

## Can Communication Be Socially Responsible and Commercially Viable? An Assessment of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw*, an Entertainment-Education Radio Series in the Philippines<sup>1</sup>

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The entertainment-education communication (E-E) strategy is one of those rare communication approaches that provide an opportunity for both commercial and social interests to be met. It does so by questioning the needless dichotomy that is made in almost all mass media content: That mediated programs must either be entertaining or educational (Singhal & Rogers, 2002; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004)). *Entertainment-education* is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members' knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, and change overt behavior (Singhal & Rogers, 1989). Entertainment-education capitalizes on the popular appeal of the entertainment media, and the large audiences that it reaches, to show individuals how they can live safer, healthier, and more wholesome lives. If implemented correctly, the entertainment-education strategy can offer important advantages to non-governmental organizations, national governments, broadcasting networks, commercial sponsors, educators, and to audiences.

The idea of combining entertainment with education goes as far back in human history as the timeless art of storytelling. For thousands of years, music, drama, dance, and various folk media have been utilized for recreation, devotion, reformation, and instructional purposes. However, "entertainment-education" is a relatively new concept in that its purposive and strategic use in radio, television, comic books, and popular music has received attention only in the recent decades.

The present chapter documents the results of a participatory assessment exercise to gauge how avid listeners of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* ("Hope After the Dawn"), an E-E radio series in the Philippines engaged with the radio program, deriving personal meanings from its plot, characters, and educational messages. The chapter (1) describes the *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* project, including the underlying

theory and methodology behind the radio program's plot and character delineation, (2) lists the research questions guiding the present research, (3) discusses our participatory methods of data-collection, (4) presents our key results, and (5) raises implications for the purposive implementation of the E-E strategy.

### **The *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* Project**

The *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* (literally "hope after the dawn or "when the sun shines") radio project was implemented in the Philippines by Population Media Center of Burlington, Vermont, USA with financial support from UNFPA, Philippines.

*Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* was a 120-episode entertainment-education radio soap opera, broadcast in the Philippines from July 18, 2005 to December 30, 2005. Five episodes of the program, each 15 minutes in length, were broadcast each week from Monday to Friday on the powerful 50,000 watt DZRH AM radio station whose signal covers the entire land area of the Philippines, some 300 Radyo Natin stations, the largest FM radio network in the country, and YES FM 91.1 on Philippines' Boracay Island. In essence, it reached a large audience of Filipinos, several times a week, week-after-week, with educational messages.

*Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw's* educational purpose was four-fold: To promote (1) a more equal status for women, (2) family planning, (3) HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support, and (4) youth health and responsibility. To achieve this purpose four intersecting storylines, each promoting one main educational theme, were created. For each educational storyline, a set of positive, negative, and transitional role models were carefully delineated, drawing upon Albert Bandura's social learning and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1986), and an accompanying methodology to operationalize it developed by Miguel Sabido, a Mexican writer-producer-director of entertainment-education *telenovelas* ("television novels") (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Singhal & Rogers, 2002; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004).

### **Positive, Negative, and Transitional Role Models**

Drawing upon theories of Stanford University social psychologist, Albert Bandura, about how audience members learn from media role models, Miguel Sabido, a creative writer-director-producer at Televisa, the Mexican national television network, produced a series of seven entertainment-education *telenovelas* from the mid-1970s to early 1980s (Singhal & Rogers, 1999;

Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). In each of these *telenovelas*, Sabido incorporated Bandura's principles of role modeling in carefully delineating the key characters. Remarkably, each *telenovela* was popular with its audience, made a profit, and met its educational objectives (Singhal & Rogers, 1999).

In operationalizing the concept of modeling Sabido was well aware that the relationship between a media consumer and a media model goes beyond the cognitive domain to include the emotive and affective domains. Sabido, for instance, knew that audience members engage in *parasocial relationships* with media models, defined as the seemingly face-to-face interpersonal relationships that can develop between a viewer and a mass media personality (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The media consumer forms a relationship with a performer that is analogous to the real interpersonal relationships. Thus, audience members tune in at a pre-appointed hour to welcome the media model into their homes. Incredibly, some audience members even talk to their favorite characters (that is, to their TV or radio set) as if the characters were real people (Papa et al., 2000; Papa, Singhal, & Papa, 2006). So, Sabido designed his entertainment-education *telenovelas* in ways that viewers could become affectively involved with the role models and learn socially desirable behaviors from them.

