifting numerous BBC Media Action lids at this stage, how can we really show the dangerous power of BBC subversive propaganda? We return to the BBC ‘charity’ Marshall Plan of the Mind Trust, also known as BBC MPM. Incorporated 11 September 1992 (removed 29 April 2002), the Trust alleged it was for education, training, the general public, mankind and providing services. Kari Blackburn, Director of International Operations for the BBC World Service Trust was appointed editor of the MPM in 1992. The establishment claimed she committed suicide by drowning in 1997.

Currently serving BBC Media Action trustee Michael C McCulloch formerly worked with the UK Delegation to UNESCO in the 1970s attempting to ‘discourage the Soviet Union from restricting press freedom.’ He also acted as Private Secretary to Tim Raison the then Minister for Overseas Development, and much later he served on the Board of the European Board of Reconstruction and Development. He drew on this UNESCO experience when appointed to launch the Know How Fund for the Soviet Union..the British Government’s programme of support for economic and political reform. McCulloch states..”one of my first tasks was to expand funding for the BBC Marshall Plan of the Mind (MPM), devised by former BBC World Service Director John Tusa with support from Baroness Chalker. MPM focused on the twin tracks of helping to develop independent media and of using media to help people in the region understand and make choices about the changes suddenly unleashed all around them. Creative, exciting, fast-moving and fun—working with MPM was all of these—who had heard of an aid programme supporting soap operas before that?!”

This was no joke by McCulloch. By 1995 BBC MPM was facilitating a ‘British-style social realist soap opera’, Crossroads to Kazakhstan. According to Ruth Mandel who critically analysed this initiative, the “making of Crossroads was informed by the assumption that the medium of television is an appropriate tool to further the logical and inevitable transition to a capitalist free-market economy, transforming the national imagination in the process.” Mandel further indicated...”Cross roads was conceived as an elaboration of a BBC MPM Radio soap opera in Russia based on an Archers format, and was funded through Know How Funds, supported by the government’s Overseas Development Administration and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It was produced by the private London based production company Portobello Media.”

## BBC Media Action British Government’s Know How Fund Propaganda Machine

Mandel’s excellent analysis ultimately lays the British government’s BBC propaganda machine bare. “In discussion, one Know How Fund official admitted that the assistance came loaded with “unashamedly political objectives.”” He described the project to support changes we want; the transition to a market economy will be better for them, and for us, for politics trade etc. There are real political objectives rather than simply humanitarian assistance.” Against this background, the work of BBC Media Action in Kazakhstan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Serbia, Palestine, Kenya, Syria, Ukraine and elsewhere becomes crystal clear. Political manoeuvring and propaganda disguised as ‘media assistance.’

Mandel states..”Crossroads mentally ‘reframed’ Kazakhstan with issues such as privatisation, banking, entrepreneurship, marketing reform...and ideological messages , issues of ethnic pluralism and technology transfer...and British American Tobacco, Wrigley’s gum and Smirnoff Vodka all benefited from product placement.”

John Tusa Chairman BBC MPM stated June 14 1996...”BBC MPM is an educational, charitable trust...to transfer skills and knowledge of democratic principles and market economies via national radio and television to assist the transition process. It is the most significant project dedicated to mass knowledge transfer within the former Soviet Union.”

In typical BBC style John Tusa spun the true subversive political objectives as ‘assistance in transition i.e. help for vulnerable people.’ The reality is that the BBC Marshall Plan of the Mind was the opposite. A vast, dangerous and subversive media propaganda exercise to break up and reframe nation states into a new British and BBC designed model, whether they wanted it or not. BBC Media Action is the spawn of that BBC MPM. Masquerading as a charity, BBC Media Action is nothing of the sort. It is a hard at work reframing and destabilising the national mind of vulnerable nation states. BBC Media Action should be exposed and disbanded as soon as possible. Left at work, it is capable of inflaming major conflict in Europe - just observe the fruits of BBC Media Action in Ukraine.

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