Each of Sabido's entertainment-educational *telenovelas* has three types of characters: (1) those who support the educational value (positive role-models) (2) those who reject this value (negative role-models), and (3) those who sit somewhere in the middle (or on the negative side) and, as the storyline unfolds, gradually begin to adopt the positive behaviors (transitional characters). When a positive character models a behavior that is socially desirable, the character is rewarded. If a negative character emulated a socially undesirable behavior, he/she was punished. The transitional characters, designed to mirror the attitudes and beliefs of the target audience, carefully watch the consequences accruing to the positive and negative role models, and gradually move toward the positive end of the continuum.

#### **Four Educational Storylines and Character Delineations**

The plot of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* was designed around four intersecting storylines, each centered on an educational purpose, and each delineated by a set of positive, negative, and transitional role models.

**Storyline #1. A More Equal Status for Women.** The first storyline revolves around the trials, tribulations, and (eventual) transformation of Amelia, who is married to Miguel, an abusive husband with vices such as drinking, gambling,

and womanizing. Submissive, sacrificing, and tolerant, Amelia (a transitional character) experiences domestic violence, but continues to stay on with Miguel (a negative character), caring for her four children, hoping that someday he would change. A local woman chieftain, Kapitana Pilar (a positive character), supports Amelia emotionally and provides opportunities for Amelia's socio-economic empowerment by hiring her as a supervisor of her seaweed farming business. With the wages she earns, Amelia sends her children to school. With Miguel's behavior worsening, and refusing to bear any more abuse, Amelia moves out to Kapitana Pilar's house with her children. Miguel promises to change, they reconcile for a while, and when Miguel returns to his abusive behaviors, Amelia decides to take more control of her life. She becomes a trader of seaweeds, launches her own business in food delicacies, and economically empowers herself. Miguel, on the other hand, suffers consequences of his wrongdoings.

**Storyline #2. Family Planning.** The second story revolves around the life of a Muslim character, Ahmed, a hardworking, industrious, and loving man, and his wife Jezreel, who together have six daughters. While Ahmed (a transitional character) gives up hope of ever having a son, his mother, Epang (a negative character), insists on more children. Epang is a traditional midwife in the barrio, and she encourages all residents to continue producing babies, as her livelihood depends on it. Epang's antithesis is Dr. Lazaro (a positive character), a kind widower and trained medical doctor, who often treats patients for free, and promotes family planning. Epang hates Dr. Lazaro, and waits for every opportunity to discredit him. When a storm devastates Ahmed's crops, Epang refuses to lend her son money, but Dr. Lazaro steps in, making Ahmed a business partner in agriculture. Epang tries to burn their crop, but instead ends up burning her own house. Meanwhile, Jezreel is pregnant again, and an ultrasound shows that, finally, a boy is on the way. However, just before birth, Jezreel develops pre-eclampsia, a life-threatening condition. Ahmed has to choose between saving the life of his wife or the unborn baby boy. He chooses Jezreel's life. Through this event, Ahmed begins to more fully appreciate his daughters, and the importance of his wife's reproductive health.

**Storyline #3. HIV/AIDS Prevention, Care, and Support.** The third storyline centers around Jeff Lazaro (a transitional character), who is a popular basketball player and a playboy, and his friend and fellow basketball player, Vince (a positive character) – who is even more popular, and is a one-woman-man. Estella Roman (a negative character), an actress-singer is obsessed with Vince, but Vince is faithful to his girlfriend Esther and not tempted by Estella, not even after they broke up. Jeff Lazaro, on the other hand, is in love with Estella, and because Estella plays with anyone available, they have a one night stand. To

break into the movie industry, Estella, meanwhile, has been sleeping around with film producers, one of whom is infected with HIV.

When Jeff learns that Estella is HIV positive, he opts to be tested, finding out that he is also HIV-positive. He undergoes counseling, takes anti-retroviral drugs, and looks after his nutritional intake. His father, Dr. Lazaro, his family, and his circle of friends still treat him compassionately. The girl, who admired Jeff since he started his basketball career and with whom she has a baby, still loves him, despite his sickness, and cares for him. They get married, and live a fairly normal life. Estella, when she learns about her HIV-infection, however, has a different experience. She becomes a loner, fearful and afraid of being seen by others. Her family disowns her, and her friends disappear.

**Storyline #4. Youth Health and Responsibility.** The fourth storyline revolves around the life of Paula (a transitional character), who is Eliza's younger sister, and who envies her elder sister for her looks, talents, and admirers. Eliza (a positive character) is a youth leader and advocate for youth issues. Joaquin (a negative character), the rogue son of the town's Mayor, likes Eliza, but Paula, envious of her sister's suitors, seduces Joaquin. Joaquin is a very bad influence on Paula. He teaches Paula many vices, including use of illicit drugs, resulting in Paula dropping out of school, and running away from home. When Joaquin is jailed (as a result of his mother's – the Mayor's – selfless actions), Paula goes to the city to compete in prestigious teenage TV talent contest. She does not win the contest as the organizers find out that she is a drug user. Paula returns to her family, rehabilitates herself, and resumes her studies. She becomes the top student in her school as she models the life of a responsible Filipino youth.

### Research Questions

Our participatory assessment exercise centered on asking the respondents the following three questions:

**Research Question #1:** *What is the radio drama Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw about? In essence, what is the nature and scope of its plot, its characters, and its educational themes?*

**Research Question #2:** *As a female (or a male) listener, which scene from Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw was most meaningful to you and why?*

**Research Question #3:** *How has your life has changed as a result of listening to Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw?*

## Participatory Assessment Methodology

In recent years, participatory sketching and photography have emerged as novel, audience-centered, and low-cost qualitative methodologies for assessing the meanings that audience members of entertainment-education (E-E) programs derive from their engagement with the mass media text (Singhal & Devi, 2003; Singhal & Rattine-Flaherty, 2006).

The inspiration for participatory sketching and photography comes from the work of noted Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. In 1973, while conducting a literacy project in a barrio of Lima, Peru, a team led by Freire (author of the seminal 1970 book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*), asked people questions in Spanish, but requested the answers in photographs. When the question "What is exploitation?" was asked, some people took photos of a landlord, grocer, or a policeman (Boal, 1979, p. 123). One child took a photo of a nail on a wall. It made no sense to adults, but other children were in strong agreement. The ensuing discussions showed that many young boys of that neighborhood worked in the shoe-shine business. Their clients were mainly in the city, not in the barrio where they lived. As their shoe-shine boxes were too heavy for them to carry, these boys, rented a nail on a wall (usually in a shop), where they could hang their boxes for the night. To them, that nail on the wall represented "exploitation." The "nail on the wall" photograph spurred widespread discussions in the Peruvian barrio about other forms of institutionalized exploitation, including ways to overcome them.

Drawing upon Paulo Freire's work with participatory photography in Peru, E-E researchers have begun to position themselves to question the dominant hegemony of textocentrism that legitimizes the lettered, literate, and text-based ways of knowing (Conquergood, 2002). Participatory sketching and photography both validate other non-textual ways of knowing by privileging the performative dimensions of sketches and photographs.

Inspired by this Freirean technique and Conquergood's (2002) call for incorporating more visual, performative methods, our assessment of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* in the Philippines included both participatory sketching and participatory photography.

Our participatory data collection activities in the Philippines comprised of a total respondent pool of 41 avid listeners of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw*, of which five individuals hailed from Metro Manila<sup>2</sup>, the national capital region, and 36 individuals from the island of Boracay, where the local FM station broadcast the pro-

gram. Some 38 of these 41 respondents were women, and 3 were men. Nearly three quarters of women were married, and two out of three were in the 21 to 40 year age group. Most of them were educated up to the high school level, and belonging to the lower socio-economic strata. Such an audience profile of married stay-at-home mothers is fairly consistent with the audience profile of day-time radio soaps in most countries.

**Participatory Sketching.** As part of the participatory sketching exercise, we asked our respondents, either as individuals or in pairs, to answer the three questions that guide our present research study: (1) *What is the radio drama Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw about?* (2) *As a female (or a male) listener, which scene from Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw was most meaningful to you and why?* And, (3) *How has your life has changed as a result of listening to Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw?* However, rather than having them respond orally to our query, we asked them instead to sketch their responses on white cardstock using colored pencils. This participatory sketching activity with 41 respondents yielded a total of 67 drawings (as noted previously, some of these sketches were constructed in pairs. After the sketches were completed, individuals (or pairs) responsible for the drawing narrated what the sketch was about. These narrations were audio-recorded and then translated and transcribed into English-language transcripts by bi-lingual speakers fluent in both languages.

**Participatory Photography.** To further assess the effects of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw*, 18 respondents (5 from Metro Manila and 13 from Boracay Island) out of our 41 respondents took part in a participatory photography exercise. Only one question was posed: *How has your life changed, or what aspects of your life have been affected, by listening to Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw?* Of the 8 to 10 photographs that our 18 participants took to answer the posed question, we asked them to select their top four or five photos that they believed best answered the question. Interestingly, some of our respondents chose to narrate only one photo, while some others narrated up to 12 photos. A total of 90 photos were narrated by our 18 participants in front of their respective groups. The narrations were translated from Tagalog to English.

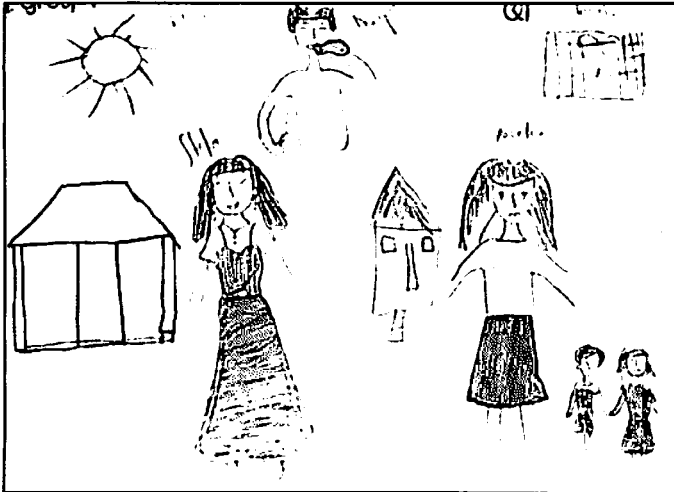
### **Audience Interpretations of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw***

To gauge the personal meanings that avid listeners of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* drew from its plot, characters, and educational messages, we organize our results around the three guiding research questions.

## Grasp of Intersecting Plots, Characters, and Educational Messages

**Research Question #1** asked: *What is the radio drama Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw about?* In essence, what is nature and scope of its plot, its characters, and its educational themes?

Liza and Fe, 24 and 32 years, respectively, and both married women from Boracay Island, provided the following narrative along with their sketch (Sketch #1).



Sketch #1. By Liza and Fe, 24 and 32 years, respectively, Boracay Island.

“Amelia is crying because of the crisis she has been experiencing with her husband. She is having a hard time working for her family.” The picture depicts Amelia [on the lower right of the sketch] standing in front of her house, next to her children, with tears on her face. Off to her upper side, there is a sketch of a smiling Miguel with a beer bottle to his mouth. Liza and Fe also talked at length about Stella [shown on the bottom left side of the sketch], a young woman “who is a socialite and after making poor choices, becomes infected by HIV/AIDS.” They describe Stella as “a very beautiful actress who had a ‘boyfriend’ Jeff although she didn’t really like him. She just wanted someone around.” In the top right corner, we see a picture of a person’s face and torso behind sketched bars, labeled Joaquin, representing his stay in prison due to illicit drug use and other criminal activities. With their detailed sketch and narration, Liza and Fe provided a fine overview of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw*’s plot, characters, and key educational messages.

Sha and Ella, 29 and 23 year old women residents of Boracay, drew the following sketch (Sketch #2), and noted:



Sketch #2. By Sha and Ella, 29 and 23 years, respectively, Boracay Island.

“There is a house w/ flowers, kids playing, and the sun. We include the sun because it ties into the meaning of the radio drama which translates -- The dawn that arises.” Like others, they also described the story of Amelia and Miguel “One family is of Amelia and Miguel. They always fight [shown on the middle-right of the sketch]. Amelia takes care of her family and is responsible while Miguel is irresponsible, asks for money from Amelia, and has another woman. Miguel has many vices, and when Amelia gives him money [coins shown on the lower left of the sketch] it ends up being used for his vices [two alcohol bottles are shown in the sketch on a dining table] or towards women. But a time did come when he went back to his wife. He did have other women....but he came back to Amelia because she still loves him.” Included in the sketch is an image of Miguel’s other woman [lower middle part of the sketch] and a drawing of an empowered Amelia [on the top] working in the seaweeds farming business to help support her family.

One of the most interesting responses about what the program *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* is all about came from a set of 12 photos that Arlene, a 34-year old married woman from Metro Manila, took to talk about her intense engagement with the radio soap opera. Arlene’s first photo (Photo #1) shows a rough road in the wilderness, and her accompanying narrative was brief: “Picture 1 shows a rough road that seems very hard to travel.”

Arlene's last (12<sup>th</sup>) photo (Photo #2) shows a paved street, and in narrating it, she notes: "So this is the same road we have seen on Picture 1. It is now better-cemented, smooth and strong."



Photo #1. By Arlene, 34 years, Metro Manila



Photo #2. By Arlene, 34 years, Metro Manila

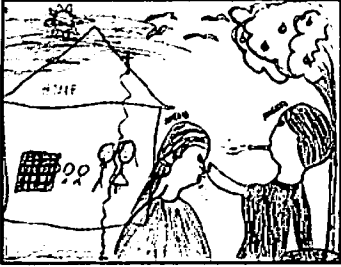
Interestingly, the imagery and narrative of Arlene's in-between photos (photos 2 thru 11) laid out the path and steps required to get from the rough road to the paved, smooth road, including highlighting the importance of listening to radio, relating to the program [*Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw*], overcoming the vices depicted in the program, parent-to-child modeling, education for children, belief in church and god, and the vital role of mothers like Amelia to make the world a better place for their children and all community members.

Arlene's photonovela (photo novel), summarizing the key educational message of the program -- primarily from the perspective of Amelia, who goes from a state of tremendous hardship to a state of empowerment -- represents a terrific illustration of narrativity both within and across the 12 photo images. Interestingly, Arlene shot the 12 photos sequentially, showing Amelia's path from a rough "lonely" existence to one of strength and empowerment.

In sum, our respondents sketches and photos suggest that they (1) comprehended the various intersecting plotlines of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw*, (2) could accurately describe the qualities of its main characters, and, in so doing, (3) could articulate its various educational messages: That is, a more empowered status for women (such as Amelia), causes of family disharmony (including domestic violence inflicted by a vice-ridden Miguel), how not to be infected with HIV (by not emulating characters like Stella), preserving youth health and responsibility (by following characters like Vince, and not emulating characters like Joaquin).

### Personal Resonance, Emotions, and Meanings

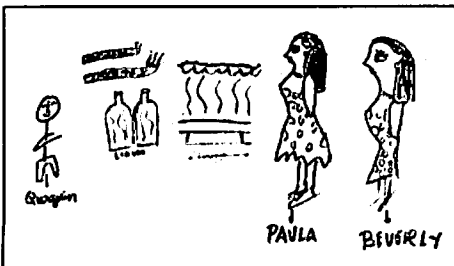
**Research Question #2 asked:** *As a female (or a male) listener, which scene from Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw was most meaningful to you and why?*



For a majority of our *female* respondents, the domestic violence scenes between Miguel and Amelia held strong personal and emotional resonance with their lived realities. Many of the married women were victims of domestic violence; and the unmarried ones did not wish to ever be in such a circumstance.

Sketch #3. By Irene, 22 years, Boracay Island

The sketch of Irene (Sketch #3), a 22-year old woman from Boracay Island, depicts Amelia crying as she is slapped in the face by her husband Miguel. Miguel is shown smoking a cigarette, representing the “many vices” he embodies. Additionally, Irene’s sketch shows Amelia and Miguel’s home “divided” with a wavy red line: “The line separates Amelia from the rest of the family,” emphasizing her lonesome existence. Although Irene is unmarried, she emphasizes that “she doesn’t want to one day become separated from her husband and quarrel with him and disagree with him.” She notes: “A house should have peace and people should try to understand each other and not separate or else the relationship will be ruined. No matter what, you can work through fights and misunderstandings.”



Ella, a 23 year old woman from Boracay Island, chose to describe another set of personally meaningful scenes (see Sketch #4) from *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw*.

Sketch #4. By Ella, 23 years, Boracay Island

Ella begins by describing how Paula, a young attractive teenage girl, comes “under the bad influence of Joaquin who convinces her to smoke and use illicit drugs.” We also see a drawing of Joaquin [on the extreme left of the sketch] who

Ella says “has many vices.” Appropriately, in Ella’s sketch, Joaquin is pictured next to marijuana, Marlboro cigarettes, and two bottles of liquor. Ella also described how Paula “competes in the national talent search for a rising star, and how she is supported by her sister Eliza and her mother, but betrayed by her friend Beverly. Beverly has another plan for Paula since she was cheated by her friend.” Beverly is depicted as standing behind Paula, implying a stab at the back. Ella, breaking down in tears, emphasized that that she doesn’t want “such betrayal to happen to her” because she believes that truth will determine the future of Philippines, suggesting that current political leaders are not truthful. She continued: “We need to love our friends and in friendship there should be love and trust. This scene meant a lot to me because my best friend betrayed me and really hurt me.”

In sum, our respondents’ sketches suggest various degrees of emotional and personal resonance with the key plotlines and characterizations. The domestic violence scenes between Miguel and Amelia held the most personal meaning for most of our *female* respondents as it closely paralleled their lived realities. Many of our respondents freely and openly shared the debilitating consequences of their spouse’s vices on their family life, calling for more understanding, harmony, and support from their husbands. Some respondents highlighted the importance of staying away from cigarettes, drugs, and criminal activities; and some others stressed the importance of honesty and trust in relationships.

## Learning and Impact

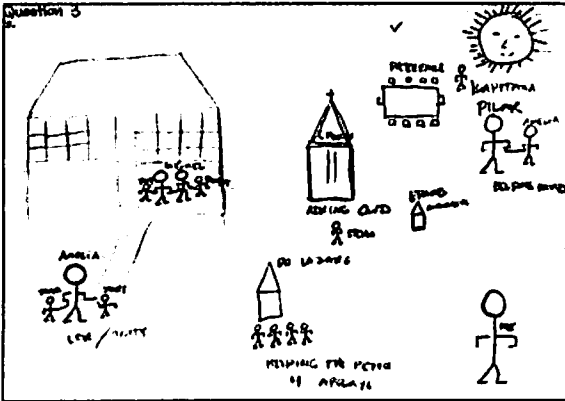
**Research Question #3 asked: *How has your life has changed as a result of listening to Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw?***

Mae, a 29 year old married woman from Boracay Island, tearfully explained the change in her life as a result of listening to *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw*: “I learned to forgive from Amelia. I used to not forgive, but now I have learned to forgive.”

Ella, a 23 year old from Boracay Island, noted that she “did not want to make friends because most of her friends were fake and not true to her. However, by having faith in God, she has learned to love, forgive and move on with her life.”

Ella’s sketch (Sketch #5) illustrates the importance of love, unity and helping others. In her sketch we see an image of Dr. Lazaro (in the bottom middle) and below him is a label “Helping the people of Apolayo” (the village in which he works). We see four people in front of his clinic. In contrast, the house of Epang, the faith healer is shown as much smaller, and there are no people

around. Ella also said she learned that “faith healers are quack doctors and shouldn’t always be trusted.” We also see a picture of Kapitana Pilar and Amelia holding hands with a label “Helping Hand,” highlighting the importance of mutual support. We also see Miguel entering the local beerhouse with a table and several bar stools (on the upper right of the sketch). Pointing to Miguel, Ella noted: “All the men that have new women....most of the mistresses will leave them because all they want is a man’s money.”



Sketch #5. By Ella, 23 years, Boracay Island

A wife, on the other hand, loves you for who you are, not for what you have.” Ella finished by saying that “It is very sweet to forgive....and it is okay to ask for the Lord’s help,” highlighting Amelia’s compassionate attitude toward Miguel, despite his vices.



Photo #3. By Amalia, 33 years, Boracay Island.

Several respondents talked about a more heightened awareness about their marital relationships, including the importance of cooperation between the husband and wife in raising children and sharing household responsibilities. Amalia, a 33 year old married woman from Boracay Island, took a photo (Photo #3) of a man drinking liquor, in broad day light, outside of his home, while a young boy and a girl look on.

Amalia noted: “The man in the picture represents Miguel. The drama affects my life personally, so that is where I got the idea to take the picture.

The man in this picture is my husband, drinking in front of my kids. He has many vices and is not responsible.



Photo #4. By Jenny, 25 years, Boracay Island.

In contrast, Jenny, a 25 year old married woman from Boracay Island, took a photo (Photo #4) of her husband feeding their daughter dinner at their home.

Jenny explained: "My husband is like the character Ahmed. He helps take care of the kids and does chores around the house. Ahmed takes care of his family, and so does my husband."



Photo #5. By Erl, 23 years, Boracay Island.

Erl, a 23 year old woman from Boracay Island, shared with us a photo (Photo #5) that showed her wading in the beach waters, picking up things from the ocean.

Erl elaborated: "This picture represents Amelia working. She is picking up shells and sea weeds to eat and sell. What she earns from sales, she uses to buy milk and food for her kids." Erl emphasized that *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* highlights the importance of women taking

care of her children and providing for them if the husband is unwilling or unable to (as was the case with Miguel). Women can take care of themselves and their children, empowered and independent from their husbands.



Photo #6. By Amelita, 33 years, Metro Manila.

This theme of parents, especially mothers, taking care of their children, providing them educational opportunities, and helping them grow into responsible citizens was reflected in the photos and narratives of several other respondents. For instance, Amelita, a 33 year old married woman from Metro Manila took a picture (Photo #6) of a mother walking her child to school.

She noted: "Even though the road is too difficult to travel and there is no available public transportation, she diligently walks her child to school." The photo shows the child holding an umbrella while the mother carries his bag. Similarly, Arlene, a 34 year old woman from Metro Manila, took a photo of several children going to school, pointing to the importance of parents encouraging their

children to earn an education: “These are children, the ones who are greatly affected by what their elders. If their parents are gamblers, they will also grow up to be gamblers....They can, however, go to school and acquire education. There are still parents like Amelia who work hard to be able to send her children to school.”

In sum, our respondents’ sketches and photos, and their accompanying narratives, suggest that listening to *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* affected their lives in various ways. Listeners emphasized that they learned about, or were reinforced in, the following: The importance of (1) taking care of siblings (as Eliza took care of Paula); (2) learning to forgive (as Amelia did to Miguel); (3) supporting others in need (as Kapitana did to Amelia); (4) staying away from vices (as Miguel should have done); (5) sharing of parenting and household responsibilities (as was modeled by Ahmed and Jezreel); and (6) working hard to support and educate one’s children (as Amelia did).

### Summary and Conclusions

Our respondents’ sketches and photos suggest that avid listeners of the E-E radio series comprehended the various intersecting plotlines of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw*; could accurately describe the qualities of its main characters, and, in so doing, could articulate its various educational messages: That is, a more empowered status for women, causes of family disharmony and how to overcome it, how not to be infected with HIV, and preserving youth health and responsibility.

Our respondents’ sketches suggest various degrees of emotional and personal resonance with the key plotlines and characterizations. The domestic violence scenes between Miguel and Amelia held the most personal meaning for most of our *female* respondents as it closely paralleled their lived realities. Some respondents highlighted the importance of such caring and supportive “parent-to-child” type relationships as was depicted in scenes involving Kapitana and Amelia and Amelia and her children. Others remembered scenes which persuaded them to stay away from cigarettes, drugs, and criminal activities, and to value honesty and trust in relationships.

Our respondents emphasized that by listening to *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* they learned about, or were reinforced in, the following: The importance of taking care of siblings; learning to forgive; supporting others in need; staying away from vices; sharing of parenting and household responsibilities between husband and wives; and working hard to support and educate one’s children.

What implications does our work in the Philippines have for the purposive design and implementation of entertainment-education initiatives? Our findings suggest, that E-E strategies can provide an opportunity for educational messages to reach large audiences, and thus help pay for themselves. In this sense, they are a unique communication platform where commercial viability and social interests can potentially co-exist.

## Endnotes

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- 2 In Metro Manila, TNS-Global, a market and social research company, identified and screened the listeners of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw*, provided their facilities for the conduct of the participatory assessment activities, and helped in the electronic scanning of the documents.

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## Introduction to

### **Can Communication Be Socially Responsible and Commercially Viable? An Assessment of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw*, an Entertainment-Education Radio Series in the Philippines**

*By Arvind Singhal, Elizabeth Rattine-Flaherty, and Molly A. Mayer*

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The authors focus on entertainment-education strategy which is a communication approach that provides an opportunity for both commercial and social interests to meet. The strategy questions the dichotomy that is made by many mass media representatives; namely, that mediated programs must either be entertaining or educational. Entertainment-education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate in order to increase audience members' knowledge about educational issues, create favorable attitudes, and change overt behavior. Entertainment-education capitalizes on the popular appeal of the entertainment media and the large audiences it reaches to show individuals how they can live safer, healthier, and more wholesome lives. If implemented correctly, the entertainment-education strategy can offer important advantages to non-governmental organizations, national governments, broadcasting networks, commercial sponsors, educators, and to audiences.

A total of 120 episodes of *Sa Pagsikat Ng Araw* ("Hope after the Dawn") entertainment-education radio program were broadcast in the Philippines in 2005. Five episodes, each lasting fifteen minutes, were broadcast each week from Monday to Friday. The purpose of this entertainment-education program was to promote more equal status to women, family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support as well as youth health and responsibility. To achieve these goals, four intersecting storylines were created; each promoting one main educational theme. For each storyline, a set of positive, negative, and transitional role models were carefully delineated drawing on Bandura's social learning and social cognition theory. To test the effectiveness of the radio program, which drew large audiences throughout the Philippines and, thus, proved to be a commercial success, the participatory assessment method was applied. This method revolves around participants sketching and photographing their responses which also include some commentary to explain the depicted scenes instead of orally

describing them. This is a relatively novel, audience-centered, and low-cost qualitative method for assessing the meanings that audience members get from their engagement with the mass media text. The analysis of the sketches and photographs as well as the accompanying narratives suggest that listening to the radio program did indeed change the listeners' lives.

Quite clearly, the entertainment-education strategy can have many fields of application in the world of business as well; whether it be in marketing or human resources. What the entertainment-education strategy also reveals that effective education is not accomplished with the KISS [Keep It Simple and Short] method because for messages to have a lasting impact on the audience, they need time and extended exposure to the stimuli. In this context, one may recall that it took Toyota many years to shed its image of a cheap, inexpensive automobile brand available on the American market in the 1960s to the quality brand of the 1990s. And radio programming could also prove to be an interesting alternative for informing audiences in developing countries where large portions of the population cannot read.

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